

When and where were you born?

I was born in Frankfurt, around 1900, approximately.

Can you tell me a little bit about your education in Frankfurt?

I went to school only, in Frankfurt, one year. And then we moved to Nuremberg. And I went to school in Nuremberg for approximately five, six years, first to the public school and then to the high school.

And I think in 1912, 1913, we moved to Berlin. And I finished my high school education, which was interrupted by military service in the First World War. And when I returned, I went to the Berlin University and studied law and economics.

OK, let me backtrack just a little bit. You mentioned that your family moved from Frankfurt to Nuremberg to Berlin. Was your father in the type of business that-- what type of business was he?

He was a merchant, yeah. He was a merchant.

Is that why you moved?

Yeah, certainly, on account of his position.

When you say a "merchant," what type of--

He was a factory, a furniture factory representative and was a salesman, I think practically all over the country.

When you went into the First World War, can you remember the end of the war and the feeling within the army after the Germans had lost?

When? After the war?

Yeah, after you were finished with the First World War.

When I came back?

What was morale like in Germany?

Morale was not very high. I was pretty low, and they had suffered a lot and didn't have any food and so on, so on. But that adjusted very fast, very fast because I know when I entered the university in Berlin, there was right away a very strong nationalistic trend.

I remember the first president of the Berlin University was a very famous historian, history teacher. And I think it was the first time when I went there. And I remember he delivered a speech after he was ordained as president from the balcony of the Berlin University. And he tore up the Treaty of Versailles, and it was a very strong nationalistic feeling among the students, too.

Was this true of the Jewish students as well?

I wouldn't say that the Jewish students weren't very significant then. They didn't have any-- it was a much stronger feeling and a much stronger attitude among the right-side nationalists, the officers' sons and the officers returned from the war. And they know they had already beatings up with socialists and left wingers and so on.

It started pretty soon. What you can say, I think it was the origin of Hitlerism, which it was approximately 1923,

something like that. But something like Hitlerism or other time in Germany militarism and discipline and all this discipline.

Did you feel any antisemitism while you were in the University of Berlin?

I didn't feel. You didn't have to feel it. I remember there were outstanding teacher there who didn't admit any Jews to their classes. Sure there were antisemitism. To a certain extent, was all the time in the army, too, when I was in the war.

How did the antisemitism in the army or at the university make itself felt to you, personally?

Not personally. I didn't have any personally bad experiences, I wouldn't say. But generally, it happened.

Did you have mostly Jewish friends at the University of Berlin or non-Jewish as well?

I had Jewish friends, but one of my best-- no, at the Berlin University, I had mostly Jewish friends. But later on, I got a very good Gentile friend, who stayed, we were friends. And we stayed together until after Hitler. And he had a lot of Jewish friends. And he was always an outstanding Jewish fighter. And he was finally, president of the Lawyers Association of Berlin.

And the first time I had an opportunity to go to Germany, on account of his attitude towards my parents, he took care of them. I transferred him all my assets I had, and he took care of them.

I paid him a visit. In fact, I paid him a visit twice. It was the only reason why I went to Germany. Nothing like that happened again. He died now. He was an outstanding friend of mine.

You mentioned that you were studying both law and economics. Did these two usually go together to become a lawyer?

No, you didn't have to, but normally, we studied them together.

When you finished studying law, did you go into your own practice?

No. When you finished studying law, you had to go through a three years practice as a-- how you call it here-- as a--

Clerk?

Clerk or assistant. You were transferred to the courts, from the court of the lowest instance up to the higher courts. And you had to take six months abroad to [INAUDIBLE] a job in a lawyer's office.

And before you could do that, you had to make an examination. And after you finished with your practical training, you had to make another examination to what they call the Great State Examination at the Ministry of Justice in Berlin. And then you were admitted to the bar or as a judge or something like that. And that, what I did first, too, I worked approximately two years as an auxiliary judge at the courts in Berlin. And then I started practicing as a lawyer.

Did you start on your own, or did you start a firm or with a few other friends?

