

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:01:05,968

2

00:01:05,968 --> 00:01:08,686

One second, and you  
can start [INAUDIBLE]..

3

00:01:08,686 --> 00:01:14,400

4

00:01:14,400 --> 00:01:16,560

OK.

5

00:01:16,560 --> 00:01:19,800

Today is April 8,  
1992, and what you're

6

00:01:19,800 --> 00:01:23,055

doing part two of the  
interview with Lore Gilbert.

7

00:01:23,055 --> 00:01:28,380

I'm Sandra Bendaya, and again,  
we have second Emily Rosenberg.

8

00:01:28,380 --> 00:01:33,210

And when we left off,  
Lore, was that you had,

9

00:01:33,210 --> 00:01:35,320

your family had  
received information

10

00:01:35,320 --> 00:01:39,810

that the Dominican  
Republic was inviting Jews

11

00:01:39,810 --> 00:01:42,060

to come and settle there.

12

00:01:42,060 --> 00:01:46,777

And you were all still  
located in the camp at Gurs,

13  
00:01:46,777 --> 00:01:48,360  
but you had received  
this information.

14  
00:01:48,360 --> 00:01:48,902  
That's right.

15  
00:01:48,902 --> 00:01:52,215  
We had received a letter  
from my father's brother.

16  
00:01:52,215 --> 00:01:55,270

17  
00:01:55,270 --> 00:02:01,390  
His son, my cousin  
Walter, was the secretary

18  
00:02:01,390 --> 00:02:10,690  
of the DORSA, which was  
Dominican Republic, Dominican

19  
00:02:10,690 --> 00:02:14,740  
Republic, let me see.

20  
00:02:14,740 --> 00:02:18,790  
Yeah, Dominican Republic  
Settlement Association.

21  
00:02:18,790 --> 00:02:19,660  
Sorry about that.

22  
00:02:19,660 --> 00:02:26,670

23  
00:02:26,670 --> 00:02:29,240  
The directors, the  
people who organized

24

00:02:29,240 --> 00:02:36,100  
it were associated with  
HIAS, the Jewish-- and Joint.

25  
00:02:36,100 --> 00:02:40,360  
And my cousin was secretary  
of Mr. Schweitzer, who

26  
00:02:40,360 --> 00:02:44,740  
was the big honcho at the time.

27  
00:02:44,740 --> 00:02:48,250  
Anyway, my uncle  
sent us a letter,

28  
00:02:48,250 --> 00:02:52,210  
and that came in December.

29  
00:02:52,210 --> 00:02:56,710  
And we had to go through  
a number of things

30  
00:02:56,710 --> 00:03:00,370  
to get our papers.

31  
00:03:00,370 --> 00:03:05,290  
And every time that happened, we  
were called to the Kommandantur

32  
00:03:05,290 --> 00:03:12,925  
in the camp as a family, and  
there were a number of delays.

33  
00:03:12,925 --> 00:03:15,850

34  
00:03:15,850 --> 00:03:20,160  
Now if I look back and I  
see, December to February

35  
00:03:20,160 --> 00:03:22,960  
doesn't seem all that long,  
but it seemed like an eternity.

36  
00:03:22,960 --> 00:03:24,770  
It was then.

37  
00:03:24,770 --> 00:03:26,170  
What year was that?

38  
00:03:26,170 --> 00:03:30,930  
In 1940.

39  
00:03:30,930 --> 00:03:37,920  
At one time, we were sitting  
in the commandant's office.

40  
00:03:37,920 --> 00:03:41,970  
And while we were there,  
he received a notice

41  
00:03:41,970 --> 00:03:45,330  
that the laws had  
changed, and everything

42  
00:03:45,330 --> 00:03:50,520  
that had been done for us before  
was not acceptable anymore,

43  
00:03:50,520 --> 00:03:53,340  
and everything had to be redone.

44  
00:03:53,340 --> 00:03:57,270  
So all of these delays  
were emotionally very

45  
00:03:57,270 --> 00:03:59,000  
difficult to take, naturally.

46  
00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:01,860

47  
00:04:01,860 --> 00:04:06,000  
And at the same time,  
there was a notice

48

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:11,160  
that older people were being  
sent to a different camp,

49

00:04:11,160 --> 00:04:16,860  
and both my grandfather and my  
grandmother were on that list.

50

00:04:16,860 --> 00:04:20,190  
And at one point,  
we got a notice,

51

00:04:20,190 --> 00:04:25,410  
or they got a notice that in  
two days, they were being--

52

00:04:25,410 --> 00:04:26,370  
that they were leaving.

53

00:04:26,370 --> 00:04:28,890

54

00:04:28,890 --> 00:04:33,900  
And we thought that we were not  
going to be leaving for a while

55

00:04:33,900 --> 00:04:34,470  
yet.

56

00:04:34,470 --> 00:04:36,270  
We thought there was a delay.

57

00:04:36,270 --> 00:04:41,040  
As it turns out, just  
as we were saying

58

00:04:41,040 --> 00:04:46,260  
goodbye to my  
grandmother, there was

59

00:04:46,260 --> 00:04:51,480

a call that Sondheimers  
at the Kommandantur.

60  
00:04:51,480 --> 00:05:01,110  
And we said-- oh, my sister ran  
to the other part of the camp

61  
00:05:01,110 --> 00:05:05,790  
to notify my father.

62  
00:05:05,790 --> 00:05:11,130  
And he said, well, we will have  
to go, all of us, right away.

63  
00:05:11,130 --> 00:05:12,930  
And my sister said,  
well, we can't.

64  
00:05:12,930 --> 00:05:16,020  
Mother and Lore and I  
can't, because we're just

65  
00:05:16,020 --> 00:05:20,310  
in the middle of preparing  
our grandmother for leaving.

66  
00:05:20,310 --> 00:05:22,710  
And of course, we had  
no idea if we were ever

67  
00:05:22,710 --> 00:05:25,830  
going to see each other again.

68  
00:05:25,830 --> 00:05:32,190  
So my father was very angry,  
and he went by himself,

69  
00:05:32,190 --> 00:05:37,170  
and we just stayed behind  
with our grandmother.

70  
00:05:37,170 --> 00:05:38,250  
Your father went to--

71  
00:05:38,250 --> 00:05:40,530  
He went to the Kommandantur.

72  
00:05:40,530 --> 00:05:47,310  
And just as we were saying  
goodbye to our grandmother,

73  
00:05:47,310 --> 00:05:52,440  
and she was ready to go into  
the car, my father arrived.

74  
00:05:52,440 --> 00:05:56,580  
And he was furious, because he  
said he had gotten his papers,

75  
00:05:56,580 --> 00:06:02,910  
and the commandant wouldn't  
give our papers to him.

76  
00:06:02,910 --> 00:06:05,230  
We had to show up personally.

77  
00:06:05,230 --> 00:06:08,490  
And he thought that just because  
we weren't there immediately

78  
00:06:08,490 --> 00:06:11,440  
when the commandant  
ordered us to,

79  
00:06:11,440 --> 00:06:13,980  
that we would forfeit  
the whole thing.

80  
00:06:13,980 --> 00:06:16,440  
He was just getting  
really panicky about it,

81  
00:06:16,440 --> 00:06:18,960  
and he was angry.

82

00:06:18,960 --> 00:06:25,590  
So we had to just run off, and  
it was a very, very dramatic

83  
00:06:25,590 --> 00:06:28,350  
experience.

84  
00:06:28,350 --> 00:06:33,000  
But we, as it turned out,  
we did receive our papers,

85  
00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:35,490  
and we were told  
that we were leaving

86  
00:06:35,490 --> 00:06:37,400  
the next day on the Saturday.

87  
00:06:37,400 --> 00:06:39,400  
What does that mean with  
your grandmother, then?

88  
00:06:39,400 --> 00:06:43,920  
My grandparents were  
in a truck or a car--

89  
00:06:43,920 --> 00:06:45,660  
I don't remember  
which-- and were

90  
00:06:45,660 --> 00:06:47,940  
being sent to a different camp.

91  
00:06:47,940 --> 00:06:49,350  
Do you know which camp?

92  
00:06:49,350 --> 00:06:51,090  
It was called Camp NoÃ©.

93  
00:06:51,090 --> 00:06:57,510  
I am not entirely sure exactly  
where the camp was located.

94

00:06:57,510 --> 00:06:58,440

In France?

95

00:06:58,440 --> 00:06:59,760

Yes, in France.

96

00:06:59,760 --> 00:07:03,810

And a lot of the young--  
what they did at the time is

97

00:07:03,810 --> 00:07:08,520

separate out the old people  
from the young people,

98

00:07:08,520 --> 00:07:10,320

so that it would be--

99

00:07:10,320 --> 00:07:14,010

I mean, in retrospect, we  
realize what they were doing.

100

00:07:14,010 --> 00:07:17,790

They were telling the old people  
that they would be better taken

101

00:07:17,790 --> 00:07:20,170

care of there.

102

00:07:20,170 --> 00:07:22,710

And the younger people  
were told that they

103

00:07:22,710 --> 00:07:26,280

were going to a much  
nicer camp later on, where

104

00:07:26,280 --> 00:07:33,060

they would be able to live in  
stone houses, and as a family.

105

00:07:33,060 --> 00:07:37,230

Actually, I'm not too

sure of the conditions

106  
00:07:37,230 --> 00:07:40,650  
in the other camp,  
Rivesaltes, what it was like.

107  
00:07:40,650 --> 00:07:43,380

108  
00:07:43,380 --> 00:07:49,110  
But some of my  
friends, the children,

109  
00:07:49,110 --> 00:07:51,420  
were then separated  
from the parents

110  
00:07:51,420 --> 00:07:55,420  
by the French underground.

111  
00:07:55,420 --> 00:07:59,190  
And some of them  
were saved, some

112  
00:07:59,190 --> 00:08:00,720  
of the really younger people.

113  
00:08:00,720 --> 00:08:03,540  
But then the older  
people, the parents

114  
00:08:03,540 --> 00:08:09,570  
and the older teenagers,  
19, 20-year-old siblings

115  
00:08:09,570 --> 00:08:14,760  
of my friends, they  
all didn't make it.

116  
00:08:14,760 --> 00:08:15,990  
What happened to them?

117

00:08:15,990 --> 00:08:20,640

They were eventually,  
when the Germans occupied

118

00:08:20,640 --> 00:08:24,000

the rest of France  
in 1941, '42, they

119

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:25,785

were all sent to Auschwitz.

120

00:08:25,785 --> 00:08:28,590

They were all sent to Poland.

121

00:08:28,590 --> 00:08:29,850

And your grandparents?

122

00:08:29,850 --> 00:08:42,000

My grandparents, from NoÃ©, were  
taken by the French Catholic

123

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:42,500

Church.

124

00:08:42,500 --> 00:08:45,620

125

00:08:45,620 --> 00:08:51,530

They had a hospice  
for poor older people,

126

00:08:51,530 --> 00:08:54,890

and they were  
fortunate to end up

127

00:08:54,890 --> 00:08:59,990

in this hospice in  
[? Romain, ?] where

128

00:08:59,990 --> 00:09:10,640

the conditions were not good, as  
far as hardship was concerned.

129

00:09:10,640 --> 00:09:16,310

They didn't have any food,  
but they could be together.

130

00:09:16,310 --> 00:09:19,730

My grandparents  
were both together.

131

00:09:19,730 --> 00:09:25,190

And my grandfather  
eventually died.

132

00:09:25,190 --> 00:09:26,150

He had a stroke.

133

00:09:26,150 --> 00:09:30,020

But my grandmother was  
able to take care of him

134

00:09:30,020 --> 00:09:33,440

and be with him to  
the very end, and he

135

00:09:33,440 --> 00:09:39,860

had a regular Jewish funeral.

136

00:09:39,860 --> 00:09:44,720

And we even have the eulogy  
that one of his friends,

137

00:09:44,720 --> 00:09:49,700

that he made, did  
at the funeral.

138

00:09:49,700 --> 00:09:51,660

So they were very fortunate.

139

00:09:51,660 --> 00:10:00,860

My grandfather was, I think,  
close to 80 at the time.

140

00:10:00,860 --> 00:10:03,770

And my grandmother survived  
and came to New York.

141  
00:10:03,770 --> 00:10:05,960  
She survived the war  
and came to New York.

142  
00:10:05,960 --> 00:10:08,670  
So your grandfather  
was buried in France?

143  
00:10:08,670 --> 00:10:10,550  
Yes, yes.

144  
00:10:10,550 --> 00:10:19,910  
And my sister was in Europe  
last year, and before she went,

145  
00:10:19,910 --> 00:10:26,540  
she wrote to that little town,  
[? Romain, ?] several times

146  
00:10:26,540 --> 00:10:28,470  
and tried to contact the--

147  
00:10:28,470 --> 00:10:33,030

148  
00:10:33,030 --> 00:10:34,970  
what is it called--

149  
00:10:34,970 --> 00:10:40,850  
the mayor of the town, and  
she never got a response.

150  
00:10:40,850 --> 00:10:43,590  
Because she really  
wanted to go there.

151  
00:10:43,590 --> 00:10:46,610  
She wanted to find my  
grandfather's grave,

152

00:10:46,610 --> 00:10:54,710  
and she also wanted to thank  
the convent and the people who

153

00:10:54,710 --> 00:10:56,720  
saved them for doing that.

154

00:10:56,720 --> 00:10:59,210  
And she wasn't able  
to, because she never

155

00:10:59,210 --> 00:11:00,740  
had gotten a response at all.

156

00:11:00,740 --> 00:11:04,380  
She tried several  
times, which is too bad.

157

00:11:04,380 --> 00:11:09,020  
But she then planned  
to go to the town

158

00:11:09,020 --> 00:11:11,300  
anyway and do the  
research on her own,

159

00:11:11,300 --> 00:11:16,530  
but she was too exhausted and  
she was never able to make it.

160

00:11:16,530 --> 00:11:21,867  
So originally, your grandparents  
were not invited or included

161

00:11:21,867 --> 00:11:23,600  
in this idea to  
go to [INAUDIBLE]..

162

00:11:23,600 --> 00:11:25,820  
They were not included.

163

00:11:25,820 --> 00:11:30,740

That's another  
part of the story.

164  
00:11:30,740 --> 00:11:36,500  
It was, unfortunately,  
only for very young people.

165  
00:11:36,500 --> 00:11:43,070  
They wanted, as far as the  
Jewish organization was

166  
00:11:43,070 --> 00:11:48,590  
concerned, it was to be  
an experiment whether--

167  
00:11:48,590 --> 00:11:50,720  
you have to remember,  
in 1940, when

168  
00:11:50,720 --> 00:11:54,200  
people were going to  
concentration camps,

169  
00:11:54,200 --> 00:11:56,630  
Joint and HIAS  
decided they will try

170  
00:11:56,630 --> 00:11:59,330  
an experiment in the  
Dominican Republic

171  
00:11:59,330 --> 00:12:05,890  
to see if young people  
could work as farmers

172  
00:12:05,890 --> 00:12:11,030  
in tropical conditions, and not  
having, not knowing anything

173  
00:12:11,030 --> 00:12:12,620  
about farming.

174  
00:12:12,620 --> 00:12:14,300

I mean, this is--

175  
00:12:14,300 --> 00:12:17,030  
it's so weird.

176  
00:12:17,030 --> 00:12:19,950  
And so my parents were--

177  
00:12:19,950 --> 00:12:20,450  
[LAUGHING]

178  
00:12:20,450 --> 00:12:24,170  
[INAUDIBLE] a second,  
and I [INAUDIBLE]..

179  
00:12:24,170 --> 00:12:26,990  
OK.

180  
00:12:26,990 --> 00:12:30,200  
I think I'll get  
back to that later.

181  
00:12:30,200 --> 00:12:35,390

182  
00:12:35,390 --> 00:12:42,170  
So the next day, we  
left the camp by train

183  
00:12:42,170 --> 00:12:45,455  
with 12 other people.

184  
00:12:45,455 --> 00:12:48,020

185  
00:12:48,020 --> 00:12:57,080  
And we left Saturday around noon  
and didn't arrive in Marseilles

186  
00:12:57,080 --> 00:13:00,920  
until Sunday late at night.

187

00:13:00,920 --> 00:13:06,080

And we had two French  
guards with us,

188

00:13:06,080 --> 00:13:07,970

but they were friendly.

