

And we are rerecording some previous tape that was-- something unfortunate happened to. And today is June the 10th, 1981. And we're going to start, hopefully, where we left off last time at the end of that tape. And we got to the point where we were talking about how you met Mrs. Geisel. Do you want me? How did you meet your-- Mrs. Geisel?

This is actually a long story or not a long story. During the war, my parents and sister were in London, England. And my brother was attending-- the university-- was sent from the army to attend the University of Cincinnati in order to learn French.

And as it was done of so many Cincinnati families on weekends, they invited GIs. And so my brother was invited from a family, Carl Frank, for a weekend. And there came the conversation that Carl Frank had a sister who was not married and were in England. And my brother said, I have an unmarried brother who is in the army. And that was it.

But after the war, I was with my-- I was discharged from the army. And I was with my mother in New York, where I had taken a job. And one day, I was called home. My later wife came with her brother and sister-in-law to visit an acquaintance who had been in England also and were also acquaintances of my future wife to look me up. And then after, they left New York for Cincinnati.

In the meantime, my brother had had his discharge too and were living in Chicago. And between my later brother-in-law, Carl Frank, and my brother, Gus Geisel, they arranged that I should meet Elsa. And in the meantime, I had a very, very good-paying job in New York.

But they were after me. I had a much better future in Cincinnati. And so we got to the decision that I married, and started, and came to Cincinnati. For a very short time, it was in the business with my brother-in-law.

What business was that?

He had a sausage factory. And he wanted to enlarge. I-- as it was, my life going 100 percent in the hotel supply business. But for one reason or the other, I was not too happy when I started in business for myself. That was in March 1947.

When you moved to Cincinnati, what part of the city did you move to?

First, my brother-in-law, he lived on Cleveland Avenue. And we moved in to the third floor in his house-- I don't know how many months. Then, also on Cleveland Avenue, there was a house for sale from Lillian's wife. The first few months in Cincinnati, she works there as a fitter or a seamstress, whatever you call it. And that house belonged to-- they'd call her, I guess the grandmother, the mother of Mr. Jacobs or whatever it was.

And so we bought that house in order to be close to the relatives. And at that time, Cleveland Avenue was very convenient located. As a fact, my wife doesn't drive. And we had our business in Bond Hill. But when our son became school age--

Do you just have one son?

One son.

And he was born here in Cincinnati?

Born in Cincinnati. We married in October '46, and our son was born in October '47.

That was good.

And we-- one day, I saw a house advertised in Bond Hill. And a friend of my brother-in-law, who was a builder, I took him along to look at the house. And I was ask the price. I made right away an offer. Also, the builder said, Albert, take it

easy.

Was on a Sunday afternoon, and I went home. We had a little to eat. Then it happened. The doorbell rang. And somebody came in the door, inquired for some certain people. And while I was talking there, I talked to our neighbors. Then I was called from my wife. I'm wanted on the phone. And the seller of the house was on the phone and said, Mr. Geisel, we did some talking and some arithmetic. I accept your offer.

And what street was that now? On Yarmouth Avenue, Bond Hill. At that time, Bond Hill was one of the top elementary schools. But as I said, our son was in walking distance, wasn't depending on transportation going to school. And my wife was in walking distance to the business, as she doesn't drive. So it was very, very convenient located for us.

And I don't even recall if we stayed in Bond Hill-- maybe from 1952 to 1976, I guess. When we sold our house, as we are-- in the meantime, our son got married. And this was only my wife and myself. We didn't need a house. And we saw a nice place advertised. And we moved to Roselawn, our present location.

Your present home. All right. Let's go back. And I think would be interesting to talk about the business. We didn't-- we erased that part from the first tape.

As I said, I started out in business. At that time, it was very difficult. It was very competitive. And at that time, I didn't know, the predecessor of my store was very much disliked as, during the war, he took too much advantage of people. He was able do his relationships with meatpackers that he had enough meat to sell, but sold it only to friends or at known high prices.

So when I bought the store, it was a declining business, as that man was so disliked. So I had to start all over again. But as business progressed, I got very well-known. I didn't have to do too much advertising because my best advertising was from our customers, from mouth to mouth. And I must say, I was 100% expert in my line. I could serve the people with the right merchandise and the right price, without taking advantage of them.

The store was on California Avenue, wasn't it?

The store was on California Avenue, next to Fifth Third Bank. And later on, as people went more and more to freezer meat, I was approached from all my customers, filled their freezer with sides of beef, and so-- and developed till that became a nice restaurant supplier. My business was lately only 90% or maybe even 95% in meats. And from the 95%, was 75% wholesale.