I got, by a former judge of when I was a law clerk or assistant to him, he had a relative who was a lawyer. And he got me in touch with him, and I got an office with him. But generally, I was independent.

Were most of your clients Jewish or Gentile?

Couldn't say that. I would say-- it's a long time.

Mixed?

Mixed. They were mixed, yeah.

Did you practice a particular kind of law?

Especially commercial law.

Meaning for business clients and-- when Hitler-- before I go on, as you were in the University of Berlin and as you were beginning your practice of law, did you also partake in the cultural events in Berlin? The opera?

Sure, very, very much. I attended very much theater. And from the University of Berlin, we had a special office of the opera there, and we got tickets there for reduced prices and so on. I attended a lot of--

That's the way I started my interest in music. It was very strong, because we had, at that time, an outstanding orchestra, outstanding conductors. I heard Nikisch. I heard Furtwaengler. I heard Weingartner. I heard all famous singers. So I went practically every week. It was opposite the university, the Berlin State Opera.

You then started your law practice, somewhere around 1925?

No, no it took much longer. It started approximately 1930. In between, I was at the court, as a judge.

OK. OK. As you were building up your practice, when Hitler came to power in 1933, how did that first affect you?

It didn't affect me so much as other Jewish lawyers, who were disbarred. Because I had participated in the First World War. And these people who had participated in the war were exempt from disbarment at first. And we were disbarred only, I think, in 1938, with the Nazi laws, Nazification of Germany.

Did you belong to a lawyers association in 1933?

When you were sworn in as a lawyer, you belonged anyway, right away to the Lawyers Association. You couldn't do without that. That was officially an official act. When you were sworn in, you were a member of the Lawyers Association, subject to the regulations and all due to these limitations and all these-- what do you call it-- honorary laws and all these things which were worked out over the years by lawyers associations. It was a very strong organization.

Was this only for Berlin or for lawyers in Germany as a whole?

No, it was every practically, I think it was every city had its own lawyers, but I don't think there were any lawyers who did not belong to a local lawyers or a state lawyers association. I know only from Berlin, and they had a Berlin Law Association.

How did the Lawyers Association react to this original disbarment of some of the lawyers?

They didn't do anything because the Lawyers Association, right away, was cleaned from Jews and was only composed of national socialist lawyers. That's the way it started.

In 1933 already?

Right away, 1933.

But early on.

Early on, but it increased and increased, the influence, until finally, all Jews were disbarred practically. And they couldn't add, any longer, even the ones who were first temporarily admitted as a participant in the war. They couldn't add any more as what they called lawyers, but they called them, I think, counselors or something like that. And it was only a very limited part who were admitted. That was nothing, practically.

What happened to your practice between 1933 and 1938?

What do you mean?

Were you still able to--

There was no, I think up to 1938, when the strict Nazification laws came, Jewish lawyers were no longer permitted to represent Gentile parties. But up to then, it was no different.

During that five-year time, did you think of emigrating? Between '33 and '38.

No, I thought from emigrating since the Kristallnacht.

1938.

And that was, I was, among other things, liquidating a former client of mine, who had a banking business, who emigrated to the United States. And I had my office at the Kurfürstendamm. And besides, the sign of my lawyer's firm, he had a little sign for his firm.

And at that time, or at that date, I think it was November 9, 1938, when they destroyed all Jewish business, they invaded my office, too, because they had the name of this banking firm. And they threw my files out of the window and destroyed the furniture and so on.

But I was very lucky because my window went outside, and the next courtyard belonged to the Chinese Embassy. So everything fell in ex-territorial district. We had a chance to pick it up again.

Before we go to what happened to you on Kristallnacht--

Nothing, because I remember I was, a friend of mine called me by phone and told me, don't go to the corridor, so on. So I didn't go. And the next day, everything was already settled. We couldn't go anymore, at least for some time.

You were not in your office either on that day, on Kristallnacht?

No, I was not, because that was the day when they destroyed it.

Yeah. Where were--

It was at night.

Where were you?

Probably, I don't know, at home or somewhere. I don't know.

But they didn't come to your apartment?