189

00:13:07,970 --> 00:13:12,810

We had to spend the  
night on a bench

190

00:13:12,810 --> 00:13:17,270

in a little town in France,  
at the waiting room,

191

00:13:17,270 --> 00:13:20,450

but we were able to go  
to a real restaurant

192

00:13:20,450 --> 00:13:26,750

and eat real food off tables,  
you know, sit at a table

193

00:13:26,750 --> 00:13:29,700

and have real china  
and silverware.

194

00:13:29,700 --> 00:13:35,040

That was a big  
experience at the time.

195

00:13:35,040 --> 00:13:39,800

And when we arrived  
in Marseilles,

196

00:13:39,800 --> 00:13:45,800

we had distant relatives  
who had emigrated to France,

197

00:13:45,800 --> 00:13:50,360

but then had to leave Paris  
and were living in Marseilles,

198

00:13:50,360 --> 00:13:52,820  
in a hotel.

199

00:13:52,820 --> 00:13:55,970  
And my dad had written  
to them and told them

200

00:13:55,970 --> 00:13:58,610  
that we were coming,  
so they actually

201

00:13:58,610 --> 00:14:02,780  
were at the train  
station to welcome us.

202

00:14:02,780 --> 00:14:14,990  
And that was a very wonderful  
feeling, to have someone there.

203

00:14:14,990 --> 00:14:18,770  
It turned out that  
our destination

204

00:14:18,770 --> 00:14:23,180  
was supposed to be the  
Hotel Terminus, which

205

00:14:23,180 --> 00:14:27,650  
was a form of a camp.

206

00:14:27,650 --> 00:14:30,860  
But the guards had no  
idea where that was.

207

00:14:30,860 --> 00:14:38,540  
And my relative's son,  
who was about the same age

208

00:14:38,540 --> 00:14:41,060  
as my sister, about  
18, went with the guard

209

00:14:41,060 --> 00:14:42,980  
into town to find it.

210  
00:14:42,980 --> 00:14:48,690  
And in the meantime, when they  
came back two hours later,

211  
00:14:48,690 --> 00:14:53,210  
they came back and we  
were told that there

212  
00:14:53,210 --> 00:14:55,530  
was only one room available.

213  
00:14:55,530 --> 00:15:04,140  
So we were allowed to spend  
the night with our relatives

214  
00:15:04,140 --> 00:15:09,260  
at their place in the  
hotel, and then we

215  
00:15:09,260 --> 00:15:12,830  
had to check in to the other  
place the next morning.

216  
00:15:12,830 --> 00:15:16,534

217  
00:15:16,534 --> 00:15:18,800  
Do you remember that  
Terminus hotel at all?

218  
00:15:18,800 --> 00:15:20,720  
Yes, I remember that very well.

219  
00:15:20,720 --> 00:15:23,690

220  
00:15:23,690 --> 00:15:25,460  
We got a room.

221

00:15:25,460 --> 00:15:27,690  
We were very crowded.

222  
00:15:27,690 --> 00:15:33,260  
We were my mother, my sister,  
and myself, and one other woman

223  
00:15:33,260 --> 00:15:36,990  
the first few days, one  
room, two beds, four people.

224  
00:15:36,990 --> 00:15:40,670  
And then eventually  
we got a fifth person

225  
00:15:40,670 --> 00:15:41,970  
coming into the room.

226  
00:15:41,970 --> 00:15:45,740  
So I guess I must have  
slept with two other people,

227  
00:15:45,740 --> 00:15:49,640  
since I was the smallest one.

228  
00:15:49,640 --> 00:15:51,840  
Was it well-furnished,  
or shabbily?

229  
00:15:51,840 --> 00:15:54,020  
Well, it was shabbily furnished.

230  
00:15:54,020 --> 00:15:57,890  
But to us, it was luxurious,  
because we had a real wardrobe.

231  
00:15:57,890 --> 00:16:01,740  
We had a sink in the  
room with running water.

232  
00:16:01,740 --> 00:16:07,640  
We had real beds, and we  
had a mirror, which I just

233  
00:16:07,640 --> 00:16:10,920  
saw in my sister's  
diary that we considered

234  
00:16:10,920 --> 00:16:13,580  
that an immense luxury.

235  
00:16:13,580 --> 00:16:17,150  
Because in the  
camp, we were never

236  
00:16:17,150 --> 00:16:18,570  
able to look into a mirror.

237  
00:16:18,570 --> 00:16:19,710  
There was no such thing.

238  
00:16:19,710 --> 00:16:22,250

239  
00:16:22,250 --> 00:16:24,980  
Did you have washing  
and toilet facilities?

240  
00:16:24,980 --> 00:16:29,110  
We had a sink, so I think  
we just washed at the sink

241  
00:16:29,110 --> 00:16:29,750  
in the room.

242  
00:16:29,750 --> 00:16:31,235  
And that, too, was a luxury.

243  
00:16:31,235 --> 00:16:37,670

244  
00:16:37,670 --> 00:16:39,950  
My father had to stay  
in a different place.

245

00:16:39,950 --> 00:16:41,120

The men were not--

246

00:16:41,120 --> 00:16:46,880

they were outside in a camp that  
was called Les Milles, which

247

00:16:46,880 --> 00:16:53,390

is a little town not too far  
from Provence, Aix en Provence,

248

00:16:53,390 --> 00:16:57,620

so it was a really pretty area.

249

00:16:57,620 --> 00:17:04,550

And we could walk around and  
take care of our business

250

00:17:04,550 --> 00:17:09,569

during the day in Marseilles,  
but we had a curfew.

251

00:17:09,569 --> 00:17:13,069

We had to be back by  
7 o'clock, I believe.

252

00:17:13,069 --> 00:17:16,710

And the food situation  
was terrible.

253

00:17:16,710 --> 00:17:21,329

We were we were  
hungry all the time.

254

00:17:21,329 --> 00:17:28,212

What the hotel provided  
was just a soup, and just

255

00:17:28,212 --> 00:17:30,545

a little bit better than what  
we had gotten in the camp.

256

00:17:30,545 --> 00:17:33,590

257

00:17:33,590 --> 00:17:36,710

But apparently,  
once in a while, we

258

00:17:36,710 --> 00:17:39,230

were able to buy some  
things on the black market

259

00:17:39,230 --> 00:17:44,510

or get some ration, buy  
some bread ration cards.

260

00:17:44,510 --> 00:17:54,440

And the mood in  
Marseilles, in May-- see,

261

00:17:54,440 --> 00:17:58,880

we were there from  
February to May--

262

00:17:58,880 --> 00:18:04,130

was very, very panicky  
and frightening,

263

00:18:04,130 --> 00:18:06,410

and there were all  
kinds of rumors.

264

00:18:06,410 --> 00:18:09,020

And every day seemed  
like an eternity,

265

00:18:09,020 --> 00:18:12,630

because you knew that you  
were sitting on a powder keg.

266

00:18:12,630 --> 00:18:18,085

You knew that the Germans  
were going to come and occupy

267

00:18:18,085 --> 00:18:19,085  
the rest of the country.

268  
00:18:19,085 --> 00:18:22,430

269  
00:18:22,430 --> 00:18:29,090  
It seemed like-- we were  
just able to slip out.

270  
00:18:29,090 --> 00:18:31,570  
And even that, we  
didn't know for sure.

271  
00:18:31,570 --> 00:18:34,260

272  
00:18:34,260 --> 00:18:36,900  
It seems my mother  
and my sister were

273  
00:18:36,900 --> 00:18:39,480  
really afraid that we  
would be turned back again

274  
00:18:39,480 --> 00:18:44,970  
at the border, once we got  
onto the train from Marseilles

275  
00:18:44,970 --> 00:18:54,930  
to Lisbon because we did not  
have a ship passage booked yet,

276  
00:18:54,930 --> 00:18:56,580  
boat passage.

277  
00:18:56,580 --> 00:18:58,950  
Apparently that was one  
of the requirements,

278  
00:18:58,950 --> 00:19:00,970  
and we were not able to get it.

279

00:19:00,970 --> 00:19:03,210

Do you know why?

280

00:19:03,210 --> 00:19:05,100

Probably just because  
everything had

281

00:19:05,100 --> 00:19:10,890

been taken, or all the delays.

282

00:19:10,890 --> 00:19:13,770

I don't remember why.

283

00:19:13,770 --> 00:19:16,020

Did your family have to have  
a certain amount of money

284

00:19:16,020 --> 00:19:18,360

to be able to complete  
these arrangements?

285

00:19:18,360 --> 00:19:24,990

Well, the DORSA, the  
organization, I think,

286

00:19:24,990 --> 00:19:30,030

covered all of that, as far  
as the passage was concerned.

287

00:19:30,030 --> 00:19:33,900

And I think eventually,  
we were supposed to--

288

00:19:33,900 --> 00:19:36,450

I know eventually,  
we had to repay it.

289

00:19:36,450 --> 00:19:41,805

My relatives just  
helped us with that.

290

00:19:41,805 --> 00:19:45,360

Do you know if other  
people in this camp at Gurs

291  
00:19:45,360 --> 00:19:48,150  
were invited to  
do the same thing?

292  
00:19:48,150 --> 00:19:49,440  
No.

293  
00:19:49,440 --> 00:19:51,180  
Well, yes and no.

294  
00:19:51,180 --> 00:19:58,560  
My dad had gotten a letter  
from the DORSA organization

295  
00:19:58,560 --> 00:20:04,350  
to ask if there were other  
people interested in going

296  
00:20:04,350 --> 00:20:05,970  
to the Dominican Republic.

297  
00:20:05,970 --> 00:20:09,240  
And he said it should be  
mostly young people who would

298  
00:20:09,240 --> 00:20:12,270  
be able to work physically.

299  
00:20:12,270 --> 00:20:16,980  
And there was another reason why  
the Dominican Republic wanted,

300  
00:20:16,980 --> 00:20:21,060  
they wanted mainly  
young, white males,

301  
00:20:21,060 --> 00:20:24,960  
because they wanted to  
lighten their population.

302

00:20:24,960 --> 00:20:30,600

That was one of the reasons  
why the dictator, Trujillo, had

303

00:20:30,600 --> 00:20:32,790

extended the invitation to us.

304

00:20:32,790 --> 00:20:43,470

One reason was that he wanted  
to be in favor with President

305

00:20:43,470 --> 00:20:48,240

Roosevelt, because he  
wanted loans of money,

306

00:20:48,240 --> 00:20:52,150

and the other was to  
lighten the population.

307

00:20:52,150 --> 00:20:56,760

He was a terrible racist,  
even though his mother was,

308

00:20:56,760 --> 00:20:59,290

I believe, a Haitian,  
and very dark.

309

00:20:59,290 --> 00:21:01,980

And he was very light.

310

00:21:01,980 --> 00:21:09,260

I don't remember exactly  
what his background was.

311

00:21:09,260 --> 00:21:12,485

But it's a status symbol.

312

00:21:12,485 --> 00:21:15,030

313

00:21:15,030 --> 00:21:18,200

And there had been a very--

314  
00:21:18,200 --> 00:21:24,170  
there had been a war in  
the early '30s, I believe,

315  
00:21:24,170 --> 00:21:29,210  
or in the '20s, between the  
Dominican Republic and Haiti.

316  
00:21:29,210 --> 00:21:33,530  
And the Dominican slaughtered  
about 12,000 Haitians,

317  
00:21:33,530 --> 00:21:38,280  
and they were out of favor with  
Washington because of that.

318  
00:21:38,280 --> 00:21:43,610  
So that was one of the  
reasons why he did that.

319  
00:21:43,610 --> 00:21:52,370  
And he was willing  
to take 100,000 Jews.

320  
00:21:52,370 --> 00:22:00,050  
And no other country,  
no other country

321  
00:22:00,050 --> 00:22:02,090  
made that kind of an offer.

322  
00:22:02,090 --> 00:22:04,850

323  
00:22:04,850 --> 00:22:15,740  
But unfortunately, the people  
from our Jewish organizations,

324  
00:22:15,740 --> 00:22:19,730  
they went to England  
to enlist people,

325

00:22:19,730 --> 00:22:25,700  
and they went to Switzerland,  
and they went to Luxembourg,

326

00:22:25,700 --> 00:22:29,870  
and they never went into  
France, and never went

327

00:22:29,870 --> 00:22:34,690  
into where it was dangerous  
for them personally.

328

00:22:34,690 --> 00:22:37,880  
And it's just unforgivable.

329

00:22:37,880 --> 00:22:40,340  
You mean as in  
Germany or Poland?

330

00:22:40,340 --> 00:22:40,950  
Yeah.

331

00:22:40,950 --> 00:22:42,530  
Well, Germany, I  
guess, they wouldn't

332

00:22:42,530 --> 00:22:43,820  
have been able to get to.

333

00:22:43,820 --> 00:22:48,950

334

00:22:48,950 --> 00:22:55,800  
My dad had a long list of  
people that had wanted to come.

335

00:22:55,800 --> 00:22:59,780  
And when we were in Portugal,  
I remember very clearly

336

00:22:59,780 --> 00:23:05,090  
that almost daily, we went

to the Dominican consulate

337

00:23:05,090 --> 00:23:09,920

and asked, when did they  
leave to go to France?

338

00:23:09,920 --> 00:23:16,190

And every day, we were told,  
no, not yet, tomorrow, tomorrow.

339

00:23:16,190 --> 00:23:20,090

And one day, we were finally  
told, yes, Mr. [PERSONAL NAME]

340

00:23:20,090 --> 00:23:22,370

left yesterday.

341

00:23:22,370 --> 00:23:23,240

Where did he go?

342

00:23:23,240 --> 00:23:26,270

He went back to  
the United States.

343

00:23:26,270 --> 00:23:32,430

And that was just maybe a  
week or so before we left.

344

00:23:32,430 --> 00:23:37,790

And I was not able to  
talk about that story

345

00:23:37,790 --> 00:23:39,860

without really getting--

346

00:23:39,860 --> 00:23:45,950

for years, I couldn't even talk  
about it, because I just, it's

347

00:23:45,950 --> 00:23:46,790

unforgivable.

348

00:23:46,790 --> 00:23:51,660

349

00:23:51,660 --> 00:24:00,980

But to get back to our trip, it  
took a few days from Marseilles

350

00:24:00,980 --> 00:24:02,370

to Lisbon.

351

00:24:02,370 --> 00:24:11,480

And it was a very  
interesting experience,

352

00:24:11,480 --> 00:24:12,630

going through Spain.

353

00:24:12,630 --> 00:24:15,230

354

00:24:15,230 --> 00:24:20,090

Spain had been totally  
devastated by the Civil War,

355

00:24:20,090 --> 00:24:28,680

and there was lots of evidence  
of the war all around,

356

00:24:28,680 --> 00:24:31,320

and the poverty.

357

00:24:31,320 --> 00:24:37,240

And the war ravaged, was worse,  
much worse than in France,

358

00:24:37,240 --> 00:24:38,280

even.

359

00:24:38,280 --> 00:24:41,930

And I remember little  
children on the train,

360

00:24:41,930 --> 00:24:46,590  
little four-year-old Spanish  
boys on the train begging

361  
00:24:46,590 --> 00:24:48,570  
for food and for money.

362  
00:24:48,570 --> 00:24:51,430

363  
00:24:51,430 --> 00:24:53,050  
And then there  
was this contrast,

364  
00:24:53,050 --> 00:24:57,040  
when we got off in Barcelona--

365  
00:24:57,040 --> 00:24:59,470  
we stayed overnight one  
night in Barcelona--

366  
00:24:59,470 --> 00:25:02,770  
and it was this  
gorgeous, gorgeous city

367  
00:25:02,770 --> 00:25:04,870  
that we all fell in love with.

368  
00:25:04,870 --> 00:25:11,470  
And the people were, they  
were like robots, really.

369  
00:25:11,470 --> 00:25:14,970  
They looked so devastated.

370  
00:25:14,970 --> 00:25:18,370

371  
00:25:18,370 --> 00:25:27,166  
And then when we got to  
the Portuguese border,

372

00:25:27,166 --> 00:25:31,070  
we had to go through customs,  
and we were bodily searched.

373  
00:25:31,070 --> 00:25:35,575  
Or maybe that was before,  
several times on the train.

374  
00:25:35,575 --> 00:25:38,200

375  
00:25:38,200 --> 00:25:41,320  
But we had no problem  
getting through the border.

376  
00:25:41,320 --> 00:25:43,880  
And that was a big  
relief, as I mentioned

377  
00:25:43,880 --> 00:25:49,780  
why we had been afraid that  
maybe they would turn us back.

378  
00:25:49,780 --> 00:25:55,690  
And it was like black and  
white, going across the border.

