

Well, subsequently, events became somewhat traumatic in France. I must-- I couldn't, as I said before, within the time frame of this interview. I cannot tell you everything about what happened. But I try to give you the highlights. My aunt and uncle had also a child. And also, my aunt's parents were in France as well. And they lived close by.

And then came the time-- I couldn't tell you the exact time frame, but I can tell you this, that there came a time when my-- the parents, especially the father of my aunt, was interned in France. And naturally, there were the associated heartaches with it. And my aunt was a rather active person. And she was able to, as I said, before cut some red tapes, and try to visit them, and have them released as well in France.

You say them.

That's-- that is my-- her aunt's-- my aunt's parents, as well as, for a period of time, my uncle was interned in France.

This is--

I must say, my aunt became a French citizen, whereas my uncle did not.

OK. So he was--

OK? So that was the explanation for the fact that my uncle was interned as well. Because he now became an alien in France because he was still German. So my uncle was interned. And my aunt was able to release him. And we were living for a while together in-- as I said, for about a year in [FRENCH] France, where we made a relatively normal living.

And at that point, Germany overran Holland, Belgium. And the debacle in France began. And I was one of the thousands-- millions, if necessary that went down the roads of France during the-- you've seen movies of it, of the Germans following the masses of people. And that's when we evacuated. That's when we left [FRENCH], going south, going where-- we had not really a specific goal. It was just to get away from--

The Germans.

--from the Germans. And the thing that is remarkable or-- about what happened in France is that during that period, most of the roads in France were absolutely clogged by civilians. So one of the reasons why the Germans were able to win that fast was because the French Army really had no way of getting anyplace fast because the roads were clogged by civilians.

Right.

And we made out to meet at a certain point.

The we being yourself and your aunt?

That is, my uncle at the time was someplace else. I don't quite remember all different instances, although I could find out. My aunt, who is still living in California, she has a fantastic memory in addition to her diaries, which would help her.

But at the time, I remember specifically the clogged roads and that my-- at the time, my aunt was together with her girl. The parents were in a different car. We were three cars going south. I was in the car with a befriended family. My aunt and the girl was in a different car. And the parents were in a different car.

As it is, in times of war and of turmoil, things go different than you think. And there came a point during that period where I didn't know where anybody else was. And neither did anybody else know from each other, meaning that I was by myself with this befriended family. My aunt and girl were someplace else. My uncle was someplace else. The

parents were somehow separated of my aunt so that the whole family unit-- nobody knew for several months where each other one was, to do through all different kinds of circumstances.

And at the time, I was in the so-called occupied zone. At the time, there was an occupied and unoccupied zone. And when we knew, subsequently, where the unoccupied zone was-- as a matter of fact, when we were still in the occupied zone, we-- the Germans overtook us. I remember the German Army and et cetera. But they didn't bother us at the time. But naturally, we knew that it wasn't going to last for very long because things were in a turmoil.

That must have been a very frightening experience to be all cut off--

Oh, yes.

--from one another.

Yes. As I said, the best I can describe it was very traumatic for all of us. I mean, looking back to it, it's like a bad dream. You don't think this thing can happen. You don't think this is real. This is something. This is-- but anyway, we went-- this befriended family, again, went at night, including myself, through a road which was still not guarded properly into the unoccupied zone. And where we finally landed up was a city called Limoges, which you probably heard of.

You mentioned that you had a car during this time.

Yes.

You were going by car.

Yes.

Were you able-- all this happened so quickly. Was there any problem as to-- I mean, where did you sleep? How did you eat?

Somehow, we managed during that time. Somehow, we-- as a matter of--

How did you? I mean, did you go to farmhouses?

I don't quite remember all the instances. But where we finally did land up happened to have been the farmhouse when we were still in the occupied zone. And in due time, that farmhouse was taken over by, I believe, some German officers. And when we knew that, that was another incentive for us to be one-- try to be one step ahead of them.

When the German officers came there, did they have any idea that you spoke German or were German?

No, no, because the befriended family, they-- while they were Jewish, they were originally French Jews. Yes. And so, as I said before, we went to the city called Limoges, where I was with this family. And the first link in the chain that brought us back together again, all of the whole family unit, as I said, the first link of that chain was I was walking in Limoges on the street, when somebody tapped me on the shoulder and said, hello, Gunther, which happened to have been my uncle.

That must have been an incredible moment.