To my apartment, they did not come. I don't think they came to any apartments. See, I think they went only after businesses, offices, and so on. And it didn't even go after lawyers' offices. I got involved in that thing only on account of that lousy little sign, banking office, the name of the firm I represented.

Up to 1938, up to Kristallnacht, did you see signs, juden [GERMAN].

Sure, any place. All over the Kurfürstendamm. The sign, Jews and dogs are not desired here, something like that. All over the place. And I do not know when it started. There was a time since you were no longer admitted to go to theaters

or to concerts or so on. And they had a special Jewish theater organization,

Kulturbund.

Kulturbund.

Did you attend performances?

Yeah, I was a member of the Kulturbund.

What was your attitude between 1933 and 1938 about how long Hitler would stay?

Look, you didn't have any definite signs, you know? I just remember one speech of Hitler, which was very true. He said we had many changes of government in Germany. One government was following the next one, and the others went into the same direction. When we took over the Nazis, the general opinion of the German people was it's going to be the same. What they did not notice was that we took the train, when we took it over into an entirely different direction, that was a basic difference, the Nazification. And how long they--

Well, what I meant by that is did you think he wouldn't last long?

There were no signs that it would be a very short temporary experience because the longer the time lasted, the stronger got the regiment of it. And it got to that extreme that he thought he could take over the whole world. And then he got into this crazy idea to start a war.

Yeah. As a lawyer, did you notice any difference in the attitude of your Gentile clients?

No, not generally. Not generally speaking. Couldn't say that.

So you represented still the same businesses that you had represented?

As long as it was legally permitted, sure.

Yeah, but I meant from the point of view of those businesses, who were owned--

I didn't lose any client because I was a Jew.

That's what I meant. OK. Did you know anybody, personally, through business that became a party member?

Everybody. My very best friend, I told you, had to become a party member in order to stay as a lawyer. The lawyer had the National Socialist Lawyers Organization, too. And by law, in order to be able to function as a lawyer, they had to be a member of the Lawyers Organization, the National Socialist Lawyers Organization. And they had on their stationery, a signed member of the National Socialist Lawyers Organization. You had to have it.

Speaking of that, how did you, on your stationery?

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing until later on, when the thing came about with the name, with Israel, and with the Kennkarte. You had to bring down the number of your identification paper, which you had to, I think you had to obtain it from the police department or somewhere.

Anyway, you had to print it on your stationery. You had to print it, Israel. And you had to print it, the number of your

Kennkarte, you know?

Of your what?

Kennkarte identification.

Oh, Kennkarte. You still have it?

I think so, maybe.

In practicing law during this time, you were never then bothered by a Gestapo or an SS or anybody for being in an exposed position?

I was liquidator of the Jewish newspaper, in Berlin. And the newspaper, being under the control and the supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda, of Dr. Goebbels, we had to deal with this ministry, and we were controlled.

And I remember, when the owner did not come back from a trip to the United States, I was called to the Gestapo, too. And I had a hearing, but I was released right away. Nothing happened to me, and thank God. I never came into a concentration camp or anything. The same thing happened to my parents and to my brother.

You mean that they were never taken.

They were never taken. After I left, they were taken to a concentration camp in, what is it,

Sachsenhausen?

I forget the name. Where they perished, all of them.

Oh. Auschwitz?

Oh, no. Not Auschwitz.

Theresienstadt?

It was most famous.

It will come to you.

Theresienstadt.

Yeah, OK. When did you realize that you would have to leave?

Not until Kristallnacht, 1938.

How did you make preparations to leave?

I got in touch with the brother of my mother and got an affidavit, two affidavits.

Two affidavits?

Yeah, I think you had to have a relative affidavit and a confirming or something like that.

OK. You were not married at this time?

No, I married here. And then after I got away, it took me approximately, I think, to 1940.

Before you left?

Before I could leave.

Between Kristallnacht and 1940, when you left, did things get worse for you?

Sure. I was no longer a lawyer. I could not practice in court. I did some dissolution business and did something which was not in court. There were other legal work to be done.

Yes, that's what I--

That should not require activity in the courts.