379  
00:25:55,690 --> 00:26:02,510  
Because Portugal was  
so clean and well taken

380  
00:26:02,510 --> 00:26:07,550  
care of that you can't believe,  
when you're on the train,

381  
00:26:07,550 --> 00:26:12,680  
and you're going from here to  
there, what a change that was.

382  
00:26:12,680 --> 00:26:20,660  
And we realized finally  
that we made it.

383

00:26:20,660 --> 00:26:22,190  
It was incredible.

384  
00:26:22,190 --> 00:26:26,230

385  
00:26:26,230 --> 00:26:32,820  
And then we spent about  
three, three and a half weeks

386  
00:26:32,820 --> 00:26:45,390  
in Lisbon and were able to  
get passage on the Nyassa.

387  
00:26:45,390 --> 00:26:49,710  
And I have that on my  
notes, what the date was.

388  
00:26:49,710 --> 00:27:11,470

389  
00:27:11,470 --> 00:27:15,580  
Yeah, we arrived in  
Lisbon on May 10th.

390  
00:27:15,580 --> 00:27:24,070

391  
00:27:24,070 --> 00:27:34,300  
Oh, June, on June  
3rd, we left Portugal.

392  
00:27:34,300 --> 00:27:39,520  
And on the boat, we met  
some of the other people

393  
00:27:39,520 --> 00:27:43,090  
that were destined to go  
to the Dominican Republic.

394  
00:27:43,090 --> 00:27:46,030  
There was one group  
that had been--

395  
00:27:46,030 --> 00:27:48,460  
I think it was the  
Luxembourg group-- that had

396  
00:27:48,460 --> 00:27:51,940  
been selected in Luxembourg.

397  
00:27:51,940 --> 00:27:56,350  
And those groups were no  
more than maybe 30 people,

398  
00:27:56,350 --> 00:28:05,590  
35 people, and all  
young, single men,

399  
00:28:05,590 --> 00:28:09,760  
and a few young, single  
women and young couples.

400  
00:28:09,760 --> 00:28:11,185  
They were all in  
their early 20s.

401  
00:28:11,185 --> 00:28:14,840

402  
00:28:14,840 --> 00:28:18,560  
Did you, either in France  
or Spain or Portugal,

403  
00:28:18,560 --> 00:28:21,320  
find any reaction towards  
the Jews amongst the people?

404  
00:28:21,320 --> 00:28:26,930

405  
00:28:26,930 --> 00:28:34,400  
Well, in France, the people  
that were guarding us,

406

00:28:34,400 --> 00:28:36,590  
they were collaborators.

407  
00:28:36,590 --> 00:28:44,180  
So although they were  
not openly terrible,

408  
00:28:44,180 --> 00:28:48,990  
sometimes they were  
in the camp also.

409  
00:28:48,990 --> 00:28:53,030  
And I remember that the  
woman who ran the-- it

410  
00:28:53,030 --> 00:28:54,870  
was so-called hotel.

411  
00:28:54,870 --> 00:29:02,180  
I mean, it was a hotel  
that wasn't making it,

412  
00:29:02,180 --> 00:29:06,120  
and obviously, the owners  
were collaborators.

413  
00:29:06,120 --> 00:29:08,540  
So they were given this,  
they were paid something

414  
00:29:08,540 --> 00:29:11,010  
by the government.

415  
00:29:11,010 --> 00:29:16,370  
So she-- I remember the woman--  
she was very tough, very tough.

416  
00:29:16,370 --> 00:29:20,750

417  
00:29:20,750 --> 00:29:25,100  
You always had the sense  
that she didn't like you,

418  
00:29:25,100 --> 00:29:29,015  
and she was not your-- she  
certainly was not your friend.

419  
00:29:29,015 --> 00:29:31,560

420  
00:29:31,560 --> 00:29:35,120  
And other than that, we didn't  
have all that much contact

421  
00:29:35,120 --> 00:29:38,780  
with the French people.

422  
00:29:38,780 --> 00:29:44,040  
And we didn't speak all  
that much French, either.

423  
00:29:44,040 --> 00:29:50,030  
But there was one  
Armenian, an old man

424  
00:29:50,030 --> 00:29:56,270  
who was an Armenian who  
was a helper at the hotel.

425  
00:29:56,270 --> 00:29:58,610  
He was kind of a kitchen helper.

426  
00:29:58,610 --> 00:30:02,990  
And he seemed to  
be just a lonely,

427  
00:30:02,990 --> 00:30:05,330  
you know, unhappy old man.

428  
00:30:05,330 --> 00:30:08,400  
I don't know.

429  
00:30:08,400 --> 00:30:12,620  
He was looking for

just human contact.

430  
00:30:12,620 --> 00:30:18,260  
I don't know exactly what  
his political leanings were,

431  
00:30:18,260 --> 00:30:21,740  
but since he was an  
Armenian, he certainly, I

432  
00:30:21,740 --> 00:30:26,030  
think he sympathized  
with our predicament.

433  
00:30:26,030 --> 00:30:29,900  
I think we all had that feeling.

434  
00:30:29,900 --> 00:30:33,920  
In Spain, we didn't  
really have any contact.

435  
00:30:33,920 --> 00:30:40,190  
And in Portugal,  
whatever contact

436  
00:30:40,190 --> 00:30:43,440  
we did have with the  
population, they were neutral.

437  
00:30:43,440 --> 00:30:49,760  
There were lots of Nazis in  
uniform all over Portugal,

438  
00:30:49,760 --> 00:30:53,450  
and we were really paranoid.

439  
00:30:53,450 --> 00:30:58,400  
I remember that very well,  
that we sometimes were afraid

440  
00:30:58,400 --> 00:31:00,740  
that they were going to  
follow us in the street

441  
00:31:00,740 --> 00:31:03,770  
and do something to us.

442  
00:31:03,770 --> 00:31:10,460  
But the Portuguese  
population was friendly.

443  
00:31:10,460 --> 00:31:11,630  
They were not unfriendly.

444  
00:31:11,630 --> 00:31:16,160

445  
00:31:16,160 --> 00:31:26,840  
And on our arrival in New  
York, when we arrived,

446  
00:31:26,840 --> 00:31:29,870  
we were looking down,  
you know, at the people.

447  
00:31:29,870 --> 00:31:35,120  
And my father kept  
saying he thought that he

448  
00:31:35,120 --> 00:31:36,890  
saw his brother in the crowd.

449  
00:31:36,890 --> 00:31:40,210

450  
00:31:40,210 --> 00:31:43,090  
And as it turned  
out, I don't think

451  
00:31:43,090 --> 00:31:47,800  
that anybody was allowed  
to make contact with us.

452  
00:31:47,800 --> 00:31:54,510  
But we found out later, when

our other relatives visited us,

453

00:31:54,510 --> 00:32:01,750

we were not allowed to go  
and be with our relatives.

454

00:32:01,750 --> 00:32:03,700

Even though we had  
a transit visa,

455

00:32:03,700 --> 00:32:08,290

we were on Ellis  
Island for three weeks.

456

00:32:08,290 --> 00:32:11,360

457

00:32:11,360 --> 00:32:15,190

And when our  
relatives finally were

458

00:32:15,190 --> 00:32:17,080

able to visit us  
on Ellis Island,

459

00:32:17,080 --> 00:32:21,310

we found out that my  
uncle had just died

460

00:32:21,310 --> 00:32:24,980

two weeks before we arrived.

461

00:32:24,980 --> 00:32:28,600

He had had a heart  
attack and died.

462

00:32:28,600 --> 00:32:33,190

So that was a big  
disappointment, certainly,

463

00:32:33,190 --> 00:32:35,590

for my father.

464

00:32:35,590 --> 00:32:40,900

I had no recollection  
of that uncle at all.

465

00:32:40,900 --> 00:32:46,210

And I did not really know  
the American relatives.

466

00:32:46,210 --> 00:32:52,640

My sister did, because they had  
lived in Germany for some time,

467

00:32:52,640 --> 00:32:55,000

and they came to visit us.

468

00:32:55,000 --> 00:32:59,200

But I was just a baby, and  
I didn't remember them.

469

00:32:59,200 --> 00:33:07,000

So that was then very exciting,  
to meet my aunt and my cousin.

470

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:11,800

And in Ellis Island,  
everybody came to visit us,

471

00:33:11,800 --> 00:33:14,270

well, all the relatives  
and lots and lots

472

00:33:14,270 --> 00:33:18,730

of friends from Germany  
came to visit us,

473

00:33:18,730 --> 00:33:21,100

and they brought us  
clothes and food.

474

00:33:21,100 --> 00:33:28,910

And it seemed like  
heaven, in a way.

475

00:33:28,910 --> 00:33:32,350

But on the other hand,  
there were the guards, too,

476

00:33:32,350 --> 00:33:35,260

the American guards, and they  
were constantly clicking,

477

00:33:35,260 --> 00:33:36,490

counting us.

478

00:33:36,490 --> 00:33:39,220

They had those little  
machines in their hand,

479

00:33:39,220 --> 00:33:42,700

counting everybody.

480

00:33:42,700 --> 00:33:44,710

And the reason we were not--

481

00:33:44,710 --> 00:33:51,760

we arrived in June, 1941,  
and we were considered

482

00:33:51,760 --> 00:33:54,880

German citizens, aliens.

483

00:33:54,880 --> 00:33:59,970

And so they were afraid  
that we might be Nazis,

484

00:33:59,970 --> 00:34:05,080

and they wouldn't let  
us go into New York.

485

00:34:05,080 --> 00:34:14,050

486

00:34:14,050 --> 00:34:19,690

The guards in Ellis Island  
were not all that friendly.

487  
00:34:19,690 --> 00:34:25,810  
And at one point, it must  
have been about a week

488  
00:34:25,810 --> 00:34:30,560  
before we left, I got sick.

489  
00:34:30,560 --> 00:34:32,679  
I had a tummy ache.

490  
00:34:32,679 --> 00:34:35,230  
I was 11 years old,  
and I hadn't been used

491  
00:34:35,230 --> 00:34:37,850  
to eating real food anymore.

492  
00:34:37,850 --> 00:34:43,120  
And I had a wonderful time  
eating pears, and you know,

493  
00:34:43,120 --> 00:34:46,989  
fresh fruit, and I  
remember corn flakes.

494  
00:34:46,989 --> 00:34:53,440  
That was our first  
experience with cold cereal,

495  
00:34:53,440 --> 00:34:55,000  
plus all the  
chocolate and things

496  
00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:58,420  
that our relatives brought us.

497  
00:34:58,420 --> 00:35:02,290  
So there was a--

498  
00:35:02,290 --> 00:35:06,040  
we had a medical,

every morning, I

499

00:35:06,040 --> 00:35:10,540  
think someone came, a doctor  
or nurse, to check us out,

500

00:35:10,540 --> 00:35:12,250  
if we had any problems.

501

00:35:12,250 --> 00:35:15,430

502

00:35:15,430 --> 00:35:20,720  
And I mentioned that  
I had a tummy ache,

503

00:35:20,720 --> 00:35:26,150  
and so I was given a laxative.

504

00:35:26,150 --> 00:35:31,100  
And I was also told that maybe  
I had appendicitis, which

505

00:35:31,100 --> 00:35:35,060  
is just exactly what you do.

506

00:35:35,060 --> 00:35:37,130  
And then they told  
me that I had to go

507

00:35:37,130 --> 00:35:41,150  
to the hospital for tests, and  
my mother couldn't come along.

508

00:35:41,150 --> 00:35:44,120  
And I didn't speak any English.

509

00:35:44,120 --> 00:35:48,380  
And on Ellis Island,  
the buildings,

510

00:35:48,380 --> 00:35:50,490

the hospital was in  
a different building.

511  
00:35:50,490 --> 00:35:53,520  
And you don't go above ground.

512  
00:35:53,520 --> 00:35:55,970  
There are tunnels underground.

513  
00:35:55,970 --> 00:36:00,830  
And there would be  
one woman taking me

514  
00:36:00,830 --> 00:36:05,510  
to one room, maybe a few paces  
to here, and they would say,

515  
00:36:05,510 --> 00:36:10,370  
you sit here, and somebody else  
will come and take you further.

516  
00:36:10,370 --> 00:36:14,330  
And I was sitting there  
for maybe an hour or more,

517  
00:36:14,330 --> 00:36:18,970  
and nobody came, and I  
had to go to the bathroom.

518  
00:36:18,970 --> 00:36:21,190  
They had given me a laxative.

519  
00:36:21,190 --> 00:36:22,340  
Nobody came.

520  
00:36:22,340 --> 00:36:25,220  
I didn't know how to  
find the bathroom.

521  
00:36:25,220 --> 00:36:32,700  
And finally, I was looking  
for somebody, and they said,

522

00:36:32,700 --> 00:36:34,060  
do you need anything?

523

00:36:34,060 --> 00:36:36,050  
I said, yes, I have  
to go to the closet,

524

00:36:36,050 --> 00:36:38,240  
because in German,  
it's the Klosett.

525

00:36:38,240 --> 00:36:41,060

526

00:36:41,060 --> 00:36:46,980  
And I finally, finally was  
able to find a bathroom.

527

00:36:46,980 --> 00:36:51,050  
And I don't remember  
how many hours

528

00:36:51,050 --> 00:36:55,520  
it took them to get me from  
one building to the next.

529

00:36:55,520 --> 00:37:00,630  
And then I arrived  
at the hospital,

530

00:37:00,630 --> 00:37:05,730  
and I was supposed to  
get an examination.

531

00:37:05,730 --> 00:37:08,070  
That examination  
didn't materialize

532

00:37:08,070 --> 00:37:10,740  
for about three or four days.

533

00:37:10,740 --> 00:37:14,650

My parents were not  
allowed to visit me.

534  
00:37:14,650 --> 00:37:21,210  
And I was given a  
nightshirt, which

535  
00:37:21,210 --> 00:37:26,340  
was a shirt that came  
from here to here on me,

536  
00:37:26,340 --> 00:37:29,580  
and it had lots of big  
holes in the front.

537  
00:37:29,580 --> 00:37:35,790  
And the buttons were missing,  
and they gave me a safety pin

538  
00:37:35,790 --> 00:37:38,460  
to hold it together.

539  
00:37:38,460 --> 00:37:42,570  
I don't remember what  
I had on my feet.

540  
00:37:42,570 --> 00:37:46,290

541  
00:37:46,290 --> 00:37:52,230  
And most of the other  
patients in the hospital where

542  
00:37:52,230 --> 00:37:58,480  
I was where women of  
staff members, either

543  
00:37:58,480 --> 00:38:05,620  
staff themselves, or family  
of staff at Ellis Island.

544  
00:38:05,620 --> 00:38:10,060  
And I was the only

little child, and not one

545

00:38:10,060 --> 00:38:14,200  
of the American ladies  
kind of befriended me,

546

00:38:14,200 --> 00:38:16,000  
and, you know, mothered me.

547

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:17,615  
I was just totally ignored.

548

00:38:17,615 --> 00:38:20,540

549

00:38:20,540 --> 00:38:25,430  
And that was my hospital  
experience on Ellis Island.

550

00:38:25,430 --> 00:38:27,980  
What was the diagnosis?

551

00:38:27,980 --> 00:38:28,850  
I never got one.

552

00:38:28,850 --> 00:38:31,430

553

00:38:31,430 --> 00:38:35,600  
They did take me in one  
time, and they put me

554

00:38:35,600 --> 00:38:38,570  
on an examination table.

555

00:38:38,570 --> 00:38:42,570  
And I was so excited and  
frightened that I broke out

556

00:38:42,570 --> 00:38:45,830  
on a rash on my chest.

557

00:38:45,830 --> 00:38:48,200

So they looked at  
that, and they thought

558

00:38:48,200 --> 00:38:51,260

that might be something  
really strange,

559

00:38:51,260 --> 00:38:54,260

and that was the end of it.

560

00:38:54,260 --> 00:38:57,020

I don't remember them ever  
giving me a blood test,

561

00:38:57,020 --> 00:39:02,300

or even feeling my  
stomach or anything.

562

00:39:02,300 --> 00:39:04,400

Fortunately, there was  
nothing wrong with me.

563

00:39:04,400 --> 00:39:08,630

564

00:39:08,630 --> 00:39:12,500

But I kept wondering,  
what's going to happen?

565

00:39:12,500 --> 00:39:15,650

I knew that we were  
supposed to leave

566

00:39:15,650 --> 00:39:21,980

to go to the Dominican Republic  
any day, and I had no contact.