I mean, like truth is stranger than fiction. And of course, this is something else distinctly in my mind. But to go back to my uncle who tapped me on the shoulder, subsequently, I understood that he was with the English Army. He was part of a unit of-- other than English persons, who were trying to help the English in doing whatever they could to-- against the Germans.

However, when the time came at the Dunkirk fiasco-- or victory, if you could call it, by the fact that they saved so many

lives, they are going back to England, the English and French had one thing to say to the people that tried to help. And they wanted to go with them, naturally, to England. In French, it's called [FRENCH], in German, [GERMAN]. And I guess, in English, you could call it just take care of yourself and go wherever you want to go. So they didn't want to-- they did not want to take him with them.

Now, this was the uncle that you had lived with in [PLACE NAME]?

That's correct.

And he had somehow made contact with this English unit or whatever?

Yes.

All right. So now, he met you in Limoges.

That's correct.

Was he there with his family?

No. He was by himself.

He was just by himself. OK.

He somehow, from Dunkirk, made his way to that particular town, somehow.

How he got to Dunkirk is-- that was during the time after you had split up?

Yes, yes.

OK. Now, while you were living in Limoges, what was living there like for you in terms of what was your daily routine?

Living in Limoges was, if you remember, I told you, it was the unoccupied zone at the time, which later on, also became occupied. This was a different time frame again. But at the time, it was unoccupied. And the living there was relatively normal. I went to school there, as a matter of fact.

This is the reason why I'm in the field that I am now. Living there, there was a school called ORT-- ORT. And there were three different things that we could study. And one of the things was electronics. And this is what I had taken up at that particular school in Limoges. And I stayed with that particular field.

Why did you go to an ORT school as opposed to a regular school in Limoges?

Because at the time, I was 16 years old, close to 16, or around there. Yes. And I felt that the time comes that I try to take up something with which to make a living.

Speaking of that, you had been living with this befriended family in Limoges.

Yes.

So again how did you all earn a living during that-- how long were you in Limoges, about a year and a half?

In Limoges, I would say I was about a year or so, maybe a little less than that.

How did you--

Because my total time in France was three years.

Right, OK.

Because when I came here, I was 16 years old.

For that year in France, how did you try and earn a living?

I had helped my uncle and aunt in the store in Strasbourg. I helped them in Limoges. As a matter of fact, I went to some other rather wealthy people who had a business in sacks-- potato sacks, grain sacks, rice, whatever. And I was there to support them and help in that way to make a living.

To make a living, yeah. You mentioned your aunt too. Did she come to Limoges?

My aunt, subsequently, also came to Limoges so that my the parents of my aunt, through circumstances that I don't remember, but somehow, as if by some miracle, between all of that happening-- because you have to have lived through this kind of a turmoil in France to realize that this was a miracle that five people-- it wasn't that much of a miracle of five people to be spread apart. But it was a miracle for five people to come back together again.

What were conditions in France? Were the-- food, I assume, was rather scarce because of the--

Excuse me.

Go ahead.

Conditions in France were quite bad. You had to get up 6 o'clock in the morning to stand in line for three hours to get a half a loaf of bread. Butter at that time was unheard of, it was margarine. And then it wasn't a pound or half a pound, it was in an eighth of a pound that had to last for maybe three days for a family of five persons. So everything was rationed. There was very little fresh fruit. And no matter, any forms of life-sustaining items were in scarcity.

And what also sticks in my mind quite a bit is that whatever you had for life-sustaining items, you had to stand in line-- not for 15 minutes, not for an hour, but for hours. And then when you finally did get it, you had ration coupons. And somehow, we were managing, despite it all.

You mentioned, if you had ration cards, you were also registered as living in Limoges.

Yes, yes, yes.

Right? Was that a problem as far as being-- not being a citizen?

No. No, it was not a problem because a lot of people were in the same shoes that we were at the time. Because you have to visualize that the southern part of France was now inundated with all kinds of people, with refugees, with people which, for their own reasons, wanted to get away. And so that there was a-- quite a sorted population in the southern part of France at that time.

You-- at this-- during this whole period, you were still in contact with your father?

During the time, that this major debacle took place, I was not in contact with my father due to the fact that the mail and everything else was an impossibility. However, when we were in Limoges, I again was in contact with my father, who at the time, still was in the same camp.

What happened to your father from [FRENCH], as far as you know?