But for whom?

For Jewish people, I could do it at that time, only, anymore. Because I think since the Nuremberg Law, there was a strict separation between Jewish and Gentile clients. And the Jewish consultant, they were lawyers, they could only represent Jewish clients.

By this time, what type of work were you doing mostly? Was it mostly liquidation or dissolution?

Liquidation, emigration, tax work, and so on. Contracts.

How long did it take for you to get this visa between the time-- you applied right after Kristallnacht?

Pardon me.

How long did it take to get the visa?

I think it took me approximately a year. I would say something like a year or something like that, I think. Wait a moment. OK, I got half a year until a year. I left in May '40.

During that year, were you at all in any life-threatening situations?

No, no. I never got any life-threatening. You could be arrested any moment but when it was not kosher, you didn't stay at home or anything but nobody came and asked for me.

I was very lucky in that respect. I was not harmed or anything like that . That's what I--

What you mean. You didn't need it.

What?

You didn't need it. You were afraid, anyway, because everybody could take you on the street or wherever you were. We didn't have any protection

Did you consider emigrating to any place other than America?

No, I didn't have any connection somewhere else.

And I moved. My uncle, there, visited us a long time and repeatedly and came and stayed with my mother, their sisters, and so on. That's why I knew my uncles.

You also mentioned you had a brother, and your parents, did they also apply for visas to emigrate?

They could not, no. They didn't have any affidavits. They stayed in Berlin, and they were taken to concentration camp later on, Theresienstadt.

But this uncle was not in a position to provide more affidavits.

I don't know. I don't know. It was hard enough for me to get one affidavit, and they said they could not supply any more every day, which, I don't know what happened anyway

I was not in-- when I came over, I didn't make any money. I couldn't take out money much or I was not able to supply them with affidavits.

Yes, I know.

Did they consider emigrating anyplace, like Shanghai?

You know, where to?

Did you belong to a congregation in Berlin?

You belonged anyway. Officially, you belong to the Great Berlin Jewish Congregation. You were a member,

But did you belong? Do you remember any sermons, any rabbis' sermons?

Sure, sure. I went to the synagogue, LÄ¼tzowstrasse, which was under the Rabbi Leo Baeck.

Do you remember Dr. Baeck talking about immigration or talking about the situation in Germany from the pulpit?

I do not know if they were talking about it. There were rabbis were talking about very distinctly. There were rabbis, for instance, Mr. Prince was talking outstanding. Mr. Nussbaum were in Los Angeles. and New York. And there were other people, too, not rabbis, but other Jewish politicians who were speaking out very distinctly about getting out.

Yeah. Did you have any direct contact or anything to do with the Reichsvertretung or the [GERMAN]?

The father of my wife had jumped into doing [GERMAN]. I think he's [? reported highers ?] or something like that.

On the day that you left Germany, how old were you when you left? About 40, something like that? Yes.

Yeah, approximately.

On the day that you left Germany, after having built your career in Germany, how did you feel about having to leave it all? Frankly speaking, I didn't feel too anxious to get out, because I knew nothing better is expecting me here. So I was very much concerned about it.

And finally, I had worked long enough in order to accomplish a lawyership and building up a practice and leaving my parent there. I left, but I had to, what I had saved.

Were you only able to leave with the 10 reichsmark?

Yeah, sure, and what were some assets, personal effects, permanent assets.

You mentioned that you had transferred some of your assets to this other lawyer.

Pardon me?

You mentioned that you had transferred some of these assets to--

Which I left to a friend of mine, sure. And he took care of them. He provided them when they needed him. And it worked out all right.

Could you have legally transferred those assets at the time to your parents or to your brother, or was it better for you to do it this way?

Look, if I would have transferred it to them directly, you wonder all the time a danger that they would confiscate Jewish property.

Could you repeat that about transferring the property? You preferred to transfer it to your friend because of the danger.

I preferred to transfer it to a friend because he was a Gentile, and Jewish property was always under an emergency of being confiscated without any recompensation. So my parents would have been without anything. And by him keeping it for them and providing it for them, and he turned them over as long as they were there, 100% honestly, was a much better way than transferring in a bank account, which could have been confiscated the same way they could have done it with mine.

