

Can ask you to repeat it-- where you were born, when, and a little about your family.

OK, I was born in Essen in Germany in 1926. And my family, I guess you would call them an upper middle class family. My father was part owner of a store that imported feathers and made them into quilts and sold them into quilts. And they sold to individuals. But mainly, I think they sold to hotels and institutions and things like that, of course, and quilts and pillows. And I think he imported them from China mainly.

And my mother didn't work. And we belonged to the synagogue in Essen. And--

When did you come to the United States?

We came to the United States in December of '39. The war started-- Germany invaded Poland in September of '39. And we came in December. So we were one of the last to leave.

Before that time, what was your life like before the Nazis came to power in Germany?

Well, of course, very early I don't remember that much because I was very young. But I think we had a very pleasant life, a very good life. My parents were comfortable. We had a live-in maid, as most people did in Europe at that time. And my parents went out a lot and went and traveled a lot. And we had a very comfortable life.

But that changed-- I don't remember the exact date. But I think by in 1934, '35 that changed.

We'll get into how that changed. Did your family experience antisemitism before Hitler in any kind of way that you remember?

No, I wouldn't have known. I would have been too young. And they would have sheltered me from it anyhow.

Did you feel that you were generally sheltered by them?

Probably.

You said you belonged to a synagogue. Was that standard for your family?

Well, I think probably both my grandparents were more Orthodox than my parents were.

Like here.

Yeah. But you know it was the thing to do to belong to a synagogue. And the way the system worked in the part of Germany where I lived, each religion had their own school. But you had no choice about it. It was a state school. Your taxes went to that school. You had no choice about it.

And it was like a combination of parochial and public school. And all the Jewish children went to a Jewish school. And the Jews were taxed for that. It was not voluntary.

And every Saturday after services, we were required-- they took attendance, and we went for religious school in the synagogue. So you had to go to services. It was part of your school attendance that you went to services. And after services, you went and you had Hebrew school on Saturdays.

Hmm.

And it was a very large synagogue. And I remember that for the high holidays, my father used to go in the top hat and tails, as did the other men. And the women sat upstairs. Even though it was a conservative synagogue, women sat upstairs.

It was hard to give that part up, I guess, even if it was not Orthodox.

Well, it was like here. They made their own rules. They had an organ. But the women sat upstairs.

What about organizations? In what way did your family live a Jewish life outside the belonging to the synagogue and the schools?

I really don't know whether they belonged to an organization or not. But they were always very charitable. And my father had somehow or other gotten a reputation that if there were any itinerant Jews in town-- you know there used to be a lot of peddlers and traveling salesman. And they always knew if they needed anything to go to my father's store. And this the sort of one told the other. They used to call them schnorrers. I don't know if you know the Jewish expression.

I do.

And he got a reputation that my parents did a lot of good. And when, for instance-- I don't know the details, but there was a time before things got real bad in Germany, when already some Eastern European Jews were persecuted and fled to Germany somehow or other, and I know that the Jewish community in Essen was so organized to help the refugees, the Eastern European Jews.

And I know my parents were very active in that because-- my father didn't have a car. And he didn't drive. But he had a chauffeur who drove the company car.

And I remember that he-- I forget where he brought them. But he transported a lot of these people someplace. And then they slept in the basement of the synagogue until they moved on to another thing.

So there was a Jewish life? There was no question in your family that--

They belonged to a Jewish B'nai B'rith, which was also much more social than the B'nai B'rith here. You had to be-- people were actually blackballed if they didn't want them. And it was a much more social thing than it is here.

And the children, we had a Jewish Community Center where the children went. And I was very much Zionist in those days. And my parents were afraid that I might go to Palestine. So they didn't let me join the Zionist youth organization.

But there was another youth organization set up, purposely I think, to counter the Zionist organizations. And it was the Jewish youth organization that didn't have the Zionist component. We had a-- I don't know, I think we had either a black flag with a white circle or white flag with a black circle.

And they taught us both German and Jewish songs. And we went camping and things like that. But the emphasis was not on Aliyah. You know, my parents taught me that's what I should join because they didn't want me to get too influenced.

And you listened, of course?

Oh, well, you know, I was very little.

Right. Did any men in your family serve in the national army?