Well, this is now a later time period. Eventually, got my visa, and I came to the United States.

How did you get the visa? I mean, how-- did you go about applying for it from Limoges?

Well, yes. Finally, I did get my visa. But the remarkable story on that is that there, the time frame is important. When I was-- when I did get the visa, it was something like two or three weeks before Pearl Harbor, the incidence of Japanese bombing.

And there were two ships berthed in Marseille, France reserved for the purpose of having people go that were supposed to go to America have a seat on them. And it so happened that I-- there were 300 persons waiting for 15 seats that were left on the second-to-last ship to leave France for the duration of the time that America went into the war. And 15-- I was one of the 15 of 300 that got a seat on one of the boats leaving France.

How did you arrange that?

Luck, I guess luck. And naturally, the boat was somewhat overloaded. And we went to-- from there to Oran, Africa. We went through Africa to Casablanca. From Casablanca, we went to Cuba, from Cuba to America. Because at that time, the reason why we went in this roundabout way is already, there was a danger of U-boats at the time. And so I can consider myself very lucky the way it did happen finally.

On the day that you heard that you had gotten the visa, how did you feel?

Oh, I felt great. Yes. Because it meant to go to America and to be rejoined with at least part of my family. On the other hand, I had mixed feelings because I knew my father was still in the camp. But to come back to my father, I did go to America. And I arrived in America two weeks after Pearl Harbor.

And as I said, there was only one more boat after that. And everything else was cut off for the war years. From-- there was no evacuation from France possible. Because by then, subsequently, later on, this is-- my aunt and my uncle still were in France. And my-- the parents also still were in France. And my uncle, subsequently, again had to hide because at that point, Germany occupied the whole of France.

How long before Germany occupied Limoges did you leave?

Oh, I guess, I would say, probably three, four months or so.

While you were in Limoges, did you realize that the unoccupied state was tentative? Did you think it was tentative?

Well, let's put it-- let me put it to you this way, the human spirit always hopes for the best. And that's the time-- that's-- you-- at any given moment, you hope for the best. And you somehow like to believe that wishful thinking. And this is one way to survive.

Who took you to Marseille from Limoges?

My uncle.

He did-- he took you?

Yes.

When you boarded the boat in Marseille, you mentioned that it was kind of overcrowded.

Yes.

And was the trip to the United States pleasant?

Yes, it was pleasant because of the expectations to be reunited, naturally, when you landed in New York.

Did your mother meet you at the boat?

Yes. My mother, my uncle-- several uncles-- and naturally, it was a very nice reunion. There's one thing that sticks in my mind. I went off the boat to meet them, say hello. And coming back to where I had my baggage, a very valuable blanket, a camel hair blanket was stolen right there. That was my--

Out of the suitcase?

No, it was on the suitcase. And since I was kind of taught and since I believed in trying to watch my belongings, I ran back into the boat, seeing if it was still there. But it was gone.

It was too easy to take, huh?

Yeah, right.

Did you go-- had your mother had an apartment at that point?

Yes. We were all living in-- at 162nd Street, near Broadway. And of course, I have mentioned this a number of times when relating back to the period, that when I came is, naturally, the instance of going on the ferry, and seeing the Statue of Liberty, and having the sight of the lower portion of New York, you would think that, well, this is the land of milk and honey, and liberty, and et cetera.

And unaware-- I remember, my uncle, he was coming back from the scarcities in France. I wasn't much of a smoker. I smoked once in a great while. So he gave me a cigarette. And I smoked a cigarette to the very end. And my uncle said, well, you don't do this in this country. You only smoke it half. And then you throw it away. And that somewhat impressed me, although I wasn't quite sure whether that was the thing to do.

Going back, just-- you mentioned this uncle here in the United States meeting you. On that day that your uncle took you to the boat in France, did he have expectations, the uncle in France? Did he have the hopes of reuniting with you in the United States?

Yes. They did, yes.

Was he-- when you said goodbye that day, what was his mood?

Well, his-- if I remember correctly, naturally, it was a hard thing to say goodbye because we have lived through a very trying period, which for me was like, this is the end. My trying period is over. Whereas for him, his future at that point was rather hazy.

You say-- you said that your trying period was over. What were your expectations of New York, of the United States? I should put it differently.

Well, it was like going from hell into heaven. But my expectations were limitless-- I mean, boundless.