Had they, at any time, put your assets under sparkontos, or had they, in any way, confiscated valuables up to then?

I do not know. I don't know. I do not know.

I meant, after Kristallnacht, there was a--

I do not know. I do not know. I do not think they did it. And practically, why because? The assets insofar as money was concerned was no longer in their name. And if suddenly, they had a bank account of their own all the time, if that was confiscated or if was not confiscated, I do not know. I don't know if they confiscated, if they confiscated all. It's a long time ago.

You mentioned you knew or you didn't expect too much when you came to New York. What kind of expectations did you have when you came to America?

I knew one thing. I wouldn't study law again. That was one thing.

Why did you think that?

If it was right, I think it was a mistake. So when I came over to New York, where my first cousin lived, he thought the best thing for me to do is getting out of New York. And he took me to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where my uncle lived. Because he thought-- and it might have been right-- I get, first, acclimated to the United States climate faster. I knew some English. I get faster to that. So anyway, I stayed, I think, three years in Fort Wayne.

How long were you in New York when you first came?

Three months, approximately. Three, four months.

How were you able to support yourself during that time?

Well, my money. I had my black money, which I had brought over previously before I left. I didn't have any outside support. It was not much, but it was enough to keep me alive.

Just you can tell me if you mind this question. How did you make that black money transference?

By a colleague of mine, who transferred a lot for himself. And he took mine along. And I left, and I think I have it in [INAUDIBLE], in Amsterdam, with an American banking firm.

And they made the transfer for you?

They made the transfer for me, when I was here.

When you went to Fort Wayne, Indiana, how did you start to earn a living there?

Pardon me?

When you went to Fort Wayne, Indiana, how did you start to earn a living there?

I got a job as a bookkeeper My cousin was born in Fort Wayne. He had another friend there. And by one of the acquaintance, I got a bookkeeper's job at a taxi company. And I stayed on this job as long as I stayed in Fort Wayne. Until I came over, I transferred, moved to New York.

When you were in Fort Wayne, you mentioned going to school.

To the Indiana University Extension, I went.

Why did you go to school?

In order to study accountancy.

What made you decide on accounting, rather than law, again?

In the first place, it was easier. And it you seemed to be able to earn money faster. And first of all, it didn't cost as much money than studying law here at the Columbia University or anything like that.

And then we were warned about the American lawyer, our opinion about the American lawyership from Germany was not too good and so on. And so I didn't feel too strong about lawyership. But I think it was a mistake anyway. Because when you look backwards, you cannot compare lawyership with accounting or law with accounting.

While you were at the University of Indiana, did you notice any difference between being in school in America and schooling in Germany?

Well, sure it's a difference. Wasn't I different?

What did you--

It was a different subject. I was finished studying law and I think I started, already, something like that, a little bit privately in Germany, from a course from the Jewish congregation, some kind of bookkeeping.

You mean with the thought of emigrating?

Yeah.

Well, what I meant was what things did you notice most about the differences between education in Germany and in the United States?

Look, in so far as that is concerned, the outstanding difference was I think about the-- how would you say about the-- it's

not only reputation, about the knowledge and the whole standard. The whole standard of these teachers in Fort Wayne, Indiana with these teachers at the University of Berlin was a difference like day and night. What there, a professor wouldn't have been a high school teacher here to Germany.

You felt the standards in Berlin were much higher.

Higher. How is was at different universities, I do not know. But I know all these, not only Berlin, had very high standards. But generally speaking, when you read the literature of other college professors outside, they were very high.

In Germany, a lawyer was a very prestigious position.

Entirely different from here. Because he was, and that's what I told you, from the beginning, he was under the supervision and under the regulations of the Lawyers Association. And if you did something which was not in accordance with the laws of standards, you were disbarred. And you couldn't afford doing that.

You were reported, and the Lawyers Association started an examination and a procedure whereby you could be disbarred on account of this dishonest behavior against the standard of a lawyer, ethical standards.