Oh, my father did. My father served in the First World War. And I think this was his undoing. He was decorated. And he felt that they would not do anything to a veteran who had served with such distinction as he had.

Did your family speak Yiddish in addition to German?

No.

Just German.

Mm, hmm.

Do you remember how you and the members of your family reacted to Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933?

Not really.

Mm, hmm. You were too young.

I was about five years old.

Mm, hmm. That would be too young to remember.

I don't know whether it was as early as 1933, but I think my mother was uneasy much before my father.

Why do you think that was?

I don't know. I guess she was more pessimistic or more aware of things.

It may have been because he felt protected by his service in the first war.

Yeah, maybe. And my father was a very good person. And sometimes when people are really very good, they don't think that anybody else can do something really bad. I'm not trying to say that my mother wasn't, but--

I understand that.

But my father especially was very kind-hearted.

Did anyone in your family have any contact with the Council of German Jews?

I don't know.

Mm, hmm.

Do you remember, or I guess you were too young, about the boycott in 1933, or the Aryan paragraph?

Well, I don't know whether it refers to that specifically. But if you want me to go into how things gradually changed as a result of the Nuremberg laws and things like that--

Yeah, that's my next question about the passage of the Nuremberg laws. That was in 1935. So tell me how your life changed.

I don't know what was in response to which law and exactly the time frame, but now one of the earlier things they did is they said that no Jewish people could have a live-in Gentile maid because they were afraid the Jewish men would sleep with them and pollute the Aryan race. So we lost we lost the maid.

And then all Jews-- this may not be in the order in which it happened. But--

It doesn't matter--

The order in which I remembered. For instance, we had to all turn in our radios. We were not allowed to have radios.

We had to turn in all our silverware and sterling things and jewelry and watches.

You were not allowed to go to the movies or to the theater. And, of course, you weren't allowed to travel. And the movement was just very much restricted.

And one scene I particularly remember because I used to read a lot and I was forever going to the library, and they passed a law that Jews were not allowed to have library cards. And I had to go to the library and turn my library card in. And the librarian gave me an argument because she knew me and she knew I read. And it was very painful for me. I had to tell her that I have to turn in my library card because I'm Jewish. I'm not allowed to have a library card anymore.

How did you feel?

Well, I felt very bad. But the one interesting thing is because they had this terrific, as you may know from newsreels, this terrific propaganda. They had the Hitlerjugend and the BDM, which is Bund Deutscher Madchen, which is for the girls. And they had a lot of pageantry and flags and banners. And the youth organizations had nice uniforms.

And on the one hand, I knew they were persecuting the Jews. On the other hand, you know, this all was so appealing that I was really very sad that I couldn't belong to the Nazi youth organization, that I couldn't take part in the parades and in the pageantry and the ceremony because, especially in the early days, the PR was so great. This all looked so glamorous and so attractive.

And there was so much propaganda, like all the children stories being published would be stories about the wonderful things they did at these youth camps. So that if you were so indoctrinated by this, even as a Jewish child, that I think if I hadn't been Jewish, I am sure I would have joined.

That's understandable.

It was all so attractive.

And when you had to do all of this, turn in your library card and have all of these restrictions, did your father still feel safe?

Well, I don't really-- again, they didn't really talk to us that much about it. But after a while, things got to the point where they really couldn't hide it anymore. Now for one thing when this Crystal Night was in November, when they burned this magnificent, beautiful synagogue down and destroyed my father's store. And then sometime later-- I don't know whether it was before or after. But at first, my parents lived in an apartment.

And then when things started to deteriorate, they moved into the-- part owner of my father's business had a mansion in the suburban part of Essen. And my parents moved in there with him. And one day, the Nazis came and said, you have a choice. You either sell us this house for 5 marks, or some ridiculous sum, or we're going to burn it down. So, of course, they signed a bill of sale and sold the house.

And when they were threatening to burn our house down, across the street from us was a family of a Dutch diplomat lived there. So they invited us over and said we could stay in their house because we'd be safe there because they wouldn't burn down a Dutch house. And unfortunately, once Holland got invaded, that whole family got killed too.

Hmm.