But as our son had left and went to college, and after reaching 65, my wife didn't want to work anymore. So when I was almost 66, I sold our place and retired.

OK. Let's talk about, now, your religious and social life in the Cincinnati community. When you first came to Cincinnati, you were a young married man. What was your social life? Was it primarily your family?

First of all, you came out of the army, you had left the old country. Also, coming from a very wealthy family, you started out with nothing. But I always was independent and want to be independent. There was not an eight-hour day, that was a 15-hour day and six and a half days a week. And so there was not much left what social life concerned.

And at that time, the newcomers, what religious life concerned, they joined the New Hope congregation. And naturally, only on the High Holidays, you could participate in the service. But later on, when our son became school age, all his friends were-- belonged to the Wise Temple.

And so naturally, I made an appointment. At that time, it was-- Milton Bloom was the president of Wise Temple. On a Sunday, I had an appointment with him. And I said, so and so. And I joined the Wise Temple. And so later on, we were only just a paying member of New Hope. But we attending all the activities and services with the Wise Temple because also, we were so-called Orthodox Jews in the old country.

But nevertheless, we didn't know the translation from Hebrew to German, or in this country, from Hebrew to English. But at the Wise Temple the service was conducted in English. So we could follow the service. And we could understand what we were praying.

But while with the Wise Temple, naturally, when there came Passover, we always-- second day, we participate in the congregational Seder. Otherwise, our social activities were very much limited, as mentioned before, with six and a half days work and 15 hours or more a day.

So now, you're making up for it now. Have you ever returned to Germany?

Yes. In '72, when I retired, we-- there was a special flight from the Germania. And my wife and myself, with quite a few of my-- our acquaintances went on the same flight. And we went direct from Cincinnati to Frankfurt, where I rented a car, and from Frankfurt, going to my hometown, Rheinbach. That was about 150 kilometers. Well, it's German.

But nevertheless, they had now the Autobahn-- that means the expressway-- when I came. I should have-- I made a mistake. I was looking for the word exit where I had to leave in Siegburg. But in German, it is not exit, it is Abfahrt.

But nevertheless, I made some detour. But I had to go from the Autobahn, which is on the right side of the river Rhine. I had to go across the bridge to Bonn. And from Bonn was the main highway, Meckenheim, and then Rheinbach.

That was dramatically different.

It was dramatic. I had to ask my way through. But after being in Rheinbach, I was at home again.

What was it like when you got back there?

So we went there to a restaurant where my brother had stayed before. We had been in the old country more frequently as I was. And I made reservations. But it was on a Sunday afternoon after putting our luggage in our room. But it was making one mistake.

From leaving that restaurant, I want to see our friend, close friend, who is a farmer in Rheinbach, but just a couple of minutes from that restaurant. And I took the key from our apartment wrong. And leaving the restaurant, instead hanging it up that people knew that I had-- that I was not in the building, I went to our friend's.

And that is custom in a small country town in the Sunday afternoon, they visit the cemetery. And saw my friend's daughter and family who live in the same building, who didn't know us. But they heard my parents are at the cemetery. In the meantime, it was about 4:30 in the afternoon. I showed my wife around in the city and explained a little. While walking around, in the meantime, the people were leaving church.

And there was one couple, second house neighbor of ours, Jacob [? Kriebler ?] and Betty [? Kriebler. ?] And that man was in the upholstery business. They're walking towards me. And I step in front of them.

And I ask them, don't you know me? No. I said, aren't you Jacob [? Kriebler. ?] Yeah. Aren't you Betty? She was used to be in my class. She went to school with me. That Jacob [? Kriebler ?] was two years older than I am. I said, don't you know Albert Geisel?

Then you can imagine the surprise. Then all those people-- and there's a small town, that was in the middle of the city, came from church. And then everybody came. Yeah, here's my sister, Clara. Here's this and that. But as it was so long, I mean, it took me a long time to remember that yeah, there's [? Gemur ?] [? Chang. ?] There's [? Franz ?] [? Hank ?] and so on. I mean, then I got acquainted.

Anyhow, after talking to them, we went then across the street where we used to live. There was a restaurant. And I said to my wife, let's eat a little. While eating there, I-- my former friend, the Jacob [? Kriebler ?] was there. And I treated him for a glass of beer and talking to him. In the meantime, on the other table were four or five people.

And so my friend said, don't you know Willie [? Storm ?] anymore? And so going over there, the right away, so many questions they bring. And one sister from-- of that [? Willie ?] [? Storm, ?] she went to school with my brother. So all the questions about how I've been and all the experience what I had in concentration camp, and all they claimed they didn't--

They were interested to know.