So the standard, the ethical standards were entirely different, and you couldn't engage in work lawyers are doing here. You couldn't do commercial work. You couldn't be an agent. You couldn't be an administrator of buildings or anything like that, or you couldn't be a crook.

What I meant is that from coming from such a prestigious position in Germany, it must have been very difficult to adjust.

It was something different. There was nothing else you could do. You could take it or leave it. That's what they said to us. If you don't like it, why don't you get to Germany? That was the only thing, the only reasonable thing to do.

We couldn't try to elevate the American lawyership to the standard of the German lawyer or something different. The German government was different from the American government. I don't say it was better or something like that. It was different. And we certainly would have been foolish to think we could practice here at the standards of the Germans.

You couldn't have taken the competition, which was much freer than over there. Yeah, you couldn't do any competing. There was nothing. There was no competition. If you started unfair competition among lawyers, you were out.

While you were in Fort Wayne, did you like living in Fort Wayne, Indiana?

I wouldn't say I was-- I was not used to living in a smaller place, like Berlin. And I came from the standard of Berlin with all the cultural features and so on and so on and that was missing in Fort Wayne. And to a certain extent that was, of course, a drawback. We had a Jewish circle from the Fort Wayne Jewish congregation, and we had some more refugees there, and we got along.

Speaking of the word "refugee," were you ever made to feel as a refugee in Fort Wayne in any way?

Sure.

How? How did you feel yourself a refugee?

In the first place, you didn't have that, but no we don't want-- no, I didn't have-- I was not a citizen at that time. I became a citizen, a long time after I was here in New York.

That was a main feature and on account of that, after the war started, you had trouble getting employment because they didn't employ non-American citizens and even enemies, German enemies.

You were considered an enemy alien?

I was considered an alien. You didn't have to be considered an enemy alien. I don't know. I don't think they could see that Jews as enemy aliens, but as refugees. And you had limitations on account of that. There were people who did not employ, people who came from Hitler.

Speaking of that, after the war broke out, did you speak mostly German in Fort Wayne?

No, never. No difference. It was no different. The American Jews didn't make any difference before and after the war.

No, no, I don't mean the American Jews, but I mean Americans, in general. If they heard you speaking German?

The refugees in Fort Wayne, we are so little that most, I don't think that most people over there didn't even know it. But there was a very strong pro-German feeling in Fort Wayne, because I think 70% of the Fort Wayne population was German descent.

And I remember by the time when I arrived in Fort Wayne, it was about the time when Paris failed. And they were very much elated about the Germans. And they were almost sure they are going to win the war. And they didn't feel too bad about that.

Did that surprise you?

Sure, that was surprising to a certain extent to me, because when I came from New York, I was entirely different.

You mean in New York, you, of course. It was much more Jewish.

Sure. And first of all, it was, New York was the city of Roosevelt. And Fort Wayne was a very reactionary Republican community. I remember I went to that far.

I had another first cousin in Fort Wayne, who had, for a long time, a bookkeeper's job with the Fort Wayne Gas Company. And Fort Wayne had, at that time, and a long time a very right wing Republican administration.

And I think it was the second term, Roosevelt's, when Fort Wayne went Democratic, too. And my cousin, on account of being a bookkeeper in the Fort Wayne city administration, she lost her job because she was a Republican.

Every street cleaner lost his job, who had not the right political association. You don't have any idea how far that went there.

Yeah, I can see that.

Lousy bookkeeping job, she lost it because she was a registered Republican. She was a very outspoken Republican. She was very far to the right.

Did you get a job then in Fort Wayne as an accountant or as a bookkeeper?

No, by that time, I didn't study the accountancy. I studied. I got a bookkeeper's job.

Was it, for you, a very-- it must have been-- I'm trying to, in my own mind, it must have been a very difficult time in terms of adjusting. Was it very depressing for you to have come from such a cultural place, like Berlin, to Fort Wayne?

In the first place that it was something missing, you know, when you couldn't go to a show, when you couldn't go to a theater, when you couldn't choose what concert you are going to there and what conductor you agree with, what opera you're going to see. That was missing. That's number one.