They had a daughter who had polio. So, you know, first one's killed. And then another thing that happened was that sometime in the early 1930s, my father had three brothers, who lived in where he was born, and some of them were cattle dealers and some of them were butchers. And all of a sudden, they were on our doorstep. They had to run away from home because they would have been killed.

They had roving gangs of farmers who were beating up the Jewish men. And they didn't realize-- they thought this was

just an outbreak of local antisemitism. And they came to my parents. And they thought they would be safe there.

And they didn't realize that, because somehow or other these things weren't publicized, so that when something happened in your town, you thought it was just happening to you. You didn't realize that it was all over the country until things got real bad. And they thought that they could come to my father's place and be safe. And they didn't realize that things were no longer safe at our house either.

And then the other thing they did is they closed the-- well, we had a very nice school. And then they told us we couldn't go to that school anymore. And they sent us to a school, oh, someplace on the outskirts of town. And we had to take like a trolley car to the end of the line to get there.

And when we got off the trolley car we found there were hundreds of people lining the street. And the reason they were waiting for us is they had never seen a Jewish person before. And they had heard-- I mean they weren't vicious or anything. At that point, they were just curious. And they had seen these propaganda cartoons that they made the Jews with the long nose and with the horns and hunchbacks and God knows what else.

And they had all come out. And that was a big event in their life to see the Jews, what the Jews looked like. But they didn't do anything to us. They were just curious at that point.

Did you ever see any of those propaganda cartoons?

Oh, yes, you couldn't avoid it. They had a big, I don't know what you would call it, like frames on post that was several feet big. And they had these propaganda posters on every block and enlarged so everybody could see them.

And, well, after that, and for a while we went to that school. And then they closed school altogether. So for the last couple of years in Germany I didn't go to school at all.

During this period of time when you and your family were experiencing all of this and seeing the cartoons and having your school closed down, did you think about leaving Germany?

Yes, we thought about leaving Germany fairly early. But it wasn't that easy because first thing you had to do is you had to get a number. I mean it's not like now where they bring the people over. You had to get a number from the American consulate. And when your number came up, then you could emigrate.

And by the time our number came up, they had made it more difficult. And they had said you had to have an affidavit from somebody in the United States that they would be responsible for you in case you didn't find work or got sick so that you would never have to go on welfare. So since we didn't know too many people in the United States, that was rather difficult.

But there were wealthy American Jews who took a chance and issued these affidavits. And as far as I know, none of them-- it never cost them anything. And in fact, somebody in Chicago gave my parents an affidavit for the whole family. And, you know, of course, we never asked them for any money.

And then what happened was then you had to go to the consulate, which was in a different city. And it was already by that time very hazardous to travel. And when our papers were on order and our number came up and the visa was satisfactory and my parents bought the ticket, and they bought the tickets from a Jewish travel agent. And this, again, is a good example of how the German mind works. This Jewish travel agent was a terrible person. He took the money for tickets, not only for my parents, but from a lot of other people and he never bought the tickets. And the Germans, when they found out about it, tried him and prosecuted him and put him in jail.

Amazing.

So anyhow, so then by the time my parents found out that they didn't really have tickets, then they upped the ante again. And they said, you have to pay for your tickets in American dollars. Where were my parents going to get American

dollars from?

Because by that time, my father had long lost his business. We had lost the house. They took them all the bank accounts. They stopped whatever investments you had, they stopped. So, you know, where were we going to get tickets from? And this is why we left on one of the-- we almost didn't get out because of this man because by that time--

During this period of time, how did you personally react? Did you think this was the worst that could ever happen to you as a child?

I had a mixed reaction, which I suppose is natural for a child. We had a beautiful home. And I didn't want to leave. No, the thought of leaving your friends and leaving your home and emigrating, I didn't like.

But, on the other hand, even though my parents tried to protect me, you couldn't help but know that the threats were very real because people were getting-- at that time, the concentration camps were only a rumor. We didn't really-- every once in a while, the word concentration camp was mentioned. But you know what you pictured, really you didn't picture what it actually was. You just pictured some place where people would be interred like a jail. You didn't know that people were going to be exterminated at that point.

But people they arrested. Once my father had to hide because somebody had-- a Gentile had heard that the Gestapo was looking for him. So, you know, my father hid.