--they didn't know anything about it. But our conversation took so long that in the meantime, it was 8:30 when I walked in to the place of my friend, [? Arnold ?] [? Simmons ?] and family, that farmer. And while I was there, the neighbors came. And everybody was holding ears and mouths open to want to know so-and-so. And that was extended and extended.

In the meantime, there was the son of a former next-door neighbor. He lived across the street of that friend of ours. Yeah, we have to see Willie [? Esse ?] too. So we go then to him. And right away, they came and bottle of wine. And his wife, she was a daughter of a former customer of ours. But when I had left Germany, she was maybe three, four years old. She had no idea.

And when we had a conversation about her aunt and uncle, and they were only sitting there and so amazed how I all know the family conditions. But in the meantime, I guess it was about 12:30 at night. And we had not slept with the time difference, for maybe 18-19 hours leaving the United States.

And we coming to our restaurant. We had in front, that whole thing was with a gate closed up. And we couldn't get in. And we rattled on that gate. You could hear at night, when everything was quiet for 10 miles. We couldn't get in.

And so what really happened in the-- at that day, there was Sch $\ddot{A}$ tzenfeste in the city. It was the same then, the blank-- I know it-- it's like the Coping House has once a year here in Cincinnati.

I think that's wine and dancing.

When they shoot the bird, and so on, and so on. And so everybody was attending there in the outskirts of the city. And they thought. And then so what did we do? We tried to get in another hotel to sleep. But everything was closed.

So finally, we went back to that farmer. I slept between two chairs. And so the next morning, when I went into our restaurant, and those people were amazed to see us. They thought we were in our room. Then our key was not hanging up. So that day, we walked around and saw another friend of ours, a lady-- the fact, she had visited me in London while I had waited a year in London for my quota number to come to the United States.

And after that, in the afternoon, we met our friends. And with our car, we went for a tour what I was used to do to Altenahr, Neuenahr, what is a very famous resort town, and then down the river Rhine, then up Bad Godesberg. And then in the meantime, we pass a village for our friend's daughter-in-law was married. With our car, we went into the field where there were--

So you had a very wonderful experience and good feelings about going back to Germany then?

And then the next day, as we had-- what was wrong on our part, we had arranged our tour, we left our hometown to Brussels, Belgium, to see my uncle, who was living there. And so we stayed about two or three days with our uncle in Brussels.

Then we, with our car-- and he and his wife with his car-- we went to La Rochelle in Luxembourg. They called that the Luxembourg Swiss. It is located in very nice, green pasture country. We stayed there with them for three days.

And from there, we took the car, we left Luxembourg, and went to-- over Metz, to Strasbourg in France, where a cousin of my wife was living. We stayed with her a few days in Strasbourg. With friends of them, we went all to the

surroundings. We went to the Borges that is-- was very well-known from World War I, where were heavy fighting done.

From there, we went-- but it was all close by to Baden-Baden, very famous resort town. And after going back, then, a few more days to Strasbourg, we left Strasbourg, and went to Freudenstadt, and stayed there for six or seven days. But besides going to the [? cool ?] garden, listen to the music, the band, we went several times again to Baden-Baden. And I drove my wife to the vineyards what she never had seen before.

Where was your wife actually from originally?

She came--

Cologne, did you say?

She came from north Germany, Wunstorf-- that's near Hanover. And then after six days in Freudenstadt, our time was up, we drove to Frankfurt, turned our car in, and back to the United States.

So how was your general impression of your return?

As I said, it was my-- as I was only such a short time in Germany, had no much chance to talk to people. But in my hometown, which was only a town of 5,000 population-- but while I was gone, Germany had lost World War II, the population had doubled as the people from former Sudeten Germany, with their industry, had come to Germany so that there wasn't a population of 5,000 people, there were 10,000 people.

In my hometown, much buildings going on what had been gardens and fields. There were houses. Like city hall, what was in the middle of the city, that was built outside of the city. And there was so much traffic on the street that there were even a traffic police on the street. I mean, in that way.

But what people itself concerned, had not much chance besides my friend and a few who came to see me. But the people there at that time, they were doing all very, very well. The fact, we went in a Konditorei, and I-- that name was [? Mostadt. ?]

And I said, you know my father was the gardener. As I said that I didn't know that man, only the name. Then his wife, she was a daughter of a Bernard [? Althausen, ?] who went to school with me. But she had no idea about me. But the people in the old country, they did all very, very well.