But the main thing was, of course, the money. In Germany, you didn't have to ask about money because you made it and you had it, to a certain extent. But here it was different. I didn't need anybody, because I had enough to support myself, but it was entire different future,

It was an entirely different feeling, too.

Of course. You had an entire different attitude to a life. You couldn't do and go where you wanted to. Couldn't go on vacation. You couldn't do it. You depended, to a large extent, on yourself or on, I wouldn't say charity, but on goodwill of other congregation members and so on.

What made you decide to leave Fort Wayne and come back to New York?

In the first place, my job in Fort Wayne was only temporary. I think on account of the fellow who left the war, who left for military service. And when he came back, I lost my job. And fooling around any longer in Fort Wayne, that I did not want to.

And meanwhile, I got married. And my wife and I decided we try first to go to New York. And if that wouldn't have worked out, we would have gone to California, where she had relatives.

Did you meet your wife in Fort Wayne?

No, I met her here.

Here, in New York?

Yeah. She is the daughter of a physician in Wiesbaden, who was a client of mine, who was a client of a friend of mine. And a friend of mine left, and I took over his practice. And that's the way we got-- I met her father in Wiesbaden, and that's we got--

In contact.

Yeah. She lived, by the way, by that time, in Los Angeles. And she was visiting the World's Fair, here, from Los Angeles. And at that time, it was a time when I arrived and when I met her.

When you came to New York, how did you start to make a living in New York?

Practically, I didn't try to start a living in New York at all. My wife tells me I lived like a traveler. And I lived at an uncle of mine. And my money from Germany, from Holland, or so on, which didn't arrive yet. So it was a very strange thing. But after that money came, I could manage again.

After you lived here for a little while, what was your first job like?

I didn't, here, get any job.

Oh, you didn't get any job after that?

I got it in my first job in Fort Wayne through the congregation. And that was difficult enough, because the congregation thought my relatives over there had enough chances. They were well acquainted enough in order to take care of me, and that didn't turn out. So finally, I got a job for, I think, for a friend of my cousin,

So after you came to New, York, you did not work at all?

No. It was not long. Six weeks. It was summertime. It was very enjoyable. I went to the Louis concert and so on.

No, but I mean, you stayed there then? You came from Fort Wayne to New York and you stayed here. Did you work at all in New York after?

No, I did not work at all in New York, because my cousin was working on me right away out of New York. Because it's a better chance in this [INAUDIBLE].

No, I mean, when you came here the second time, after you got married.

No, then I got a job right away, because I had worked as a bookkeeper, and I think I put in an advertisement in the New York Times, looking for a job.

And I referred that I had worked there as a specialist for a transportation company. And I got a job to accounting firm, who was specializing in bus accounting. And there, I got a job as a junior accountant.

And did you remain in this job for the next several--

Until I got a better job and so on, until I got independent. I started taking the CPA examination, but it got not finished. Because in the position I was treasurer of a corporation, and they didn't want me to devote any longer time to studying and so on. And they said either, or.

So I gave up the study and stayed with them until they left. They moved out of New York and moved to Norwalk, Connecticut. And I didn't follow them there. And I built up my own practice.

You built up your own practice. Did you ever take the CPA exam after that?

No, I got to old.

When you say you built up your own practice then, you dealt mainly with your own clients after this company moved out of New York? In the early years, when you came to New York after Fort Wayne, after 1945, was your wife working also?

Yeah, she was working. She was a kindergartener, a licensed kindergartener in Germany. And she had some type of job at that time, too.

In a kindergarten?

Independent. Independent. She was independent. And I think it was, I think it was some kind of a kindergarten where she worked. But also I think it was a German company or something like that.

Where did you settle when you came--

Pardon me?

Where did you settle when you came to New York after Fort Wayne? In Washington Heights?

We settled, at first, in midtown, 97th street. And then we moved up to Washington Heights.

In looking back, what do you think was the greatest adjustment that you had to make to the United States, the greatest adjustment that you had to make in the emigration?