And towards the end my mother always had us dress-- you know, she wanted to do something. For a woman, what could she do? So she came up with the idea in case they sent us someplace where it's cold, we had to always wear like three or four sets of underwear and extra sweaters so that if we couldn't go home and pack, at least we would be warm.

And towards the end, the Nazis moved into this house. But they let us stay in two rooms until we emigrated. So the Nazis were living in most of the house. And we, the four of us, had two rooms and use of a kitchen where we stayed until we could emigrate. So you couldn't help but notice.

And, of course, you had to be very careful if you went out that people didn't know you were Jewish. And it was funny, I had very long braids. And once some had stopped me on the street and complimented me and said, I looked like German girl is supposed to look, because that was the fashion. The youth organizations all wore braids.

And although we didn't have school and--

What did you do?

There were food shortages. They tried to have some of the teachers teach us. But it didn't work out too well.

So what did you do with your time?

I really don't remember. They did try to have classes for us. And there was a great fever in getting ready for the immigration. You got a lot of advice of what to take and what not to take.

And I know my parents, so I would have a usable skill, which was probably the worst thing they could have done because I'm very inept when it comes to sewing, they sent me to an old lady who taught me how to make artificial flowers out of material. So that I would have a skill. My mother learned how to make candy so that when she came to the United States she could make a living making candy.

Did you have grandparents?

Yes, my mother's parents were still alive.

Were they going to come with you?

That was a very sad case. My grandmother, fortunately, died before things got too bad. My grandfather, who was born in the United States because my great grandparents immigrated to the United States. My grandfather was the youngest child. He was born when they were up in years.

And when they got old, they got homesick. They wanted to go back to Germany. And since he was still a child, they took him back. And because he served in the German army, they wouldn't let him into the United States. So it was very, very sad that he was I think about 70 then.

And what could my parents do? It was either stay with him and all of us die or go leave with the children and leave him. We could not get him out. And he was sent to a concentration camp and died.

Do you remember feeling frightened during this period of time?

Sometimes. I think it really wasn't real. The one thing that we all told each other is that they would run after us and call us dirty Jew. And our answer always was I'm not dirty. In other words, we were taught that if somebody calls you a Jew, that's not an insult. But if they call you dirty, that's an insult.

During the period from 1933 to 1938, did your family have any contact with non-Jews? And how were they? How did they behave?

My father had some contact because he had non-Jewish employees. And they, sometimes at great risk to themselves, they did what they could. But, of course, they couldn't do much because they were not influential people and they had to be very careful.

Now this is, for instance, how I was warned that the Gestapo was looking for him by one of the employees. And they would sometimes try to bring us some food to help in what way they could. It wasn't much.

But I think the social acquaintances, they didn't have many contacts with. Because people, I can't really necessarily blame them, because you had to be so careful because the children were taught to spy on their parents. And the neighbors were told to spy on the neighbors. And if you had Jewish contact with any Jews, you might get killed. So they really didn't have that much.

What happened to your family during Kristallnacht?

Well, of course, my father was affected very dramatically because he was in the store. And they utterly destroyed the store. And then, of course, once they burnt the synagogue, everybody in the Jewish community heard about that. And then they also-- I don't think that was the day they came to burn the house down.

But a lot of my parents friends, they came to the apartments, the houses. And they beat them up and threw them down the stairs. And that happened to my father's brothers.

After that time, was your father able to work?

You know, I don't know whether he ran the store for the Nazis or-- now, of course, the store was taken over too now. Whether he had to go and run the store for the Nazis or whether he was just at home I don't know.

How did you support yourselves?

Well, everybody, as much as you could, you took your money and squirreled it away before they closed the bank accounts because it was a progression. They started off as little things like the radios. And people could read the handwriting on the wall. So as much as people could, you took money out and hid it away and things like that.

After the invasion of Poland, did that change your family situation any?

Well, first of all, we realized that it was very urgent. And then even before the invasion of Poland, we had a total blackout. We were under a war condition, not just the Jews, everybody. We had total blackouts. You had to have an air raid shelter in your house. And they came to inspect it. You had to have sandbags. You had to have the windows blacked out. You had to have supplies.