567

00:39:21,980 --> 00:39:24,200

And I kept thinking,  
well, maybe they're

568

00:39:24,200 --> 00:39:26,030  
going to forget  
about me, and then

569  
00:39:26,030 --> 00:39:29,990  
eventually I'll be able to  
live with the Kehrs, which

570  
00:39:29,990 --> 00:39:31,860  
were my relatives in New York.

571  
00:39:31,860 --> 00:39:34,280  
And I had this, I  
kept thinking, maybe I

572  
00:39:34,280 --> 00:39:37,190  
won't go to the  
Dominican Republic.

573  
00:39:37,190 --> 00:39:40,100  
There had been rumors  
on the boat, it seems,

574  
00:39:40,100 --> 00:39:46,430  
that things on the Dominican  
Republic were terrible,

575  
00:39:46,430 --> 00:39:48,065  
and at Ellis Island.

576  
00:39:48,065 --> 00:39:52,970

577  
00:39:52,970 --> 00:40:02,620  
But my cousin Walter,  
who was my idol--

578  
00:40:02,620 --> 00:40:03,840  
I adored him.

579  
00:40:03,840 --> 00:40:07,960  
He was, he is four  
years older than I.

580  
00:40:07,960 --> 00:40:11,370  
And when we were little  
children, we played together,

581  
00:40:11,370 --> 00:40:15,750  
and I just, I was going to  
marry Walter when I grow up.

582  
00:40:15,750 --> 00:40:18,210  
And I thought, I'll have to--

583  
00:40:18,210 --> 00:40:22,050  
I'm going to stay in New York,  
and I'll live with the Kehrs,

584  
00:40:22,050 --> 00:40:25,770  
and I'll have a big  
brother, Walter.

585  
00:40:25,770 --> 00:40:27,880  
Never mind the  
rest of the family.

586  
00:40:27,880 --> 00:40:30,330  
They can go to the  
Dominican Republic,

587  
00:40:30,330 --> 00:40:31,590  
and I'll stay in New York.

588  
00:40:31,590 --> 00:40:34,740

589  
00:40:34,740 --> 00:40:41,880  
As it turned out, the call came.

590  
00:40:41,880 --> 00:40:46,830  
There was also delays with which  
boat we were going to go on.

591  
00:40:46,830 --> 00:40:54,390

And the call came that  
the group was leaving.

592  
00:40:54,390 --> 00:40:57,990  
I think we met another  
group on Ellis Island that

593  
00:40:57,990 --> 00:41:01,560  
was also going.

594  
00:41:01,560 --> 00:41:10,980  
And they were getting into,  
they were piling into cars

595  
00:41:10,980 --> 00:41:15,780  
to get to the pier, to New York.

596  
00:41:15,780 --> 00:41:21,810  
Well, from, I guess they had to  
take a car to the ferry first,

597  
00:41:21,810 --> 00:41:25,260  
to get to the pier in New York.

598  
00:41:25,260 --> 00:41:27,102  
And I wasn't there.

599  
00:41:27,102 --> 00:41:28,380  
Still in the hospital?

600  
00:41:28,380 --> 00:41:29,940  
I was still in the hospital.

601  
00:41:29,940 --> 00:41:32,700  
And I found out  
later that my mother

602  
00:41:32,700 --> 00:41:38,580  
refused to get into the  
car until they brought me.

603  
00:41:38,580 --> 00:41:40,860

So then they made  
this, you know,

604  
00:41:40,860 --> 00:41:43,470  
somebody came to  
me in the hospital

605  
00:41:43,470 --> 00:41:48,630  
and brought me over directly  
from the hospital to the pier

606  
00:41:48,630 --> 00:41:49,770  
to be with my family.

607  
00:41:49,770 --> 00:41:52,280

608  
00:41:52,280 --> 00:41:53,710  
That was New York.

609  
00:41:53,710 --> 00:41:56,662

610  
00:41:56,662 --> 00:41:57,890  
It was fun.

611  
00:41:57,890 --> 00:42:00,860

612  
00:42:00,860 --> 00:42:03,540  
What was the living  
conditions on Ellis Island?

613  
00:42:03,540 --> 00:42:07,130  
On Ellis Island,  
well, they were clean.

614  
00:42:07,130 --> 00:42:08,180  
We had good beds.

615  
00:42:08,180 --> 00:42:10,340  
Everybody had their own beds.

616  
00:42:10,340 --> 00:42:16,830  
We had a big dormitory  
with maybe 10.

617  
00:42:16,830 --> 00:42:18,680  
I don't remember  
exactly, but there were

618  
00:42:18,680 --> 00:42:21,890  
quite a few women in one room.

619  
00:42:21,890 --> 00:42:25,610  
But for me, that was heaven.

620  
00:42:25,610 --> 00:42:26,780  
I really didn't care.

621  
00:42:26,780 --> 00:42:29,540  
Of course, we were  
very unhappy that we

622  
00:42:29,540 --> 00:42:33,410  
couldn't be with our family.

623  
00:42:33,410 --> 00:42:37,140  
We had wanted to  
be with our family.

624  
00:42:37,140 --> 00:42:41,960  
And it was very difficult from  
them to come from Manhattan,

625  
00:42:41,960 --> 00:42:44,990  
to come to Ellis Island  
maybe two, three times a week

626  
00:42:44,990 --> 00:42:48,140  
to see us.

627  
00:42:48,140 --> 00:42:52,130  
But aside from that, if

we couldn't be with them,

628

00:42:52,130 --> 00:42:54,890

Ellis Island, as far  
as I was concerned,

629

00:42:54,890 --> 00:42:57,800

it was so much better than  
what we had left behind.

630

00:42:57,800 --> 00:43:00,950

And we knew that there was  
going to be an end to it.

631

00:43:00,950 --> 00:43:02,420

It was a temporary thing.

632

00:43:02,420 --> 00:43:07,550

So we were fed, and we had beds.

633

00:43:07,550 --> 00:43:08,590

What more did we need?

634

00:43:08,590 --> 00:43:11,120

And we were going away.

635

00:43:11,120 --> 00:43:12,070

We were out of hell.

636

00:43:12,070 --> 00:43:20,880

My sister's diary said  
when she-- actually, she

637

00:43:20,880 --> 00:43:24,060

typed it all up, and she  
had parts of it published.

638

00:43:24,060 --> 00:43:27,720

And she titled it Liebe  
Gottes Danke Dir, which

639

00:43:27,720 --> 00:43:31,740

means dear Lord, I thank you.

640  
00:43:31,740 --> 00:43:35,280  
And that's what she had  
written in her diary

641  
00:43:35,280 --> 00:43:43,940  
when we left France,  
when we get to Portugal.

642  
00:43:43,940 --> 00:43:49,940  
She said that we got out  
of this witch's brew.

643  
00:43:49,940 --> 00:43:55,710  
That's exactly the  
way she had thought,

644  
00:43:55,710 --> 00:44:01,520  
and it's how we all felt.

645  
00:44:01,520 --> 00:44:06,620  
And then the next comes a  
completely different chapter

646  
00:44:06,620 --> 00:44:17,130  
with the tropics, which was very  
exciting, very exciting to--

647  
00:44:17,130 --> 00:44:21,410  
it was fun on the  
boat, on the Algonquin.

648  
00:44:21,410 --> 00:44:24,170

649  
00:44:24,170 --> 00:44:32,150  
At night, most of the  
young people in the group

650  
00:44:32,150 --> 00:44:35,690  
were in their, as I said  
before, in their early 20s.

651  
00:44:35,690 --> 00:44:39,350  
And a lot of them came  
from Austria, from Vienna.

652  
00:44:39,350 --> 00:44:42,170  
And there was a  
few young men who

653  
00:44:42,170 --> 00:44:48,680  
were very good on the mandolin,  
and at night, we had concerts.

654  
00:44:48,680 --> 00:44:51,170  
We had singalongs  
with the mandolin.

655  
00:44:51,170 --> 00:44:57,950  
And there we are, floating  
on the Atlantic Ocean

656  
00:44:57,950 --> 00:45:01,100  
and singing, and having  
a wonderful time,

657  
00:45:01,100 --> 00:45:04,700  
and, I imagine, feeling very  
guilty at the same time.

658  
00:45:04,700 --> 00:45:09,080

659  
00:45:09,080 --> 00:45:17,760  
There was one experience, one  
of the matrons on the boat told

660  
00:45:17,760 --> 00:45:20,520  
my father he should shave  
his little mustache,

661  
00:45:20,520 --> 00:45:25,470  
because it made him look too  
much like Hitler, which he did.

662  
00:45:25,470 --> 00:45:29,880

663  
00:45:29,880 --> 00:45:33,750  
And I remember stopping.

664  
00:45:33,750 --> 00:45:39,000  
It was a banana boat, and  
we had about three stops

665  
00:45:39,000 --> 00:45:43,350  
in Puerto Rico, where the  
bananas were unloaded.

666  
00:45:43,350 --> 00:45:46,200  
I mean loaded, and I  
don't remember what

667  
00:45:46,200 --> 00:45:49,080  
they delivered in Puerto Rico.

668  
00:45:49,080 --> 00:45:56,070  
But it was a fairy  
land, all of a sudden.

669  
00:45:56,070 --> 00:46:05,700  
And little boys  
came onto the boat.

670  
00:46:05,700 --> 00:46:08,490  
They had us drop  
pennies in the ocean,

671  
00:46:08,490 --> 00:46:11,040  
and they dived for the pennies.

672  
00:46:11,040 --> 00:46:15,640  
And they also came on board and  
they sold these big bananas,

673  
00:46:15,640 --> 00:46:17,640

and you know, we  
said, oh, my goodness.

674  
00:46:17,640 --> 00:46:19,890  
We had never seen  
such big bananas.

675  
00:46:19,890 --> 00:46:21,330  
Aren't they wonderful?

676  
00:46:21,330 --> 00:46:26,100  
So we bought some, and when  
we started eating them,

677  
00:46:26,100 --> 00:46:29,160  
they didn't taste like bananas.

678  
00:46:29,160 --> 00:46:30,870  
They were plantains.

679  
00:46:30,870 --> 00:46:33,660  
But we didn't know that,  
and we ate them raw.

680  
00:46:33,660 --> 00:46:39,412  
What strange tasting  
bananas they were.

681  
00:46:39,412 --> 00:46:42,690  
They became one of  
my favorite foods,

682  
00:46:42,690 --> 00:46:45,270  
cooked, baked, eventually.

683  
00:46:45,270 --> 00:46:48,750

684  
00:46:48,750 --> 00:46:55,740  
And it took about a week to  
get to the Dominican Republic,

685

00:46:55,740 --> 00:47:02,190  
and we arrived in  
Puerto Plata, which

686  
00:47:02,190 --> 00:47:09,560  
is about 10 miles  
from Sosua, which is

687  
00:47:09,560 --> 00:47:13,310  
the name of the little village.

688  
00:47:13,310 --> 00:47:23,760  
We were given-- actually,  
Trujillo gave our organization

689  
00:47:23,760 --> 00:47:29,370  
a huge piece of land  
for us to settle.

690  
00:47:29,370 --> 00:47:35,430  
And it's a beautiful, absolutely  
beautiful piece of land,

691  
00:47:35,430 --> 00:47:40,320  
right on the ocean, and  
there's always a breeze.

692  
00:47:40,320 --> 00:47:46,620  
And it's on the Atlantic  
side of the island, which

693  
00:47:46,620 --> 00:47:49,740  
is a little bit  
cooler and breezier.

694  
00:47:49,740 --> 00:47:53,970  
The capital is Santo  
Domingo, which was then

695  
00:47:53,970 --> 00:47:56,100  
called Ciudad Trujillo.

696  
00:47:56,100 --> 00:48:03,000

That is on the Caribbean,  
and it's always very humid,

697  
00:48:03,000 --> 00:48:05,700  
and no breeze at all.

698  
00:48:05,700 --> 00:48:11,970  
And the Caribbean is not  
all that great for swimming,

699  
00:48:11,970 --> 00:48:13,430  
and there are lots of sharks.

700  
00:48:13,430 --> 00:48:18,090  
But we had the most  
wonderful beach,

701  
00:48:18,090 --> 00:48:21,810  
one of the finest  
beaches in the country.

702  
00:48:21,810 --> 00:48:31,860  
And the land had belonged  
to the United Fruit Company,

703  
00:48:31,860 --> 00:48:38,040  
and they realized that  
the soil was not conducive

704  
00:48:38,040 --> 00:48:43,320  
for them to have a plantation,  
a fruit plantation there.

705  
00:48:43,320 --> 00:48:47,880  
So they abandoned it and gave it  
up, and Trujillo gave it to us.

706  
00:48:47,880 --> 00:48:51,730

707  
00:48:51,730 --> 00:48:54,300  
And over the years,  
we also found out

708  
00:48:54,300 --> 00:48:58,485  
that farming, which is what we  
were supposed to be there for,

709  
00:48:58,485 --> 00:48:59,700  
did not work out.

710  
00:48:59,700 --> 00:49:04,340

711  
00:49:04,340 --> 00:49:10,265  
People were supposed to  
go form little groups.

712  
00:49:10,265 --> 00:49:13,130  
And they did form  
little groups and have

713  
00:49:13,130 --> 00:49:17,360  
established small settlements.

714  
00:49:17,360 --> 00:49:23,210  
There was a main  
area for those who

715  
00:49:23,210 --> 00:49:27,230  
chose not to be on settlements.

716  
00:49:27,230 --> 00:49:31,490  
That was right along  
the shore, which is now

717  
00:49:31,490 --> 00:49:37,010  
the wonderful tourist area.

718  
00:49:37,010 --> 00:49:48,170  
And those who chose to go  
on settlements were given--

719  
00:49:48,170 --> 00:49:53,720  
they were able to build

little houses, wooden houses,

720

00:49:53,720 --> 00:49:58,700

and they were given  
a mule, and a horse,

721

00:49:58,700 --> 00:50:04,290

and a certain amount  
of land to cultivate.

722

00:50:04,290 --> 00:50:08,430

723

00:50:08,430 --> 00:50:14,190

And I don't remember if  
they started out with--

724

00:50:14,190 --> 00:50:17,790

yes, they did have  
maybe one or two cows,

725

00:50:17,790 --> 00:50:21,630

because we immediately had  
our own dairy products.

726

00:50:21,630 --> 00:50:23,940

I mean our own milk.

727

00:50:23,940 --> 00:50:25,760

Dairy products came much later.

728

00:50:25,760 --> 00:50:28,650

729

00:50:28,650 --> 00:50:37,700

But I think one or two more  
groups arrived after we did.

730

00:50:37,700 --> 00:50:42,810

And by the end of  
'41, the door closed.

731

00:50:42,810 --> 00:50:44,860  
No one came anymore.

732  
00:50:44,860 --> 00:50:46,020  
Was that because of--

733  
00:50:46,020 --> 00:50:46,812  
Because of the war.

734  
00:50:46,812 --> 00:50:47,645  
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

735  
00:50:47,645 --> 00:50:48,280  
No, no, no.

736  
00:50:48,280 --> 00:50:55,860  
Because once the United States  
entered the war, in December,

737  
00:50:55,860 --> 00:50:59,386  
that it wasn't possible anymore.

738  
00:50:59,386 --> 00:51:03,580

739  
00:51:03,580 --> 00:51:07,710  
We had wanted to bring  
our other relatives,

740  
00:51:07,710 --> 00:51:10,900  
but it never happened.

741  
00:51:10,900 --> 00:51:13,665  
Why was the entry of the  
United States a critical thing?

742  
00:51:13,665 --> 00:51:17,310

743  
00:51:17,310 --> 00:51:20,600  
I don't think there  
was any direct--

744  
00:51:20,600 --> 00:51:26,712  
how were people going to come  
from Europe to the Dominican--

745  
00:51:26,712 --> 00:51:28,920  
They wouldn't be able to  
stop at the port in New York

746  
00:51:28,920 --> 00:51:29,852  
or in Puerto Rico?

747  
00:51:29,852 --> 00:51:32,310  
Is that what you mean?

748  
00:51:32,310 --> 00:51:39,810  
Right, although  
my brother-in-law

749  
00:51:39,810 --> 00:51:42,510  
came from Austria.

750  
00:51:42,510 --> 00:51:49,770  
He found out about it in  
Vienna, and he went on his own.

751  
00:51:49,770 --> 00:51:51,090  
He traveled by himself.

752  
00:51:51,090 --> 00:51:54,750  
And I think he was one  
of the few people who

753  
00:51:54,750 --> 00:51:57,900  
did not come in a group.

754  
00:51:57,900 --> 00:52:04,530  
And he went by train all the  
way through Russia and China,

755  
00:52:04,530 --> 00:52:11,370  
and I think then took a boat

from Japan to San Francisco,

756

00:52:11,370 --> 00:52:15,810

and then, I mean, he went  
all the way around the world.