When you came to this apartment in Washington Heights, how had your mother earned a living? All this time that she was alone with her mother?

She was working in a neighboring restaurant as a cook.

Had she done anything like this in Germany?

No. No. She was active in a butcher store, selling, et cetera.

What were your first impressions of their lifestyle in New York?

It was a very cozy arrangement. We had one room. We had several rooms, but divided with different family members. And it was a rather-- very happy family at the time.

When you say several rooms, you mean one rented the apartment. And then you divided the rooms?

Yes, that's correct.

Your grandmother was there too?

Still living, yes.

OK. How did you proceed to try and earn a living in the beginning?

Well, I remember writing my father, who was still in [FRENCH] at the time. I sometimes have a way of overblown sentences. But I had written a letter, saying in German, [GERMAN]. Do you understand?

Yes.

And so I said, well, I'm going to go out and shine shoes or whatever I can do to help earn a living. And it so happened that looking back, I-- one of my first jobs were to bring out clothes from a member of the tabernacle called Frederick. I don't know if you remember them. And subsequently, I was working in a food market. I was working there.

Bring out clothes, you mean-- was it a--

Delivering clothes. It was delivering clothes.

Was it a tailor?

A cleaning store.

OK.

And the food market, and I was working as a busboy.

How did you get these jobs?

By asking the different areas around. And I felt that it's time for me to start helping the family and start to make a living.

And did you speak English?

No. As a matter of fact, at that time, I was in an age that I could have entered George Washington High School. And at the time, they said, well, he cannot speak a word in English. We cannot take him. And the same thing went for a junior high school. And I finally ended up-- I was 16 at the time. I landed up with children seven and eight years old in a public school in a class for new Americans. But most of the children were seven, eight, nine years old.

That must have been awful.

It was awful. But I felt comfortable knowing that in no time at all, I would know enough to speak, which I subsequently did, within three months, to master the language enough that I could enter a high school, which I did at the Samuel Gompers Vocational High School in the Bronx, where I continued my studies in electronics.

I see. Did you-- after this time in the school to learn English, did you want to go to Samuel Gompers? Or did you want to go to George Washington? Or was there a choice?

Well, I think, after I was able to speak a relatively intelligible English, I probably could have had the choice. But I felt that I wanted to right away enter into something that would be more towards making a living, which I felt was the more practical thing to do.

You meant-- you remembered the electronics from the art school in Limoges.

Oh, yeah, sure. Sure.

That was what you wanted to do.

Yes. I became hooked.

When you left Samuel Gompers, how did you gain your first opportunity in electronics?

Well, the history of my studying is rather fragmented. I couldn't finish my studies in Germany. I couldn't finish my studies in France. And again, here, I was in-- when I went to Samuel Gompers Vocational High School, I jumped grades from the first grade into the third grade, from the third grade into the fifth. Because as I gained more knowledge and mastery of the English language, the teachers realized that I wasn't really in my proper grade. And I possibly could have gotten into the seventh, which at this time was interrupted due to the fact that I went into the Navy.

Right. OK. Hold on just a second. Let me backtrack for a minute. When you went to Samuel Gompers, one thought occurs to me-- that was not the neighborhood high school. So you were more with American kids than with German Jewish refugee kids, as in George Washington.

Yes.

Did you-- was-- did you find that difficult at all in being with mostly Americans?

No.

Did they realize that you were of German background?

I suppose so, but it didn't make itself felt in any way.

They didn't make you to feel as-- I used the word as a refugee or as a German?

No, although I remember one time, when I went-- that was before I had a somewhat mastery of the English language. That was before. But I was able to speak somewhat fragmented. I was in a shoe store. And I recall, for some reason, which I don't remember, this woman said something to me about being a quote "refugee" and all the connotations that it had with it at the time. And I remember, with as little English as I knew, I gave her a piece of my mind, which I felt I was very able to do at that time.

When you say all the connotations that went with refugee, what does that mean? What did it mean?

Undesirable, in the case of whoever was using that word-- somebody undesirable that was not invited into the community.

Today, if we-- if our kids would have to go through some of the experiences that we're talking about now-- in Germany, you're undesirable because you're a Jew, in France, you're undesirable because you're a German, in the United States, you're undesirable because you're a refugee--



Yes.

--that's pretty hard to take after a while, in terms of it-- in terms of your kids, if you had to think of them going through that.