And almost every night, we spent in the air raid shelter. Now, in those days, the British were stupid. They had air raids. And instead of dropping bombs, they dropped leaflets. But, of course, when the siren goes off in the middle of the night and you're in the air raid shelter, you don't know what they're dropping.

And I know when we first came to the United States, we lived in New York for a little while. And as you may in New York, the sirens are going off on the street every five minutes. And it took us a long time before we didn't react to the sirens.

And the food shortages, they were food shortages.

What did you do about that?

Well, you really couldn't do anything about it because nobody-- and this was not just Jews. Nobody had, unless you had an in with the Nazi or something. No, everybody was in the same boat as far as that goes.

Tell me about the emigration, how you found out that you could leave and that whole process.

Well, again, I don't know all the details. But the Jewish newspapers and the Jewish community, they publicized this, whether they sent out bulletins or had meetings. And towards the end, everybody all wound up in emigration. A lot of people, of course, went to Palestine. And some people went to Latin America.

And this was the whole topic of conversation-- what your number was, whether you could get an affidavit. And it was a great deal of fear when you had to travel to another city to talk to the American consulate. And they were-- I mean they rejected people under the most awful pretext. And really it was very capricious. So it was a very frightening thing when you had to go talk to the American consul whether they would accept you or not, because it was completely up to his own discretion. If he didn't like the way you look, he could trump up something and say you can't come to the United States.

And then as I say, everybody was trying to figure out how-- in the beginning, you could send money to the United States, but not towards the end. So some people sent money to the United States. And we got a great deal of conflicting advice of should you take your furniture? Should you not take your furniture? What kind of furniture should you take?

And people were trying to take things with the idea that once they got to the United States they could sell them so they would have some money. And this was a consuming thing. Besides trying to avoid getting arrested or beaten up, the only other topic of conversation was how you could manage to get the necessary papers to get out and what you should do so once you got out could make a living.

Did everyone you knew want to come to America?

No, because a lot of them wanted to go to Palestine and did go to Palestine.

How did you finally find out that you could emigrate? And what did you do? How soon were you able to?

Well, once you got your visa from the counsel-- now, I don't know whether it probably came in the mail, but I really don't. Because again, these were things the adults took care of themselves. I mean I knew what our number was. And I suppose we heard from the United States, from people in the United States, when we had gotten the visa.

And then my mother's brother finally managed to borrow money from somebody who had already emigrated to the

United States ahead of us. He got the money from somewhere. Somewhere he borrowed money to pay for our tickets in dollars. So once we got-- I suppose once-- we actually had the visa I think before we had the tickets. And then it was just a question of once we got the dollars of buying the first available tickets and leaving. And we actually left from Holland. And did you want to know about that too?

Sure.

I don't know the mechanics of how we were notified. I really don't know. So we had put what things we still had left, they put into a huge wooden boxes, huge wooden crates, room-sized crates, which were called lifts. And the Germans were very particular about what you were allowed to take. And they had inspectors there watching you pack. And while you were packing in these lifts, they would take things out that they thought might be valuable or that they didn't want to go out. And the rest you were allowed to take.

And the lifts, of course, were shipped separately. And with my parents' luck, when the harbor where they were was bombed, they were all burned up. So we never got any of that stuff.

And then just took the suitcases that we could carry. And we took the train to Holland, which, of course, was already under wartime condition because Germany was already at war with Poland by that time. And when we got to Holland, we stopped at some kind of a displaced persons camp in Holland for Jews and visited those people and had cousins--

Visited them?

Well, I don't know. Somehow or other the Jews who were emigrating. I don't know why these Jews had to stay there whether they didn't have papers in the--

[AUDIO OUT]

They were refugees. But it was the Dutch somehow. I don't know whether they were in transit or whether they didn't have papers or what it was. But anyhow, it was a camp.

And I remember my father had a cousin-- a branch of our family was Dutch. And they came to see us off. And he was in the Dutch army. And, you know, there's certain things stick in your mind. And he said, don't worry. The Germans will never invade Holland because as soon as we see them cross the border, we're going to open the dikes and flood the country. And they'll never invade Holland. So--

You had no difficulty at a border crossing or anything like that going from Germany to Holland?

No, because the papers-- they wouldn't let you out unless everything was in order. And again, as long as everything was in order, they didn't care how they got rid of the Jews. They were perfectly happy to let you emigrate as long as they had gotten what they could out of you and the papers were in orders.