757

00:52:15,810 --> 00:52:18,270

How he got the money and  
how he managed to do it,

758

00:52:18,270 --> 00:52:19,900

I really don't know.

759

00:52:19,900 --> 00:52:20,820

I don't know how.

760

00:52:20,820 --> 00:52:23,400

761

00:52:23,400 --> 00:52:27,270

And I don't think there were too  
many people who came that way.

762

00:52:27,270 --> 00:52:31,860

There was a group of  
like 18, 19-year-olds,

763

00:52:31,860 --> 00:52:36,330

to between 17 and 20,  
that came from England.

764

00:52:36,330 --> 00:52:40,380

Those, I think, because  
they were afraid

765

00:52:40,380 --> 00:52:46,020

that their permits in England  
were going to run out,

766

00:52:46,020 --> 00:52:49,770

and that they would have  
had to return to Austria.

767

00:52:49,770 --> 00:52:53,670

There was one young man  
who was from Hungary

768

00:52:53,670 --> 00:52:56,460

who had been studying.

769

00:52:56,460 --> 00:52:58,740

Actually, he came from New York.

770

00:52:58,740 --> 00:53:00,780

He was Hungarian,  
and he had been

771

00:53:00,780 --> 00:53:02,700

studying in the United States.

772

00:53:02,700 --> 00:53:07,620

And his student visa ran out,  
and somehow he found out.

773

00:53:07,620 --> 00:53:12,450

774

00:53:12,450 --> 00:53:21,600

And we were only a little  
bit over 600 people.

775

00:53:21,600 --> 00:53:22,710

Out of [INAUDIBLE].

776

00:53:22,710 --> 00:53:28,130

Out of 100,000, yes.

777

00:53:28,130 --> 00:53:33,200

There were about 2,000 people  
that came on their own,

778

00:53:33,200 --> 00:53:38,090

living in the capital, who chose  
never to go to the settlement.

779

00:53:38,090 --> 00:53:44,480

They were just refugees  
that went to the Dominican

780

00:53:44,480 --> 00:53:48,320

Republic on their own, had  
nothing to do with the Joint

781

00:53:48,320 --> 00:53:49,280

organization.

782

00:53:49,280 --> 00:53:55,590

783

00:53:55,590 --> 00:54:05,910

But Sosua was, at the  
time, most of the people,

784

00:54:05,910 --> 00:54:11,190

they couldn't wait to  
leave and go back to, go

785

00:54:11,190 --> 00:54:16,100

to their final destination,  
which was the United States,

786

00:54:16,100 --> 00:54:23,260

for most everybody,  
and just did not

787

00:54:23,260 --> 00:54:25,930

want to commit themselves  
to do any kind of farming

788

00:54:25,930 --> 00:54:28,480

and have a settlement.

789

00:54:28,480 --> 00:54:30,700

There were some  
people like that.

790

00:54:30,700 --> 00:54:35,260

Others did commit  
themselves and tried,

791  
00:54:35,260 --> 00:54:42,700  
and saw that it didn't work  
out, that it was difficult.

792  
00:54:42,700 --> 00:54:51,950  
Eventually, they realized  
that only cattle--

793  
00:54:51,950 --> 00:54:55,180  
they could just  
be dairy farmers,

794  
00:54:55,180 --> 00:54:58,360  
which is what they still  
are today, to this day.

795  
00:54:58,360 --> 00:55:06,255  
They have, there are maybe,  
I don't know, maybe 50 people

796  
00:55:06,255 --> 00:55:06,755  
left.

797  
00:55:06,755 --> 00:55:11,750

798  
00:55:11,750 --> 00:55:17,790  
I don't know how many  
remained, maybe 100, maybe 150,

799  
00:55:17,790 --> 00:55:18,590  
originally.

800  
00:55:18,590 --> 00:55:20,120  
Most of them died by now.

801  
00:55:20,120 --> 00:55:26,250

802

00:55:26,250 --> 00:55:29,070  
It really was a paradise.

803  
00:55:29,070 --> 00:55:35,430  
We didn't know it at the  
time, but it was a paradise.

804  
00:55:35,430 --> 00:55:36,270  
We didn't know.

805  
00:55:36,270 --> 00:55:41,040  
We were worried about  
our family in Europe,

806  
00:55:41,040 --> 00:55:46,410  
but we had no idea  
how bad things were.

807  
00:55:46,410 --> 00:55:49,690  
Had you heard anything  
from your grandparents?

808  
00:55:49,690 --> 00:55:57,390  
We were getting some letters  
through our relatives through--

809  
00:55:57,390 --> 00:56:02,640  
they were able to correspond  
with our relatives in New York,

810  
00:56:02,640 --> 00:56:09,128  
and we had contact with the  
New York family all the time.

811  
00:56:09,128 --> 00:56:13,545  
News from Europe  
was very sparse.

812  
00:56:13,545 --> 00:56:16,575

813  
00:56:16,575 --> 00:56:18,450  
Did you hear from your

grandparents directly,

814

00:56:18,450 --> 00:56:20,670  
or news from the relatives?

815

00:56:20,670 --> 00:56:24,420  
I think it was-- it all  
came through our relatives.

816

00:56:24,420 --> 00:56:26,430  
I don't remember now.

817

00:56:26,430 --> 00:56:28,530  
Maybe we did get some letters.

818

00:56:28,530 --> 00:56:30,120  
I have some letters.

819

00:56:30,120 --> 00:56:34,770  
They may have been  
sent directly to us.

820

00:56:34,770 --> 00:56:36,840  
I think maybe they were,  
as a matter of fact.

821

00:56:36,840 --> 00:56:40,160

822

00:56:40,160 --> 00:56:45,040  
I don't know whether, once  
France was totally occupied,

823

00:56:45,040 --> 00:56:48,820  
whether any mail would go out.

824

00:56:48,820 --> 00:56:51,860  
But then the Dominican  
Republic was a neutral country.

825

00:56:51,860 --> 00:56:53,860  
So I think we did.

826

00:56:53,860 --> 00:56:57,250

We must have gotten some mail  
there, directly ourselves.

827

00:56:57,250 --> 00:56:59,550

I have the letters,  
but not the envelopes.

828

00:56:59,550 --> 00:57:04,540

So I don't know exactly  
where they went.

829

00:57:04,540 --> 00:57:08,090

When you arrived, did they make  
provision for housing and food

830

00:57:08,090 --> 00:57:09,490

[INAUDIBLE].

831

00:57:09,490 --> 00:57:15,040

At first, we lived in barracks.

832

00:57:15,040 --> 00:57:20,380

They had some barracks that  
were just for single people,

833

00:57:20,380 --> 00:57:22,795

and there were several  
barracks for families.

834

00:57:22,795 --> 00:57:26,950

835

00:57:26,950 --> 00:57:29,110

Essentially, there  
was no difference,

836

00:57:29,110 --> 00:57:31,540

because it was two  
people to a room.

837

00:57:31,540 --> 00:57:36,160  
And it was just a long  
barrack with separate rooms,

838  
00:57:36,160 --> 00:57:47,510  
and then in the center was an  
area with sinks and showers.

839  
00:57:47,510 --> 00:57:51,160  
So that was like  
a community area.

840  
00:57:51,160 --> 00:57:52,390  
And we had latrines.

841  
00:57:52,390 --> 00:57:56,200  
We had to go outside  
for latrines.

842  
00:57:56,200 --> 00:58:03,460  
But after about six months, we  
were given a little cottage.

843  
00:58:03,460 --> 00:58:07,600  
Or rather we had two  
rooms in a little cottage.

844  
00:58:07,600 --> 00:58:09,970  
There were other people  
who had rooms there too,

845  
00:58:09,970 --> 00:58:12,910  
but we were able-- we had  
our own kitchen, so we were

846  
00:58:12,910 --> 00:58:16,160  
able to cook for ourselves.

847  
00:58:16,160 --> 00:58:21,670  
Up until then, we ate in  
the community kitchen,

848  
00:58:21,670 --> 00:58:24,110

and our own people.

849

00:58:24,110 --> 00:58:29,020

It was a little bit like  
a kibbutz, in a way.

850

00:58:29,020 --> 00:58:35,170

What I need to say is  
about the Dominican people

851

00:58:35,170 --> 00:58:37,730

themselves and the country.

852

00:58:37,730 --> 00:58:40,900

853

00:58:40,900 --> 00:58:42,610

They are just wonderful people.

854

00:58:42,610 --> 00:58:47,710

They don't know what  
anti-Semitism is.

855

00:58:47,710 --> 00:58:48,910

It just doesn't exist.

856

00:58:48,910 --> 00:58:52,340

857

00:58:52,340 --> 00:59:01,060

And as a matter of fact,  
many of the upper classes,

858

00:59:01,060 --> 00:59:05,760

Dominicans, are very  
proud when they say--

859

00:59:05,760 --> 00:59:09,840

some of them are very  
proud of Jewish heritage,

860

00:59:09,840 --> 00:59:16,950

that there were quite a  
few morenos that ended up

861  
00:59:16,950 --> 00:59:22,380  
in the Caribbean, and some  
people trace their heritage

862  
00:59:22,380 --> 00:59:27,990  
to Jewish heritage, and  
they're very proud of it.

863  
00:59:27,990 --> 00:59:33,300

864  
00:59:33,300 --> 00:59:35,100  
That was the upper classes.

865  
00:59:35,100 --> 00:59:41,520  
But the native people, who were  
just dirt poor, just who walked

866  
00:59:41,520 --> 00:59:48,540  
barefoot and just had one  
cotton dress on their backs,

867  
00:59:48,540 --> 00:59:50,850  
and those are the people  
that we were dealing with.

868  
00:59:50,850 --> 00:59:52,710  
The poverty was incredible.

869  
00:59:52,710 --> 00:59:55,290

870  
00:59:55,290 --> 01:00:03,270  
But they have an inner charm  
and a wonderful hospitality.

871  
01:00:03,270 --> 01:00:11,670  
And I can't tell you what it  
felt like to be out of Germany

872

01:00:11,670 --> 01:00:16,320

and to be fully  
accepted and equal.

873

01:00:16,320 --> 01:00:18,900

874

01:00:18,900 --> 01:00:23,250

I found out in 1990, when  
I went back with my son

875

01:00:23,250 --> 01:00:26,520

for our 50th  
anniversary celebration,

876

01:00:26,520 --> 01:00:30,120

that we were actually  
given a bill of rights

877

01:00:30,120 --> 01:00:33,540

by Trujillo just for us.

878

01:00:33,540 --> 01:00:36,960

And our bill of rights was--

879

01:00:36,960 --> 01:00:40,230

we had more rights than  
the Dominican people,

880

01:00:40,230 --> 01:00:44,130

because he had a monopoly  
on practically all business.

881

01:00:44,130 --> 01:00:48,210

Anything that was  
lucrative was his monopoly.

882

01:00:48,210 --> 01:00:54,380

His family owned practically  
the entire country.

883

01:00:54,380 --> 01:00:58,290

The rum production and the sugar  
cane production, all of that

884  
01:00:58,290 --> 01:01:04,590  
was in Trujillo hands,  
just a couple of families.

885  
01:01:04,590 --> 01:01:06,120  
We had no restrictions.

886  
01:01:06,120 --> 01:01:08,710

887  
01:01:08,710 --> 01:01:12,160  
Our people could go into  
any kind of business.

888  
01:01:12,160 --> 01:01:15,265  
We had religious  
freedom, of course.

889  
01:01:15,265 --> 01:01:19,120

890  
01:01:19,120 --> 01:01:22,660  
I was trying to get a copy  
of the bill of rights that

891  
01:01:22,660 --> 01:01:27,760  
were given to us when  
I was there in 1990,

892  
01:01:27,760 --> 01:01:29,770  
but I wasn't able to.

893  
01:01:29,770 --> 01:01:32,620  
But we now have a  
museum with all of that,

894  
01:01:32,620 --> 01:01:38,020  
and your niece  
should try to see it.

895

01:01:38,020 --> 01:01:45,700

In 1990, when I was  
there with my son,

896

01:01:45,700 --> 01:01:48,970

we had the opening,  
the ceremonies

897

01:01:48,970 --> 01:01:53,710

of a museum that was built  
by some of the settlers that

898

01:01:53,710 --> 01:01:54,610

remained there.

899

01:01:54,610 --> 01:01:59,160

900

01:01:59,160 --> 01:02:02,170

I went to school.

901

01:02:02,170 --> 01:02:11,250

The schools were-- we  
were short on teachers,

902

01:02:11,250 --> 01:02:20,430

but we were long on educated  
people who just gave us

903

01:02:20,430 --> 01:02:22,140

whatever they were able to.

904

01:02:22,140 --> 01:02:27,740

905

01:02:27,740 --> 01:02:32,540

But after I was  
14 or 15, I think

906

01:02:32,540 --> 01:02:36,230

by the time I was in  
seventh grade, they stopped.

907  
01:02:36,230 --> 01:02:41,060  
They no longer went along  
with the upper grades,

908  
01:02:41,060 --> 01:02:43,220  
and I never did end up with--

909  
01:02:43,220 --> 01:02:46,730  
whatever else education  
I have, I did on my own.

910  
01:02:46,730 --> 01:02:50,780  
But I really had very,  
almost no formal training,

911  
01:02:50,780 --> 01:02:54,185  
because my training was  
interrupted in Germany.

912  
01:02:54,185 --> 01:02:58,940

913  
01:02:58,940 --> 01:03:00,560  
From my first day in school--

914  
01:03:00,560 --> 01:03:03,470  
it was a Jewish school--  
and our teachers constantly

915  
01:03:03,470 --> 01:03:04,480  
left the country.

916  
01:03:04,480 --> 01:03:06,230  
So you know, those  
conditions kept

917  
01:03:06,230 --> 01:03:11,040  
getting smaller and smaller,  
and more and more difficult.

918  
01:03:11,040 --> 01:03:14,630

And then in the  
Dominican Republic,

919  
01:03:14,630 --> 01:03:19,130  
it was not a formal training.

920  
01:03:19,130 --> 01:03:22,730  
But eventually,  
they those settlers

921  
01:03:22,730 --> 01:03:26,780  
that remained had a private  
school and better schools

922  
01:03:26,780 --> 01:03:29,040  
than anywhere else  
in the country.

923  
01:03:29,040 --> 01:03:35,990  
In fact, when I talk to some of  
the people who were born there,

924  
01:03:35,990 --> 01:03:40,250  
who were there at our  
meeting who said that--

925  
01:03:40,250 --> 01:03:42,530  
and whose parents  
remained and who

926  
01:03:42,530 --> 01:03:48,080  
went to school there, and  
eventually went to college

927  
01:03:48,080 --> 01:03:52,700  
in the United States, and were  
better prepared for college

928  
01:03:52,700 --> 01:03:57,080  
in the United States  
than the students that

929  
01:03:57,080 --> 01:04:00,050

came from schools,  
United States schools.

930  
01:04:00,050 --> 01:04:02,600  
But those were  
the schools that--

931  
01:04:02,600 --> 01:04:05,680  
and still are provided  
for the children there.

932  
01:04:05,680 --> 01:04:10,010  
Now, I saw the school  
when I was there in 1990,

933  
01:04:10,010 --> 01:04:14,060  
and they have something  
like 400 children.

934  
01:04:14,060 --> 01:04:21,400  
And most of them are  
native Dominicans

935  
01:04:21,400 --> 01:04:24,100  
that are working in the area.

936  
01:04:24,100 --> 01:04:26,920  
It's now a Dominican town.

937  
01:04:26,920 --> 01:04:31,580  
It is no longer a settlement.

938  
01:04:31,580 --> 01:04:33,315  
Were you given a  
kind of citizenship

939  
01:04:33,315 --> 01:04:34,660  
when you first arrived?

940  
01:04:34,660 --> 01:04:35,260  
No.

941

01:04:35,260 --> 01:04:38,830  
We could have asked for  
it, but we didn't want it.

942  
01:04:38,830 --> 01:04:42,490  
Most of us didn't  
intend to stay.

943  
01:04:42,490 --> 01:04:44,890  
Your parents also?

944  
01:04:44,890 --> 01:04:50,990  
My parents, there was really  
nothing there for them.

945  
01:04:50,990 --> 01:04:54,220  
Unfortunately, my  
parents, my dad

946  
01:04:54,220 --> 01:04:57,370  
had a little bit of  
a problem there doing

947  
01:04:57,370 --> 01:04:58,570  
what he wanted to do.