Well, I tried to tell my girls of some of the events that had happened, but not in the way-- come here, I want to tell you something. I tried to tell them in a way of a-- during the course of something that is just happening and casually relating to them of what it was in the times past to be a Jew. And I'm sure they got the message. And this being just here this morning, I feel that by having this interview, I probably am doing something better having this interview here than being in a synagogue discussing it.

OK. In terms of-- you mentioned, too, that when you went from-- when you were in Gompers in the seventh term, you got your notice from-- your greetings note.

Yes, yes.

You were only here a couple of--

Two years.

Was it two years?

Two years, yes.

How did you feel when you were drafted?

Well, this was another episode that was rather funny, as it turned out. At the time, the enlisted people, the people that were drafted, had to go to the Grand Central Station. And you go through a routine of processing. And there were two tables left that you had to go through.

And the table before the last table, I was asked, well, in what branch of the service would you like to go? And I said, well, I like to go into the Army Signal Corps because I felt that was the closest thing to my chosen field.

Oh, I said, always, I said-- I've said to myself, oh, that's great. And then in the last table that you went through, he says, well, what branch of-- what-- yeah, what branch of the service? I said-- and I said, in the army. Oh, no, what would you-- I'm sorry, where would you like to go? What theater of war would you like to go? I say, well, I would like to go to Europe. Because I had every reason to go to Europe.

And so the last table, he said, well, you're in the United States Navy. And I say, what? Here, you asked me where I like to go. And you say, I'm in the Navy. I said, what branch is in the-- what-- oh, you're in the Seabees. I said, what's the Seabees? I said, I wanted to go in the Army Signal Corps. He says, the Seabees are something like the Army Signal Corps. OK, I'll take the Seabees, although I had no choice over it.

Why--

PS, I did not go to Europe. I went to the Pacific area.

Why did you want to go back to Europe?

Well, since it was a matter of more-- closer relationship with the-- that particular war theater than to the Asiatic theater, which was-- which meant in the Japanese area, I felt more-- I had a reason to be in that area than there. So that's why I chose Germany-- I mean, to chose Europe.

Did you feel at all that--

And I felt that if I had to shoot at anybody, if necessary, I'd rather shoot somebody-- a German rather than a Japanese.

OK. Understandable. When you were drafted, this must have been particularly hard, in a way, on your mother. I mean, she had said goodbye once.

Yes. Yes.

And to say goodbye again--

Yes, this is true. But in the time frame that we're talking about now, this was 1943. And I must go come back a little earlier and say the history of what happened to my father. I did write several letters when I was still here. And then I did not hear from him anymore.

And subsequently, the indirect news that I received from him is because my aunt, and uncle, and family that were living in France came to the United States and gave me some correspondence that he still wrote from that particular camp in southern part of France. And thereby, I had a lot of more different news and things how my father felt. He was a rather very good writer of cards and letters.

When you say how your father felt, did he express in those letters his feelings?

He was very literate in all sorts of ways. And now, more so than ever, rereading some of the letters-- as you grow older, you read more into it and understand it more so of what things were at the time. Even when you're 18, or 19, or 20 years old, your comprehension, and your understanding, and your feelings are different when you're 40, or 45, or 50.

And anyway, I-- since I didn't hear from him anymore, my aunt brought the news that they didn't know either of what had happened to him. And of course, it was assumed that he died. Where, we don't know, how we didn't know. She mentioned something about trucks that went north and a lot of people that never arrived at the-- wherever they were going to go.

You never were able to get word through the Red Cross?

Well, since that time, it was extremely painful to go into the matter of what happened to him. Because he knew what the eventual result was going to be anyway. And my family and I let things lie for a while.

And it was only in the last six years-- about six years ago is when I received through the-- I was getting to be more interested again because it was something that-- it was just too painful to reopen. But anyway, about six years ago, a friend of mine wrote to the Red Cross.

And at that time, I received the news that I have papers to show that he went by train. And this is reinforced by what he wrote because I have his last card to me and to my family and friends with the train to Auschwitz, where he died. And I remember the last card he wrote, that it was a train with women, children, cattle train of all.

He wrote the card from the train? I don't know if I want it later. When you-- before you went to Samuel Gompers High School, or during the time you were there, you had odd jobs in Washington Heights.

Yes

Is that-- you mentioned the shoe-- no, you mentioned the bringing out from Fredericks.

Yes.