Because even I think during the later stages of the war, they were willing to let Jews get out of the camp. They didn't care. The difficulty was all before.

You left by ship from Holland?

We left by ship from Holland. And, of course, the ship also was under total blackout conditions. In fact, they didn't even throw the garbage overboard because U-boats could have seen the trail of the ship from the garbage.

And a couple of times, they had drills. They said there were U-boats. And they were afraid the ship would get sunk. And all the passengers had to go in the lifeboats and everything. It was not a pleasure cruise.

How long did it take?

I think it took about either 7 or 10 days.

Mm, hmm. When did you first hear that Jews were being killed in concentration camps?

I think not until we were here during the war. Because all we heard before, every once in a while there would be a rumor. But we didn't have-- and, of course, I don't think they were exterminating yet in 1939. I think they were just rounding them up. They had not really started to exterminate anybody.

Once you got to this country and until the war was over in '45, did you have contact with other family members and friends in Germany?

No. No, I don't think so.

Did you know of any Jewish resistance groups in Germany? Did your family know of any or did you hear of anything like that?

No.

During this period of time, you were still young. Later on, do you feel that the experiences that you had strengthened any of your feelings about Zionism? About Judaism? About identification?

In some ways, now I would feel that if I would not continue to be Jewish, I would play into the Nazis' hands. And, of course, while I have no control over it, I feel that any younger Jewish person who marries a non-Jew is in a way-- from that point of view, it has strengthened it.

And as I got older and more idealistic, I no longer think living in Israel for me it's realistic. When I was young, I thought it was. And the only other thing it has done for me really is I don't have the feeling that it can happen to me. Like people usually have that traffic accidents or disasters always happen to the other person.

We lived for too many years, it was too perilous and all those years of constantly looking over your shoulder, not knowing when you came back, whether your parents would be there or whether somebody would come in the middle of the night and take you away, and then your friends and acquaintances disappearing, that I think creates a great deal of insecurity. Even as much as my parents, you know, as I said between my parents and really wanting to protect us and the fact that when you're 10, 11 years old, you don't realize a lot of things.

How do you feel the experience affected the rest of your life?

Well, it obviously affected it very profoundly, because if I hadn't been Jewish I would have been in Germany during the war. And we might have gotten killed in the bombing or whatever. Who knows? And if Hitler had never come, I would have had very much different life because I was scheduled, for instance, to go to Switzerland to finishing school in the very near future.

And certainly economically, it was a drastic change from being very comfortable because we came to the United States-- I think my father had \$2 on him and the clothes we carried. And that was it.

What happened to your family when you came here?

Well, we stayed in New York for a couple of-- I think we stayed in New York actually till December and--

Where?

We stayed with an aunt of my mother's and with my mother's brother, who was my uncle. They shared an apartment in New York. And they weren't very well-off either. But they let us stay with them.

And fortunately, my father realized that it was not a good idea to stay in New York. Like most Jews just stayed in New York. And he didn't want to stay in New York.

And my grandfather, the one who had been born in the United States, his sister who had stayed here and had married an American, they lived in Niagara Falls, New York. And they invited us to stay with them until my father found a job. And they thought he could find a job in Niagara Falls.

And he never really-- he had a couple of temporary jobs. But he never really found employment, even though there were some very wealthy Jews in Niagara Falls and they tried. And it was very interesting, because unlike New York, we were the only refugee family in Niagara Falls. So we were a great curiosity. And people came to see us.

And then I was a great sensation in school, which I didn't appreciate because I was very shy. And I remember they assigned a Boy Scout the first day to take me around which was very nice. Except I didn't speak English and he didn't speak German. So I don't know how much good he did me. But it was a nice thought.

But they tried. They didn't really know what to do. But they did tried.

Where did he finally find work?

Then he found I think through some Jewish Agency. There was a man in Philadelphia, a Jewish man, who manufactured clothes and mattresses and things like that. And my father found a position with him, of course, not at all like what he had been doing. In effect, he was a factory laborer. And then finally they made him foreman. So that's how they came to Philadelphia because that was the only employment he could get because, as you remember, before the United States got into the war, we had a lot of unemployment.