948  
01:04:58,570 --> 01:05:11,830  
Because our cousin, since he  
was part of the administration,

949  
01:05:11,830 --> 01:05:15,970  
he was always afraid  
of allowing us

950  
01:05:15,970 --> 01:05:22,810  
to do anything that would look  
like he's favoring his uncle,

951  
01:05:22,810 --> 01:05:26,890  
and by doing that,  
actually restricted

952  
01:05:26,890 --> 01:05:28,990

my dad in doing  
things that would

953  
01:05:28,990 --> 01:05:30,710  
have been very helpful for him.

954  
01:05:30,710 --> 01:05:36,410  
And I remember my dad  
wanted to buy cattle,

955  
01:05:36,410 --> 01:05:38,830  
and he needed a loan  
to get the cattle.

956  
01:05:38,830 --> 01:05:42,340  
And those people who started  
doing that eventually

957  
01:05:42,340 --> 01:05:46,420  
had their own cattle  
farms, and still have them,

958  
01:05:46,420 --> 01:05:48,230  
and became very wealthy.

959  
01:05:48,230 --> 01:05:55,450  
But my dad wasn't allowed  
to take out the loan.

960  
01:05:55,450 --> 01:05:58,900  
And my dad was one of the  
few people who actually

961  
01:05:58,900 --> 01:06:06,130  
had some background in soil,  
because he was a grain and feed

962  
01:06:06,130 --> 01:06:10,150  
dealer in Germany and had  
grown up in a little village,

963  
01:06:10,150 --> 01:06:13,045  
and his business was

related to-- with farmers.

964

01:06:13,045 --> 01:06:15,880

965

01:06:15,880 --> 01:06:19,900

But he wasn't listened  
to, and he was very hurt.

966

01:06:19,900 --> 01:06:24,020

His feelings were very hurt.

967

01:06:24,020 --> 01:06:26,620

On the other hand, I  
have a wonderful report

968

01:06:26,620 --> 01:06:30,460

that he wrote in  
German, unfortunately

969

01:06:30,460 --> 01:06:34,810

hasn't been translated  
yet, with his impressions

970

01:06:34,810 --> 01:06:38,210

about the country and  
about the settlement,

971

01:06:38,210 --> 01:06:41,334

which is really great.

972

01:06:41,334 --> 01:06:43,120

What kind of work did he do?

973

01:06:43,120 --> 01:06:44,830

As a matter of  
fact, yes, my sister

974

01:06:44,830 --> 01:06:46,960

did translate it, and my son.

975

01:06:46,960 --> 01:06:51,820

Yeah, he did it on the  
plane on the way down.

976  
01:06:51,820 --> 01:06:54,910  
He ran the colmado.

977  
01:06:54,910 --> 01:06:56,980  
Now, this is the  
other thing that I

978  
01:06:56,980 --> 01:06:59,050  
need to, wanted  
to talk about, is

979  
01:06:59,050 --> 01:07:03,850  
that within that little  
group of 600 people,

980  
01:07:03,850 --> 01:07:10,180  
we had so many gifted people  
that there wasn't a thing

981  
01:07:10,180 --> 01:07:13,690  
that we could not  
provide on our own.

982  
01:07:13,690 --> 01:07:19,660  
We had a bakery with  
wonderful breads and cakes.

983  
01:07:19,660 --> 01:07:21,760  
We had a restaurant.

984  
01:07:21,760 --> 01:07:29,080  
We had three or four doctors,  
naturally, amongst 600 Jews.

985  
01:07:29,080 --> 01:07:34,600  
We had three or four  
doctors and a dentist.

986  
01:07:34,600 --> 01:07:37,180  
We provided free medical--

987  
01:07:37,180 --> 01:07:39,670  
when I say we, it's  
the organization,

988  
01:07:39,670 --> 01:07:43,210  
DORSA-- provided  
free medical care

989  
01:07:43,210 --> 01:07:50,650  
to any native who was able  
to come to the hospital.

990  
01:07:50,650 --> 01:07:53,260  
And there were long  
lines every day.

991  
01:07:53,260 --> 01:07:57,220  
My sister worked as a nurse.

992  
01:07:57,220 --> 01:08:00,820  
We had lots and lots  
of babies, and they

993  
01:08:00,820 --> 01:08:07,240  
were absolutely beautiful,  
absolutely wonderful children.

994  
01:08:07,240 --> 01:08:14,470  
When I was there in 1990,  
a son from, actually,

995  
01:08:14,470 --> 01:08:18,250  
one of our teachers who then  
was the principal of the school,

996  
01:08:18,250 --> 01:08:20,590  
he came with his three  
sons and his wife.

997  
01:08:20,590 --> 01:08:27,520  
And one of the sons was looking  
at the pictures of the children

998

01:08:27,520 --> 01:08:34,990  
that were born there, and  
he said, the terrible irony

999

01:08:34,990 --> 01:08:41,430  
of here in Europe, the  
babies were killed,

1000

01:08:41,430 --> 01:08:48,810  
and went to the gas chambers,  
and we had this wonderful crop

1001

01:08:48,810 --> 01:08:49,810  
of children.

1002

01:08:49,810 --> 01:08:51,689  
I have some pictures  
in that thing.

1003

01:08:51,689 --> 01:08:55,700

1004

01:08:55,700 --> 01:09:01,069  
We had people that--

1005

01:09:01,069 --> 01:09:02,540  
wonderful craftspeople.

1006

01:09:02,540 --> 01:09:08,630  
We had carpenters that  
made wonderful furniture.

1007

01:09:08,630 --> 01:09:11,240  
We had a garage.

1008

01:09:11,240 --> 01:09:17,870  
We had the metal  
and machine shop.

1009

01:09:17,870 --> 01:09:21,819

1010  
01:09:21,819 --> 01:09:23,640  
We had a goldsmith.

1011  
01:09:23,640 --> 01:09:25,720  
We had people that  
were making jewelry.

1012  
01:09:25,720 --> 01:09:28,410

1013  
01:09:28,410 --> 01:09:33,090  
I myself, once I left  
school, I was always

1014  
01:09:33,090 --> 01:09:35,520  
interested in arts and  
crafts, and I wanted

1015  
01:09:35,520 --> 01:09:39,779  
to be an artist, worked in a--

1016  
01:09:39,779 --> 01:09:45,300  
well, we were trying to  
make some kind of crafts

1017  
01:09:45,300 --> 01:09:53,379  
that we could produce  
with native products.

1018  
01:09:53,379 --> 01:09:55,890

1019  
01:09:55,890 --> 01:10:00,000  
So we had what was called  
a straw shop, from the palm

1020  
01:10:00,000 --> 01:10:03,600  
leaves, the dried straw.

1021  
01:10:03,600 --> 01:10:10,740  
We were dying and weaving

placemats and handbags.

1022

01:10:10,740 --> 01:10:17,490

And I don't remember all  
of the different products

1023

01:10:17,490 --> 01:10:20,820

that we tried to produce.

1024

01:10:20,820 --> 01:10:32,310

My dad, at one point, tried  
to produce jams and jellies

1025

01:10:32,310 --> 01:10:37,560

and chocolate-covered candied  
fruit through the kitchen,

1026

01:10:37,560 --> 01:10:39,360

with the women in the kitchen.

1027

01:10:39,360 --> 01:10:46,620

He was also involved in working  
with a couple of chemists.

1028

01:10:46,620 --> 01:10:49,290

1029

01:10:49,290 --> 01:10:52,470

They produced  
mosquito repellent.

1030

01:10:52,470 --> 01:10:55,730

1031

01:10:55,730 --> 01:11:06,490

We had the dairy with the, at  
that point, just heavy cream.

1032

01:11:06,490 --> 01:11:10,030

1033

01:11:10,030 --> 01:11:12,940

We had someone who  
produced sausages.

1034  
01:11:12,940 --> 01:11:20,640

1035  
01:11:20,640 --> 01:11:22,230  
We had dressmakers.

1036  
01:11:22,230 --> 01:11:26,455  
We couldn't buy  
clothes, but we made,

1037  
01:11:26,455 --> 01:11:28,080  
we had people who  
made our own clothes.

1038  
01:11:28,080 --> 01:11:30,630

1039  
01:11:30,630 --> 01:11:31,873  
We had everything.

1040  
01:11:31,873 --> 01:11:36,310

1041  
01:11:36,310 --> 01:11:39,570  
And your father was mostly  
involved in this jam and--

1042  
01:11:39,570 --> 01:11:43,410  
No, actually, my  
father then became--

1043  
01:11:43,410 --> 01:11:45,980  
he managed the general store.

1044  
01:11:45,980 --> 01:11:48,800

1045  
01:11:48,800 --> 01:11:59,920  
And he wanted to have as many

of our own native-grown products

1046

01:11:59,920 --> 01:12:03,590

to sell, like tomatoes and  
corn, and those things, what

1047

01:12:03,590 --> 01:12:07,420

they were able to grow.

1048

01:12:07,420 --> 01:12:12,790

But he also ordered  
whatever other products

1049

01:12:12,790 --> 01:12:15,090

we needed in the store.

1050

01:12:15,090 --> 01:12:16,720

And he had his staff there.

1051

01:12:16,720 --> 01:12:17,650

He supervised it.

1052

01:12:17,650 --> 01:12:20,390

1053

01:12:20,390 --> 01:12:22,510

No one got any money.

1054

01:12:22,510 --> 01:12:32,870

Every settler received \$3 pocket  
money a month, and that was it.

1055

01:12:32,870 --> 01:12:36,090

But everything we needed  
was provided for us.

1056

01:12:36,090 --> 01:12:41,990

So the \$3 we had to go to the  
movies, which was like \$0.15.

1057

01:12:41,990 --> 01:12:50,840

And we had a maid, which I

think we paid \$3 a month to her.

1058

01:12:50,840 --> 01:12:54,170

And she did all  
of our heavy work,

1059

01:12:54,170 --> 01:13:04,250

and we cooked from an  
open, a cold stove.

1060

01:13:04,250 --> 01:13:09,980

But we had, someone  
had made aluminum,

1061

01:13:09,980 --> 01:13:13,670

like an aluminum box to  
put on top of the open fire

1062

01:13:13,670 --> 01:13:16,100

so that my mother was  
able to bake a cake.

1063

01:13:16,100 --> 01:13:21,757

And so we always  
kept a fire going.

1064

01:13:21,757 --> 01:13:22,840

Was there a barter system?

1065

01:13:22,840 --> 01:13:24,968

Or how were the  
products distributed?

1066

01:13:24,968 --> 01:13:28,250

1067

01:13:28,250 --> 01:13:33,270

For us, we would  
go to the colmado

1068

01:13:33,270 --> 01:13:37,470

to buy things with  
whatever money we had,

1069  
01:13:37,470 --> 01:13:39,533  
but everything was  
very inexpensive.

1070  
01:13:39,533 --> 01:13:40,200  
It cost pennies.

1071  
01:13:40,200 --> 01:13:43,660

1072  
01:13:43,660 --> 01:13:47,710  
Once a week, or  
maybe twice a week,

1073  
01:13:47,710 --> 01:13:50,230  
they were showing a movie  
in one of the barracks.

1074  
01:13:50,230 --> 01:13:55,192  
We had one barrack that was  
strictly for entertainment.

1075  
01:13:55,192 --> 01:13:55,900  
We had a library.

1076  
01:13:55,900 --> 01:14:00,420

1077  
01:14:00,420 --> 01:14:07,080  
And we had a truck going  
two or three times a week

1078  
01:14:07,080 --> 01:14:12,880  
from Sosua across the country  
to the capital for whatever,

1079  
01:14:12,880 --> 01:14:13,380  
you know.

1080  
01:14:13,380 --> 01:14:16,680  
There was always business there.

1081

01:14:16,680 --> 01:14:21,180

And it was run like a  
democracy, in a way.

1082

01:14:21,180 --> 01:14:24,030

We had s settler  
meeting, which was

1083

01:14:24,030 --> 01:14:30,790

like the old American  
ways of town meeting,

1084

01:14:30,790 --> 01:14:33,730

and tempers ran very high.

1085

01:14:33,730 --> 01:14:38,140

People were under a lot  
of tension, naturally,

1086

01:14:38,140 --> 01:14:40,570

so tempers did run very high.

1087

01:14:40,570 --> 01:14:44,540

And there was a terrible  
shortage of women,

1088

01:14:44,540 --> 01:14:47,990

so there was a lot  
of changing around

1089

01:14:47,990 --> 01:14:52,210

of partners going on, also.

1090

01:14:52,210 --> 01:14:53,950

What about the plan  
of intermarrying

1091

01:14:53,950 --> 01:14:55,570

with the local people?

1092

01:14:55,570 --> 01:15:02,140

Well, since they weren't an awful lot of people that came,

1093

01:15:02,140 --> 01:15:06,640  
it didn't succeed to the extent that Trujillo wanted it to.

1094

01:15:06,640 --> 01:15:08,920  
But those people that are still there

1095

01:15:08,920 --> 01:15:16,900  
today are mostly people who intermarried

1096

01:15:16,900 --> 01:15:20,590  
and decided to stay there, and their children

1097

01:15:20,590 --> 01:15:24,670  
are raised as Jews.

1098

01:15:24,670 --> 01:15:31,240  
And in that film that I showed you,

1099

01:15:31,240 --> 01:15:35,140  
it's just wonderful to see these Dominican-looking,

1100

01:15:35,140 --> 01:15:41,350  
Spanish-speaking children, and preparing for the seder,

1101

01:15:41,350 --> 01:15:44,335  
and it's great.

1102

01:15:44,335 --> 01:15:47,050

1103

01:15:47,050 --> 01:15:49,420  
The children were all beautiful.

1104

01:15:49,420 --> 01:15:59,290

And the children, when we had  
our reunion in June of 1990,

1105

01:15:59,290 --> 01:16:03,520

quite a few of the young  
people that were born there

1106

01:16:03,520 --> 01:16:04,810

came to the reunion.

1107

01:16:04,810 --> 01:16:09,310

And they're now in their  
late 40s, early 50s,

1108

01:16:09,310 --> 01:16:11,290

and they're no longer children.

1109

01:16:11,290 --> 01:16:14,020

And they are just  
wonderful people.

1110

01:16:14,020 --> 01:16:19,660

The daughter of a good  
friend of mine said to me,

1111

01:16:19,660 --> 01:16:22,720

she just had celebrated  
her 25th anniversary,

1112

01:16:22,720 --> 01:16:25,020

and her sons are in college.

1113

01:16:25,020 --> 01:16:31,220

So it was difficult  
to comprehend.

1114

01:16:31,220 --> 01:16:35,770

But it was--

1115

01:16:35,770 --> 01:16:38,440

I meant to bring

you on my album.

1116  
01:16:38,440 --> 01:16:40,420  
It was great to see.

1117  
01:16:40,420 --> 01:16:46,630  
There were two young women  
who, their parents had

1118  
01:16:46,630 --> 01:16:50,260  
been good friends, and they  
had lived in the same cottage

1119  
01:16:50,260 --> 01:16:50,860  
together.

1120  
01:16:50,860 --> 01:16:55,450  
And they had been best  
friends as three-year-olds,

1121  
01:16:55,450 --> 01:16:57,730  
but they came to  
the United States,

1122  
01:16:57,730 --> 01:17:00,170  
and they were not in  
touch with each other,

1123  
01:17:00,170 --> 01:17:04,860  
did not know each  
other anymore at all.

1124  
01:17:04,860 --> 01:17:07,930  
One was in New York, and the  
other one was in Los Angeles.

1125  
01:17:07,930 --> 01:17:12,790  
And they met in  
Sosua two years ago,

1126  
01:17:12,790 --> 01:17:16,840  
and they became such  
good friends again

1127  
01:17:16,840 --> 01:17:19,840  
that they've been  
visiting with each other,

1128  
01:17:19,840 --> 01:17:22,090  
and they talk on the  
phone every week.

1129  
01:17:22,090 --> 01:17:24,530  
And it's incredible.

1130  
01:17:24,530 --> 01:17:25,600  
It's really incredible.

1131  
01:17:25,600 --> 01:17:32,870

1132  
01:17:32,870 --> 01:17:39,080  
We had this reunion, this  
50th anniversary party,

1133  
01:17:39,080 --> 01:17:44,910  
and it was totally arranged  
by the people that remained

1134  
01:17:44,910 --> 01:17:48,080  
and paid for by the  
people that remained,

1135  
01:17:48,080 --> 01:17:55,880  
other than our  
passage and hotel.