And so on.

Yes.

And then you went to high school. And during the last term, you got your notice.

Yes.

OK.

It wasn't-- I had several terms to go. But it was before I finished my studies.

That's what I meant. OK. So you found yourself in the Seabees.

Yes.

OK. Typical army aplomb.

Yes.

OK. When you did-- did you go overseas? You mentioned it.

Yes. Right away, I have to recall something that has happened. At the time, it-- you had a five-year wait to become an American citizen, I believe.

Right.

However, the-- I was in the Navy about three months, or four-- no, it was more than that. It was about six months. Anyway, it doesn't matter. And so I was in the country for about two and a half years. And when you had to go overseas, at the time, there was a law that you had to be an American citizen.

And naturally, I was looking forward to becoming an American citizen, except I didn't know that I was going to be an American citizen that soon because there was one day that they took all the aliens of my company, or several other companies, and we went-- we were stationed near San Francisco.

We went to San Francisco to United States District Court. And we were really boarding up, and studying about all the questions, and about the presidents, and the States, and whatever, Constitution. And so we were rather very surprised. We were lining up in front of the judge.

And when the judge said, well-- he said, well, I know what-- you know what you're here for. And you probably studied for this very well. So I will not bother you with that. And the mere fact that you are in the service and that you will be going overseas is good enough for me to grant you American citizenship. And before you know it, the whole thing was over. And you were American citizen right there and then.

Did you go to this court with other German Jewish boys mostly?

Yes. Yes.

Were there many in your company?

I would say, proportionately, yes.

Were you shipped overseas with them too?

Yes, to Hawaii.

Did you-- the reason I ask that is did you tend to stick together? Or did you socialize with mostly the other guys?

Well, we had a tendency of getting together. But there was no distinct effort made to just stick to our crowd, so to speak. Because in the real sense of the word, it was-- if I want to digress slightly-- and at this point, I can say, of what is most wrong with America, if I were to say it in one word, I'd say it is irresponsibility. I could explain that a little bit further and maybe later on.

And then, again, what is most right with America, I would say, it is freedom. And if you wanted to taste freedom, even unconsciously, as somebody who has come through something like that is to intermingle with as many groups as possible and to understand other groups of people. And when I was in the service, this is exactly what I did. And this is exactly what others did to understand this great country we call America.

You mentioned the word irresponsibility. You said, we could come back to it later.

Yes.

But in what way did that show itself then?

At that time, I would not have said what I am saying now, this word irresponsibility. I am saying through the 35 or some-odd years that I am living in this country. And I could elaborate. And now, I'm-- what I'm saying now, also, you have to understand in the context of this. I have not lived in any other country. And this may very well be the case in other countries as well. This may apply for other countries as well.

But I can only talk from knowledge, firsthand experience of this country. Countries as you knew them 30 years ago or how I perceive them, people in general were very responsible. People in general here are responsible.

But ingrained in it is a irresponsibility in certain areas of government. There is a irresponsibility in throwing paper on the street. There is a irresponsibility in city government. There is irresponsibility as far as some aspects of unionism is concerned and other areas. And to be responsible, especially in the areas of, for example, your job-- a job, at the time, meant to be absolutely responsible for what you do and take responsibility for it.

However, here, it is not how much you can do for the job in a lot of areas, but how little you can do and get away with it, and not to be proud of the type of work that you are doing. Now, again, I'm saying this of what I know from here. This may very well be the case in different countries now. So this is not a put-down as such. But it is as I see it.

But this is a way to weigh against the good sides of America. The good sides of America by far outweighs the negative sides. And if I-- if somebody would say, I should go back to Germany, I would rather have bread and water for the rest of my life in America than to go to Germany, with the possible exception of Israel, than any other country. Sometimes, somebody that you love, you can criticize. And you feel like you have a right to criticize because your love is only so much to grade a foreign. And this is the way I feel about America.

It's a nice sentiment, in terms of-- do you feel that America afforded you the opportunity that you hoped it would have?

Yes. I say with certain limitations that if you put enough effort into what you're doing, you can get as far as your knowledge, your intelligence, and some of the breaks that can bring you. Of course, there's one thing that I know at this time, this is not the land of milk and honey. But it is the land of freedom. Again, certain special areas in the country, freedom is not as-- is still a word-- it's something that you would like to have in certain minority groups. But by and large, it's something that I can say this is what America is.