After the war, were you able to locate any survivors of your family or friends?

The ones that didn't emigrate didn't survive. No, they were in the-- the only immediate family, my mother's brother came here. He survived. And one of my father's brothers and his family came over. The other one-- again, my father's brothers, because they stayed in the country, physically very robust. I said they were cattle dealers, lived in a village. They were very physically very robust men.

And one of his brothers had had a motorcycle accident. And he had a slight limp. And they wouldn't let him into the United States because he had a slight limp. And he and his whole entire family was killed.

The other brother managed to come here. The third brother, who never married, very early in the game went to Argentina. And he lived in Argentina for many years. But other than that, the whole family got killed.

And then we have another very interesting story. I'm not exactly sure of this. I think my father had a half sister who married a Dutchman. And either her daughter-- it was either her daughter or her granddaughter. When the Nazis came, the mother put her in a baby carriage and pushed her through a hedge into the neighbor's yard, hoping the neighbors would keep her so she wouldn't get killed.

And that whole entire family got killed. And the girl was brought up and wasn't told-- in fact, she came over here two years ago. She's now married and has children. She wasn't told until she was an adult that she hadn't been their real daughter and that her family background was.

That must have been a shock to her. But she located you?

Because of my father, my father somehow managed to track her down. But the people who raised her asked my father not to contact her. And he honored their wishes.

And then after the parents died, somehow I don't know whether she found the papers or whether they arranged for her to see the papers after died, the letters that my father had written, and that's how she contacted him.

What other circumstances or incidents do you feel that you want to be recorded?

Well, there was a terrible-- I mean it's really hard to describe the whole atmosphere of hate, whether it was in the newspapers, it was in movies, on the radio, the constant vicious, vicious things that they said about Jews for hours and hours on end. Whether it was billboards and the rallies, and it was just always attacks on Jews. So that you really got to the point where if you walked out of your house--

Oh, and one very important thing I forgot towards the end. Then they passed a law that every Jewish man had to take the name Isaac and every Jewish woman had to take the name Sara. And we had to wear the yellow stars, yellow Magen David.

So, of course, you can't stay in your home all the time. And whenever you went out, you really felt that you were really in peril. Because even before that, you somehow felt that people could tell you were Jewish, even those of us who had always been told they didn't look Jewish. And we had this whole general atmosphere of hate.

And one thing that people don't understand, now I think we say, well, why didn't the Jews fight back or do something, is that you really had no place to go. Even if you admit, which I'm not willing to admit, that most Germans only went along because they were afraid. I think that was a percentage of people went along the way. But I think most of them were in it heart and soul.

There was no place you could go. There was no refuge. You couldn't get across borders. And there would not have been anybody to help you, so that you really were completely isolated and completely trapped. And it was this whole atmosphere of danger and malice and hopelessness and never knowing what--

And then, of course, they started this business that even if you only had one Jewish grandparent you were considered Jewish. And my parents knew people who had never considered themselves Jewish and who thought they were safe. And because they had Jewish ancestors-- sometimes they didn't know about it. But the Nazis found out about it, and they started persecuting them.

And I don't know-- because people were arrested already long before we finally left, now why my parents somehow or other avoided getting arrested, I don't really know. My father came very close to it a couple of times. In fact, once the Gestapo actually took him and interrogated him and let him go.

Now whether it's because somebody interceded for him or because he had such a good reputation or whether it was just luck, I don't know. But we came close quite a few times. And somehow or other, he always got off.

What did they interrogate him about?

He never told me. One of the employees from his store came and ran to my mother and said, your husband has been arrested by the Gestapo. And she actually went to Gestapo headquarters to look for him. But how she got hi out I don't. But they didn't tell us those things. They didn't want to burden us with those things.

Another thing we did is, of course, everybody took English lessons. But you learned the English English, not the American English.

So when you came here you still couldn't speak?

I spoke-- I did speak. But there's a big difference between learning and speaking. But as a child, you pick it up fairly quickly. And in fact, in the school in Niagara Falls, they sent me to the speech therapist to lose my English accent.

[LAUGHS]

Is there anything else, Inge, that you did that you want to include?

Not really. I don't know whether it really amounts to all that because I don't remember that much.