All right. Let's just-- can you give us a little idea about your views on Israel?

Change it.

In regards of Israel, the intention of the people are very well-founded. But as it might be in any country or any family, if you have a family of six, or if you have a whole country, you have different opinions how to approach things. And there are mistakes made within the family. There are mistakes made in a country.

As the sad story is, going back in history, the Jews are the most hated people. And the fact is if they can't help themselves, they are lost. Now, what Israel concerned, there are many things done what I don't agree with. Instead being there as a whole entity, not Orthodox, Reform, there should be there as Jews and have only one thing in common-- the best for the people, not be in each other's hair.

Now, what personally-- I am not a Zionist, but I'm a Jew. There is nothing what charity concern or whatever it is where I don't participate. But that doesn't mean that I agree with everything what is going on. And to my soul, Israel is not different from any other countries. That is very much of selfishness going on. So I only can emphasize when they want to make progress, once they have success, it should be-- should pull on the same string.

I think you've given us a really good picture of your life up till now. And just for a final question-- and I think I know

the answer before you answer it-- did any social agencies or any people in Cincinnati help you along the way?

To be frankly, as I have mentioned several times before, I never asked anybody for anything. But starting out as a so-called greenhorn, foreigner, stranger in business, you could use all the help you could get. But the experience that I had from Jewish people in Cincinnati, when I started out in business, everybody was patronizing me.

But the Jewish people had even the experience. There was one family who lived close to my store who were Orthodox that they didn't buy from me, as I didn't have kosher meat. But they came occasionally and bought a loaf of bread or some milk. And once the conversation came up that I had been in a concentration camp, that I was Jewish, those Orthodox Jews, they were so surprised that I was not German, that they never put a foot in my store anymore after hearing that I was Jewish.

So answering your question, I have no special patronage from no Jewish organization or any Jews, except later on, when I was well-known. Had Jewish people the same like Gentile people who came to me. Like my brother and always said, Al, don't get in your mind that the people come to Al. They come to Al because they see an advantage in coming to you.

OK. Is there any final thing you'd like to say to sum up this interview? I think it's really been a pleasure and a delight to be here. And I'm really lucky that the tape didn't work out because I've enjoyed coming back to visit with you.

When I was approached from your people about that interview, I had nothing to hide. Everybody can know about my history because we came, as I repeat and repeat again, from very, very well-to-do people, as I had mentioned at the beginning of our interview.

The generation before me in the old country, the taxpayers-- the people what voting concerned, they were in three classes. Or my dad had the privilege to be in the number one class. That means-- I don't recall anymore they had three votes or two votes. But they was in the top class.

And the only thing what I am proud of about coming here with nothing, accomplish everything. We were independent, stay independent, was able to give our only child, our son, a wonderful education, sending him to the best schools.

As I said before, he attended Wharton School, the school of business in Pennsylvania. He attended law school in Cincinnati, went after graduation, without any help, to Colorado and made the bar in Colorado, worked for a couple of months for the justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. Erickson, the Justice Erickson.

In the meantime, he had made applications at two places-- to the district attorney, who-- but as everybody knows, our son had made the bar around October. And these, the attorneys, who have to run for election, it comes not before November. And it happens both attorneys-- one in Boulder, Colorado and the other one in Pueblo, Colorado-- both were elected.

And our son came in a peculiar situation, as that district attorney in Pueblo had a post him first. And he took the job. But naturally, he had to wait from November to January, when they was taking over. But in the meantime, the district attorney in Boulder wanted him also. And at that time, our son asked the justice of the Supreme Court what his suggestion was.

And at that time, our son was not married yet. And that Justice Erickson said, as you are not married, and Boulder is a college town, also the most desired position, but I would prefer Boulder. And so our son had a very hard time, as he had taken that job in Pueblo, to tell that man that he was going to Boulder.

But after being in Boulder for a little more than a year or the two years, the district attorney from Pueblo, through a third party, approached our son to have him with all kinds of promises. So he went to Pueblo. And there, he became very well-known as one of, I guess, the youngest deputy district attorney.

They had a murder case. He was for weeks in the front line in the paper. And he got also that prospect murder was a very famous athlete. And he was able to get him convicted.

But being really advancing at the chief deputy district attorney, he told his boss, if the opportunity arises to go in business for himself, he will do. And that is what he did. So the last four or five years or whatever, three years, he is practicing law on his own in Pueblo, Colorado.

And married and has two adorable children. That right? He's married and he has two adorable children.

Yes, yes, yes. He's now married for five years and have two wonderful grandsons.

And it seems to me you have a very full, wonderful life.