1136  
01:17:55,880 --> 01:18:06,240  
But now Sosua is a  
well-known tourist area,

1137  
01:18:06,240 --> 01:18:15,660  
and some of the hotels are  
owned by family of our people.

1138

01:18:15,660 --> 01:18:19,980  
And there are others  
there too that were--

1139  
01:18:19,980 --> 01:18:22,890  
settlers had bought the  
land and then sold it.

1140  
01:18:22,890 --> 01:18:25,920  
There's one big,  
big German hotel,

1141  
01:18:25,920 --> 01:18:34,140  
which actually, the German hotel  
has the prize spot in the area,

1142  
01:18:34,140 --> 01:18:48,560  
and has the nicest, the most  
expensive rooms, and so on.

1143  
01:18:48,560 --> 01:18:51,260  
And they're not all that  
friendly to the Jews,

1144  
01:18:51,260 --> 01:18:53,570  
and they're very  
sorry now that they

1145  
01:18:53,570 --> 01:18:58,415  
sold that land to the Germans.

1146  
01:18:58,415 --> 01:19:02,420

1147  
01:19:02,420 --> 01:19:06,020  
How long did the community  
go on as a viable community?

1148  
01:19:06,020 --> 01:19:12,020  
It started to fall apart right  
after the end of the war.

1149  
01:19:12,020 --> 01:19:20,450

My sister and I left  
in 1946, in March.

1150  
01:19:20,450 --> 01:19:25,710  
So that was 10 months  
after the end of the war.

1151  
01:19:25,710 --> 01:19:29,900  
And by around that time, people  
just, within a year or two,

1152  
01:19:29,900 --> 01:19:31,820  
most people left.

1153  
01:19:31,820 --> 01:19:33,185  
Your parents went with you?

1154  
01:19:33,185 --> 01:19:34,175  
No.

1155  
01:19:34,175 --> 01:19:38,510  
My parents, we really  
couldn't afford it.

1156  
01:19:38,510 --> 01:19:41,870  
My sister and I came  
first, and we worked,

1157  
01:19:41,870 --> 01:19:48,290  
and we then were able to send  
an affidavit for our parents.

1158  
01:19:48,290 --> 01:19:53,630  
So we came in March, and  
they arrived in October,

1159  
01:19:53,630 --> 01:19:55,940  
and we stayed with  
our relatives.

1160  
01:19:55,940 --> 01:19:56,940  
In New York?

1161  
01:19:56,940 --> 01:19:58,760  
Yeah.

1162  
01:19:58,760 --> 01:20:01,707  
So most of the community had  
been waiting for the war to end

1163  
01:20:01,707 --> 01:20:02,540  
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

1164  
01:20:02,540 --> 01:20:05,540  
To end, exactly.

1165  
01:20:05,540 --> 01:20:09,200  
But there were a few  
people who realized

1166  
01:20:09,200 --> 01:20:13,910  
that they had something there,  
and they wanted to stay,

1167  
01:20:13,910 --> 01:20:17,150  
and maybe had no one  
in the United States.

1168  
01:20:17,150 --> 01:20:22,460  
And then there were also those  
mixed marriages who stayed.

1169  
01:20:22,460 --> 01:20:32,000

1170  
01:20:32,000 --> 01:20:37,310  
Mostly the young people, the  
children that were born there,

1171  
01:20:37,310 --> 01:20:41,990  
worked really hard to arrange  
our reunion, our anniversary

1172  
01:20:41,990 --> 01:20:43,640  
party.

1173  
01:20:43,640 --> 01:20:51,650  
They picked us up at the airport  
and drove us in, and dropped us

1174  
01:20:51,650 --> 01:20:52,910  
off at our hotels.

1175  
01:20:52,910 --> 01:20:59,180  
And I like to tell one story  
that happened to my sister, who

1176  
01:20:59,180 --> 01:21:01,880  
came with her son.

1177  
01:21:01,880 --> 01:21:07,100  
Her son lives in California,  
but they met there.

1178  
01:21:07,100 --> 01:21:11,060  
My sister and her son went,  
and I went with my son.

1179  
01:21:11,060 --> 01:21:12,380  
My husband wasn't able to.

1180  
01:21:12,380 --> 01:21:16,940

1181  
01:21:16,940 --> 01:21:22,700  
But my sister and  
her son met in Miami

1182  
01:21:22,700 --> 01:21:28,910  
and took the flight from Miami  
to Puerto Plata together.

1183  
01:21:28,910 --> 01:21:35,990  
She said when they were about  
20 minutes, half an hour

1184  
01:21:35,990 --> 01:21:39,650

out of Puerto Plata,  
the captain on the plane

1185  
01:21:39,650 --> 01:21:43,320  
announced, he said,  
ladies and gentlemen,

1186  
01:21:43,320 --> 01:21:48,860  
we have a very special group  
of people on our plane today.

1187  
01:21:48,860 --> 01:21:56,450  
They're a group of  
refugees from the war who

1188  
01:21:56,450 --> 01:22:04,100  
are going back to the Dominican  
Republic for a reunion.

1189  
01:22:04,100 --> 01:22:07,490  
We would like to welcome  
them, and welcome home.

1190  
01:22:07,490 --> 01:22:11,310

1191  
01:22:11,310 --> 01:22:15,890  
I can't say it without  
choking up myself.

1192  
01:22:15,890 --> 01:22:19,780  
It wasn't on our plane, but  
it's really an incredible story.

1193  
01:22:19,780 --> 01:22:23,430

1194  
01:22:23,430 --> 01:22:26,280  
And that's how the people were.

1195  
01:22:26,280 --> 01:22:33,480  
And every one of the people  
that I met while I was there

1196  
01:22:33,480 --> 01:22:36,330  
had that attitude.

1197  
01:22:36,330 --> 01:22:43,660  
They're just such  
hospitable, friendly people.

1198  
01:22:43,660 --> 01:22:47,960

1199  
01:22:47,960 --> 01:22:53,540  
The Germans are  
so self-centered,

1200  
01:22:53,540 --> 01:22:57,950  
and they cannot tolerate anyone  
not knowing their language,

1201  
01:22:57,950 --> 01:23:00,950  
foreignness, as we even  
know today how they treat

1202  
01:23:00,950 --> 01:23:02,720  
foreigners.

1203  
01:23:02,720 --> 01:23:05,640  
And that's what we were used to.

1204  
01:23:05,640 --> 01:23:10,190  
And we didn't know Spanish.

1205  
01:23:10,190 --> 01:23:14,420  
Well, in Germany, if a foreigner  
couldn't speak the language,

1206  
01:23:14,420 --> 01:23:19,280  
it was open season on  
making fun of them.

1207  
01:23:19,280 --> 01:23:25,760  
No one ever made fun of--

1208  
01:23:25,760 --> 01:23:27,680  
I remember my mother  
saying one time

1209  
01:23:27,680 --> 01:23:33,920  
that she found out afterwards  
that she told our maid to clean

1210  
01:23:33,920 --> 01:23:35,670  
the floor with chicken broth.

1211  
01:23:35,670 --> 01:23:39,020  
Because you know,  
that's just how you--

1212  
01:23:39,020 --> 01:23:39,920  
the word for it.

1213  
01:23:39,920 --> 01:23:42,710  
And she looked it up in the  
dictionary, the German word,

1214  
01:23:42,710 --> 01:23:45,290  
and it turned out  
to be chicken broth.

1215  
01:23:45,290 --> 01:23:49,880  
And they didn't laugh.

1216  
01:23:49,880 --> 01:23:51,980  
They didn't make fun of you.

1217  
01:23:51,980 --> 01:23:57,710  
They just accepted you and  
were kind and considerate.

1218  
01:23:57,710 --> 01:24:01,260

1219  
01:24:01,260 --> 01:24:07,800  
So I went back with, really,

with this feeling of gratitude.

1220

01:24:07,800 --> 01:24:11,160

1221

01:24:11,160 --> 01:24:14,680

Did you miss Dominica  
when you left?

1222

01:24:14,680 --> 01:24:16,890

No, no.

1223

01:24:16,890 --> 01:24:18,330

I was 16 years old.

1224

01:24:18,330 --> 01:24:22,600

And when I got my visa, I  
jumped as high with joy.

1225

01:24:22,600 --> 01:24:25,860

1226

01:24:25,860 --> 01:24:33,660

But there is a connection  
between our group of people,

1227

01:24:33,660 --> 01:24:37,140

because we experienced  
so much together,

1228

01:24:37,140 --> 01:24:42,870

and that it's like  
one big family.

1229

01:24:42,870 --> 01:24:55,200

And I asked myself many  
times in later years,

1230

01:24:55,200 --> 01:25:01,950

what is it that makes me feel  
so strong about this country

1231

01:25:01,950 --> 01:25:03,440  
and these people?

1232  
01:25:03,440 --> 01:25:06,570  
And I was only there for  
five years, which is,

1233  
01:25:06,570 --> 01:25:10,830  
when you're 62, a very  
small part of your life.

1234  
01:25:10,830 --> 01:25:14,800

1235  
01:25:14,800 --> 01:25:18,540  
And I realized  
it's because it was

1236  
01:25:18,540 --> 01:25:21,960  
the first experience  
I had in my life

1237  
01:25:21,960 --> 01:25:25,800  
of being accepted  
and feeling free.

1238  
01:25:25,800 --> 01:25:28,930

1239  
01:25:28,930 --> 01:25:33,340  
And that gave me that  
very, very strong hold.

1240  
01:25:33,340 --> 01:25:36,460  
I never knew what it  
felt like to be free.

1241  
01:25:36,460 --> 01:25:39,930

1242  
01:25:39,930 --> 01:25:45,780  
Even in the United States,  
you always-- there's

1243  
01:25:45,780 --> 01:25:54,330  
that little bit of a barrier  
that it took me a lifetime here

1244  
01:25:54,330 --> 01:25:57,150  
to feel that I'm  
not an outsider,

1245  
01:25:57,150 --> 01:26:01,140  
and that I can be  
proud of being Jewish.

1246  
01:26:01,140 --> 01:26:03,090  
I always had that  
fear of, what are

1247  
01:26:03,090 --> 01:26:04,770  
people going to think of me?

1248  
01:26:04,770 --> 01:26:08,160  
What are they going to--  
are they going to accept me?

1249  
01:26:08,160 --> 01:26:11,880  
I kept that with me in  
one form or another.

1250  
01:26:11,880 --> 01:26:14,010  
If it wasn't Jewish,  
I transferred it

1251  
01:26:14,010 --> 01:26:17,670  
to something else, because  
I'm not with this group.

1252  
01:26:17,670 --> 01:26:18,660  
I'm new in this group.

1253  
01:26:18,660 --> 01:26:19,710  
I'm new in this city.

1254

01:26:19,710 --> 01:26:21,010  
I'm new in San Francisco.

1255  
01:26:21,010 --> 01:26:21,900  
I'm new in New York.

1256  
01:26:21,900 --> 01:26:23,700  
I'm new in Connecticut.

1257  
01:26:23,700 --> 01:26:26,130  
I'm always an outsider.

1258  
01:26:26,130 --> 01:26:31,740  
And I only realized  
that very recently.

1259  
01:26:31,740 --> 01:26:34,650

1260  
01:26:34,650 --> 01:26:39,690  
But in the Dominican Republic,  
that was the first experience

1261  
01:26:39,690 --> 01:26:45,250  
I had what it felt  
like, since I was

1262  
01:26:45,250 --> 01:26:50,740  
only four years old in 1933.

1263  
01:26:50,740 --> 01:26:53,860  
It wasn't the same  
for older people

1264  
01:26:53,860 --> 01:26:58,780  
who had experienced  
some sort of decent life

1265  
01:26:58,780 --> 01:27:02,140  
in Germany, who had some  
equality, our parents.

1266

01:27:02,140 --> 01:27:06,520

And even my sister, with the  
seven years that she's older,

1267

01:27:06,520 --> 01:27:08,950

she had gone to  
the public school

1268

01:27:08,950 --> 01:27:16,150

and had had some Gentile  
friends, but I never did.

1269

01:27:16,150 --> 01:27:18,430

Did you ever regret  
leaving the Dominican

1270

01:27:18,430 --> 01:27:20,890

Republic for those reasons?

1271

01:27:20,890 --> 01:27:24,940

1272

01:27:24,940 --> 01:27:31,540

Not really, because there  
really was nothing there for me,

1273

01:27:31,540 --> 01:27:36,400

other than that, I mean  
culturally and economically.

1274

01:27:36,400 --> 01:27:41,230

And I knew that I  
would never find anyone

1275

01:27:41,230 --> 01:27:43,120

to have a family with.

1276

01:27:43,120 --> 01:27:46,930

1277

01:27:46,930 --> 01:27:50,620

But in other ways, yes,  
I have regretted it.

1278  
01:27:50,620 --> 01:27:51,970  
Because it's peaceful.

1279  
01:27:51,970 --> 01:27:59,590  
There's no stress,  
and very secure now.

1280  
01:27:59,590 --> 01:28:03,280  
The people that are there,  
they're are very well-off.

1281  
01:28:03,280 --> 01:28:06,850  
They can travel and go wherever  
they want to and just come back

1282  
01:28:06,850 --> 01:28:09,120  
whenever they want to.

1283  
01:28:09,120 --> 01:28:10,750  
How did you fare in  
the United States?

1284  
01:28:10,750 --> 01:28:13,980  
You got a job, I gather,  
when you first got here?

1285  
01:28:13,980 --> 01:28:14,830  
Yeah.

1286  
01:28:14,830 --> 01:28:17,220  
I started to work right away.

1287  
01:28:17,220 --> 01:28:20,080  
I had no training in anything.

1288  
01:28:20,080 --> 01:28:25,260  
I was doing piece work and doing  
little, painting little toys,

1289  
01:28:25,260 --> 01:28:29,790  
and eventually met

my husband that way.

1290

01:28:29,790 --> 01:28:33,390

We were painting  
neckties, both of us.

1291

01:28:33,390 --> 01:28:37,360

But until I took some  
courses in accounting,

1292

01:28:37,360 --> 01:28:39,780

that's what I did just.

1293

01:28:39,780 --> 01:28:43,140

At first I was  
painting dolls' dishes,

1294

01:28:43,140 --> 01:28:47,670

and I was getting the  
huge amount of money

1295

01:28:47,670 --> 01:28:57,200

half a penny a piece, in  
1946, half a penny a piece.

1296

01:28:57,200 --> 01:28:58,180

Incredible.

1297

01:28:58,180 --> 01:29:00,170

Yeah.

1298

01:29:00,170 --> 01:29:04,670

If I made \$10 a day,  
I did very well.

1299

01:29:04,670 --> 01:29:06,970

And I made less money  
than the other women,

1300

01:29:06,970 --> 01:29:09,580

because I had to take  
time to go to the bathroom

1301

01:29:09,580 --> 01:29:11,790

more often than  
the rest of them.

1302

01:29:11,790 --> 01:29:15,290

1303

01:29:15,290 --> 01:29:19,240

Did you say you met your  
husband doing the same work?

1304

01:29:19,240 --> 01:29:19,950

Yes.

1305

01:29:19,950 --> 01:29:23,190

My husband is an artist,  
and he had come--

1306

01:29:23,190 --> 01:29:26,430

he had been a  
veteran in the war.

1307

01:29:26,430 --> 01:29:30,200

And in 1946, it was  
difficult to find work.

1308

01:29:30,200 --> 01:29:40,620

And we met in a place  
where we were hand painting

1309

01:29:40,620 --> 01:29:44,370

neckties, silk ties.

1310

01:29:44,370 --> 01:29:47,970

And he showed me how.

1311

01:29:47,970 --> 01:29:48,978

He helped me.

1312

01:29:48,978 --> 01:29:51,970

1313

01:29:51,970 --> 01:30:00,540

Yes, to get back to our reunion,  
the people had arranged for us,

1314

01:30:00,540 --> 01:30:04,380

we had one or two free days.

1315

01:30:04,380 --> 01:30:09,690

I think we arrived  
on a Wednesday,

1316

01:30:09,690 --> 01:30:13,000

and by Friday morning  
we checked in.

1317

01:30:13,000 --> 01:30:14,010

We registered.

1318

01:30:14,010 --> 01:30:22,120

1319

01:30:22,120 --> 01:30:27,160

And then after we registered,  
they took us on a tour

1320

01:30:27,160 --> 01:30:33,550

to show us all the old  
homesteads on buses.

1321

01:30:33,550 --> 01:30:40,800

And there were other people  
there that we did not know.