Is adjustment to me, just giving up my old profession and starting something new, which took some time. I had to restudy. And I never had the same fever for accounting country I had for law. In fact, I had a certain disrespect in comparison to accounting and to accountancy and everything was dependent on that.

When you use the word "disrespect," how do you mean that? You said you had a certain disrespect.

I would not say disrespect. When I compared both of them, I thought, what a comparison. And the law, my former lawyership profession was something much more a different level. But here, to a certain extent, accountancy was different from Germany. Because this type of accountancy and this time of professional standard the accountants have here, they never had in Germany.

Here, they are practically, the CPA are practically on the same level as lawyers. But that, there was nothing like that in Germany. There was no comparison. And that's the difference. That's the outstanding feature, I would say, I lost my former professional standard.

Yeah, I can understand that, yeah. A matter of fact, my husband's a lawyer, and I often think of because law is a non-transferable profession basically.

I know I certain such a study, commercial law or anything like that, and it's so much superior to accountancy. To a certain extent, maybe if you specialize in tax law or something like that, then you are practically a lawyer, too. Because tax law in the higher instances or when it came to anything else was handled by lawyers not by accountants because we didn't have something like CPAs.

Yeah. Did you ever contact the Organization for European Lawyers?

I attended them once or twice as a guest, but I left shortly for Fort Wayne, and then I did not.

And not in New York?

No. And they didn't have anything like that in Fort Wayne.

How would you compare working conditions as an accountant here to Europe, to Germany?

You can't compare it. Something different. Because law work was, to a large extent, taken up by the work in the courts and lawsuits and so on. To a certain extent, you had contract work or something like that or you were specialized in legal law or anything like that.

But to a certain extent, what they are doing here that they were not permitted to do on account of these, how would you call it, limitations of the lawyership. You could not practically do anything but being a lawyer. If you did something else, it was, to a certain extent, considered against the ethical standard of the lawyership, and you couldn't do it.

I meant mostly, not in terms of a lawyer, but in terms of the work standard in America, how would you compare that to what you saw in Berlin?

Look, you have to take into consideration, I never had other experiences outside of professional work. I had very little to do with commercial, with commerce, or so on. But I think, generally speaking, they had a much more ethical standard to their profession than they are having right now here. They don't have it anymore in Germany today, either. Sure. Can be sure. I know it from experience and from what I heard.

Have you ever been back to Germany?

Yeah, I have been back twice. The last year I was back, upon invitation of the city of Berlin.

How did it feel to be back in Germany?

The first time, it felt better than the last time.

How so?

Look, this second visit was beautifully organized from the beginning up to the end. And we were taken care of excellently, [INAUDIBLE]. But on my trip home, it suddenly struck me that is the same kind of organization and the same kind of efficiency that they applied when they got us out of Germany. It's the same type of work efficient, quiet and so on. And they get what they want to and that's the way they worked it out under Hitler, too. And in that time, I'm practically fed up with them.

That's an interesting point.

Pardon me?

That's an interesting point.

I don't have any plans any more, going. In that moment when I realized that. That's a typical German thing. You marvel at it, what they accomplish and the way they are doing it, but they are doing it a very bad and worse way, too.

The same characteristics that go for the good also went for the bad.

But you see, you read all the time in the newspaper. They are having, again, antisemitism and so on and so on. And I do not know. They tell me it couldn't happen anymore here.

Look, when I came here, my cousin told me, also, it couldn't happen here, what happened in Germany. I'm no longer that much convinced. When I compare what is here now and what was here when I came 1940, it's a difference like day and night.

Let me ask you. The first time you went to Germany, how did you feel being back in Berlin? And did you have any contact with the Berliners?

I told you, the only reason I went back was on account of my friend, who took care of my parents and who stayed during the war, all the time and who, at that time, was president of the Berlin Lawyers Association.

And I stayed with him three days. And then I went to Switzerland or somewhere. I didn't stay a longer time, but I visit them. And we spent very nice days together and renewed our friendship, which never changed until he died.

Right. Right. How do you feel about the Wiedergutmachung?

We feel it. In--