1322

01:30:40,800 --> 01:30:44,370

There was a small  
group of people that

1323

01:30:44,370 --> 01:30:46,540

came to Sosua after the war--

1324

01:30:46,540 --> 01:30:48,630

I forgot about

that-- from Shanghai.

1325

01:30:48,630 --> 01:30:51,405

There was a group of people  
that came from Shanghai,

1326

01:30:51,405 --> 01:30:55,920

but they either had no  
relatives in the United States,

1327

01:30:55,920 --> 01:30:58,930

or whatever, and they  
decided they wanted to go.

1328

01:30:58,930 --> 01:31:02,490

They heard about the Dominican  
Republic and about Sosua,

1329

01:31:02,490 --> 01:31:07,297

and they arrived, and  
they became Settlers.

1330

01:31:07,297 --> 01:31:10,500

1331

01:31:10,500 --> 01:31:16,950

What they have done is  
they have a corporation.

1332

01:31:16,950 --> 01:31:24,720

Most of the-- all of the people  
that stayed have cattle farms.

1333

01:31:24,720 --> 01:31:28,410

And they pool their  
dairy, their milk,

1334

01:31:28,410 --> 01:31:41,560

and they have a dairy which  
produces most, probably maybe

1335

01:31:41,560 --> 01:31:47,110

75% of all the dairy

products for the island,

1336

01:31:47,110 --> 01:31:48,325

butter, cheese, yogurt.

1337

01:31:48,325 --> 01:31:51,310

1338

01:31:51,310 --> 01:31:55,390

Some of the people that  
stayed, they went to Europe,

1339

01:31:55,390 --> 01:32:01,600

and they studied cheese  
making in the factories there.

1340

01:32:01,600 --> 01:32:03,260

We were there.

1341

01:32:03,260 --> 01:32:07,890

1342

01:32:07,890 --> 01:32:15,075

And they also produce meats,  
sausages, meat products.

1343

01:32:15,075 --> 01:32:18,330

1344

01:32:18,330 --> 01:32:22,260

So it's those two  
things that form

1345

01:32:22,260 --> 01:32:24,630

the core of what they have now.

1346

01:32:24,630 --> 01:32:32,490

And then the tourists, the  
airport in Puerto Plata

1347

01:32:32,490 --> 01:32:36,340

was opened up about

10 or 12 years ago.

1348  
01:32:36,340 --> 01:32:38,850  
And once the airport  
opened up, that

1349  
01:32:38,850 --> 01:32:43,080  
brought in a huge  
influx of tourists

1350  
01:32:43,080 --> 01:32:47,910  
from England and Germany  
and from all over Europe.

1351  
01:32:47,910 --> 01:32:52,920  
It's considered one of  
the less-expensive places

1352  
01:32:52,920 --> 01:32:56,250  
for tourism now.

1353  
01:32:56,250 --> 01:32:58,920  
So then the hotel  
building started.

1354  
01:32:58,920 --> 01:33:03,390  
And you can walk down  
the street in Sosua now,

1355  
01:33:03,390 --> 01:33:05,790  
and you can have French  
food, and Italian food,

1356  
01:33:05,790 --> 01:33:10,440  
and German food, anything  
but Dominican food, almost.

1357  
01:33:10,440 --> 01:33:13,127  
You can find  
Dominican food, but--

1358  
01:33:13,127 --> 01:33:14,460  
You said you went with your son.

1359  
01:33:14,460 --> 01:33:17,380  
Is he your only child?

1360  
01:33:17,380 --> 01:33:17,880  
No.

1361  
01:33:17,880 --> 01:33:19,590  
I have a daughter,  
and I actually

1362  
01:33:19,590 --> 01:33:24,430  
had wanted to go-- wanted  
both children to come.

1363  
01:33:24,430 --> 01:33:26,700  
And my daughter wanted  
to come very badly,

1364  
01:33:26,700 --> 01:33:31,830  
but she had a one-year-old  
baby, and she couldn't leave her

1365  
01:33:31,830 --> 01:33:33,960  
behind, and she couldn't--

1366  
01:33:33,960 --> 01:33:37,170  
it wouldn't have been the  
right place to take her along,

1367  
01:33:37,170 --> 01:33:38,370  
so she couldn't make it.

1368  
01:33:38,370 --> 01:33:40,800  
But I had been there  
with my daughter

1369  
01:33:40,800 --> 01:33:44,130  
and my husband in 1974.

1370  
01:33:44,130 --> 01:33:49,860  
We had made a quick, just

the three of us for a week.

1371

01:33:49,860 --> 01:33:55,080

So my son was the only one  
that had not been there,

1372

01:33:55,080 --> 01:33:59,410

and it was just wonderful.

1373

01:33:59,410 --> 01:34:01,800

It was the most  
exciting experience

1374

01:34:01,800 --> 01:34:06,300

that I had in my  
life, to go back.

1375

01:34:06,300 --> 01:34:11,250

And to go with my son made  
it really extra special,

1376

01:34:11,250 --> 01:34:19,880

because he really got  
an understanding for--

1377

01:34:19,880 --> 01:34:22,270

he said, well, I always  
heard you talk about Sosua,

1378

01:34:22,270 --> 01:34:24,120

but I couldn't picture anything.

1379

01:34:24,120 --> 01:34:26,330

I didn't know what  
it was really like.

1380

01:34:26,330 --> 01:34:29,480

He had met some of the people  
that I'm very friendly with,

1381

01:34:29,480 --> 01:34:34,130

but he said now it really--

1382

01:34:34,130 --> 01:34:39,920

And the young people made  
a connection, a very strong

1383

01:34:39,920 --> 01:34:43,010

connection, so that they  
formed their own organization,

1384

01:34:43,010 --> 01:34:46,640

because they want to  
keep the spirit up.

1385

01:34:46,640 --> 01:34:51,830

The idea, one of the strongest  
ideas behind the reunion

1386

01:34:51,830 --> 01:34:59,660

was that because of  
the intermarriage

1387

01:34:59,660 --> 01:35:06,380

and the lack of being able to  
continue the Jewish heritage,

1388

01:35:06,380 --> 01:35:09,932

the people that are  
there now don't want to--

1389

01:35:09,932 --> 01:35:16,340

they don't want the area to  
forget what happened here,

1390

01:35:16,340 --> 01:35:18,530

and they don't  
want their families

1391

01:35:18,530 --> 01:35:20,060

to forget what happened here.

1392

01:35:20,060 --> 01:35:24,500

They want to have, especially  
with the tourist business going

1393

01:35:24,500 --> 01:35:31,820  
on all around them, and since  
it's now a Dominican town,

1394

01:35:31,820 --> 01:35:35,540  
they want to make sure  
that the heritage is

1395

01:35:35,540 --> 01:35:36,810  
known in the future.

1396

01:35:36,810 --> 01:35:40,850  
And that's why they  
renovated the synagogue,

1397

01:35:40,850 --> 01:35:42,540  
and they built the museum.

1398

01:35:42,540 --> 01:35:49,940  
I went back to the synagogue  
with a very good friend

1399

01:35:49,940 --> 01:35:51,080  
that I was--

1400

01:35:51,080 --> 01:35:55,280  
he was my first boyfriend.

1401

01:35:55,280 --> 01:36:04,640  
And he was a carpenter  
and had made the menorah,

1402

01:36:04,640 --> 01:36:06,965  
a life-sized mahogany menorah.

1403

01:36:06,965 --> 01:36:10,280

1404

01:36:10,280 --> 01:36:12,860  
And we went together to see it.

1405

01:36:12,860 --> 01:36:19,475  
And he's in his 70s now, and  
he said that was really--

1406  
01:36:19,475 --> 01:36:22,370

1407  
01:36:22,370 --> 01:36:25,580  
it was a very emotional  
experience for him.

1408  
01:36:25,580 --> 01:36:31,490  
He came with his wife to  
look back at the menorah

1409  
01:36:31,490 --> 01:36:35,750  
that he had carved 50  
years ago, and it's

1410  
01:36:35,750 --> 01:36:38,450  
standing there in the  
synagogue, lots of pictures.

1411  
01:36:38,450 --> 01:36:42,670

1412  
01:36:42,670 --> 01:36:52,230  
On Friday night, we had  
a banquet for 500 people.

1413  
01:36:52,230 --> 01:36:57,060  
And on Saturday night, we  
had a banquet and a ball

1414  
01:36:57,060 --> 01:36:58,890  
for 1,000 people.

1415  
01:36:58,890 --> 01:37:05,430  
Because what they did  
was invite everybody,

1416  
01:37:05,430 --> 01:37:08,310  
all of the native, all of

the Dominicans that had ever

1417  
01:37:08,310 --> 01:37:13,410  
worked for them, for  
the cooperative--

1418  
01:37:13,410 --> 01:37:15,630  
the CILCA is the name--

1419  
01:37:15,630 --> 01:37:17,100  
were invited to come.

1420  
01:37:17,100 --> 01:37:19,530  
And on Saturday  
morning, we had a--

1421  
01:37:19,530 --> 01:37:22,140

1422  
01:37:22,140 --> 01:37:24,030  
Friday night and  
Saturday morning,

1423  
01:37:24,030 --> 01:37:30,720  
we had a religious service  
in the courtyard of the dairy

1424  
01:37:30,720 --> 01:37:31,830  
factory outdoors.

1425  
01:37:31,830 --> 01:37:35,430

1426  
01:37:35,430 --> 01:37:39,240  
I almost forgot about that,  
the most exciting thing, or one

1427  
01:37:39,240 --> 01:37:40,470  
of the most exciting things.

1428  
01:37:40,470 --> 01:37:44,070  
It was just-- my adrenaline

was pumping for a whole week.

1429

01:37:44,070 --> 01:37:48,750

1430

01:37:48,750 --> 01:37:54,290

When I arrived in Sosua,  
someone said to me,

1431

01:37:54,290 --> 01:37:58,640

there was a rabbi here  
once who said he knows you.

1432

01:37:58,640 --> 01:38:05,960

And I couldn't understand  
who that could be.

1433

01:38:05,960 --> 01:38:10,700

And then later on, someone  
else came and said,

1434

01:38:10,700 --> 01:38:13,910

there is a rabbi here  
who said he knows you.

1435

01:38:13,910 --> 01:38:16,640

And again, like, what  
rabbi could that be?

1436

01:38:16,640 --> 01:38:19,200

1437

01:38:19,200 --> 01:38:25,750

And right after we registered  
on Friday morning, this man

1438

01:38:25,750 --> 01:38:29,450

with a sombrero and  
shorts and, you know,

1439

01:38:29,450 --> 01:38:31,220

we were all soaking hot.

1440

01:38:31,220 --> 01:38:32,580

It was at the end of June.

1441

01:38:32,580 --> 01:38:34,070

It's terribly hot.

1442

01:38:34,070 --> 01:38:38,378

It's probably 92 and very humid.

1443

01:38:38,378 --> 01:38:40,895

He stops me and he  
says, Lore, I know

1444

01:38:40,895 --> 01:38:44,930

you don't recognize me in this  
outfit, but I'm Alan Levins.

1445

01:38:44,930 --> 01:38:46,900

Of course, I recognized  
him right away.

1446

01:38:46,900 --> 01:38:52,880

That was my rabbi in  
Connecticut, in New Haven,

1447

01:38:52,880 --> 01:38:54,020

Connecticut.

1448

01:38:54,020 --> 01:38:57,110

And I said, Alan, what  
are you doing here?

1449

01:38:57,110 --> 01:39:00,680

I can't understand this.

1450

01:39:00,680 --> 01:39:02,340

We had been very good friends.

1451

01:39:02,340 --> 01:39:05,270

And he said, don't you remember?

1452

01:39:05,270 --> 01:39:08,150  
You always talked about Sosua.

1453  
01:39:08,150 --> 01:39:10,940  
You told us all  
about it in 1974,

1454  
01:39:10,940 --> 01:39:12,590  
when you came back  
from your trip,

1455  
01:39:12,590 --> 01:39:16,250  
and I always wanted  
to go and see it.

1456  
01:39:16,250 --> 01:39:23,330  
And about six years ago, I  
came, and I became very friendly

1457  
01:39:23,330 --> 01:39:30,950  
with a Cohen, Hans  
Cohen, and I've

1458  
01:39:30,950 --> 01:39:34,850  
been coming here with  
my wife several times.

1459  
01:39:34,850 --> 01:39:39,530  
And Hans asked me, would I  
officiate at the service,

1460  
01:39:39,530 --> 01:39:43,040  
at the Friday night and  
Saturday morning service?

1461  
01:39:43,040 --> 01:39:45,620  
And I said-- he's  
not a rabbi anymore.

1462  
01:39:45,620 --> 01:39:48,020  
He's a clinical  
psychologist now.

1463

01:39:48,020 --> 01:39:52,340

So I said, for Sosua,  
of course, I'll come.

1464

01:39:52,340 --> 01:39:56,870

And he didn't have my address.

1465

01:39:56,870 --> 01:40:02,070

We had moved in 1980 from  
Connecticut to California.

1466

01:40:02,070 --> 01:40:06,410

He didn't know me, and he had no  
way of knowing if I was coming

1467

01:40:06,410 --> 01:40:06,950

or not.

1468

01:40:06,950 --> 01:40:09,900

1469

01:40:09,900 --> 01:40:12,050

But he had been  
telling people there

1470

01:40:12,050 --> 01:40:18,410

that the way he knew about  
Sosua is from Lore Sondheimer.

1471

01:40:18,410 --> 01:40:22,340

And I said, Alan, how did  
you know my maiden name?

1472

01:40:22,340 --> 01:40:24,930

Because he only knew  
me as Laura Gilbert.

1473

01:40:24,930 --> 01:40:28,040

So he said, don't  
you remember when

1474

01:40:28,040 --> 01:40:30,440

your mother was ill

with cancer and stayed

1475

01:40:30,440 --> 01:40:32,990

with you in Connecticut?

1476

01:40:32,990 --> 01:40:36,830

You asked me to come and

visit her, and I did.

1477

01:40:36,830 --> 01:40:39,350

And this is how it

came about, and that's

1478

01:40:39,350 --> 01:40:41,630

how he remembered my name.

1479

01:40:41,630 --> 01:40:45,620

And he performed the services.

1480

01:40:45,620 --> 01:40:48,800

We also had a service at the

cemetery on Sunday morning,

1481

01:40:48,800 --> 01:40:49,760

before we left.

1482

01:40:49,760 --> 01:40:52,980

1483

01:40:52,980 --> 01:40:57,050

And I can't describe what

that meant to me, that I

1484

01:40:57,050 --> 01:41:00,890

had my old rabbi in Sosua.

1485

01:41:00,890 --> 01:41:03,320

And the service was wonderful.

1486

01:41:03,320 --> 01:41:12,590

And he identified

with us so much,

1487  
01:41:12,590 --> 01:41:15,530  
and he actually  
cried at the service.

1488  
01:41:15,530 --> 01:41:19,910  
And also it was familiar  
to me, because the way

1489  
01:41:19,910 --> 01:41:23,180  
he sang everything  
was the way I had been

1490  
01:41:23,180 --> 01:41:25,100  
used to it from Connecticut.

1491  
01:41:25,100 --> 01:41:27,530  
And you were the  
instrument to bring him.

1492  
01:41:27,530 --> 01:41:28,700  
Yeah, right.

1493  
01:41:28,700 --> 01:41:31,400  
And he mentioned  
that in his talk.

1494  
01:41:31,400 --> 01:41:37,100  
And by the way, they  
were, the representatives

1495  
01:41:37,100 --> 01:41:39,122  
from the President  
of the Republic

1496  
01:41:39,122 --> 01:41:40,205  
were there at the service.

1497  
01:41:40,205 --> 01:41:45,430

1498  
01:41:45,430 --> 01:41:49,600

And I think the Israeli  
consul was there.

1499  
01:41:49,600 --> 01:41:51,040  
It was really wonderful.

1500  
01:41:51,040 --> 01:41:54,190  
Do you think you'll go again?

1501  
01:41:54,190 --> 01:41:55,600  
I doubt it.

1502  
01:41:55,600 --> 01:41:56,530  
I don't think so.

1503  
01:41:56,530 --> 01:42:00,430  
We all said, well, we'll  
come back for the 60th.

1504  
01:42:00,430 --> 01:42:03,030  
It's a difficult  
trip, physically

1505  
01:42:03,030 --> 01:42:05,860  
a very strenuous trip  
from here to there,

1506  
01:42:05,860 --> 01:42:09,400  
and it's also very expensive.

1507  
01:42:09,400 --> 01:42:13,870  
And it's changed so much.

1508  
01:42:13,870 --> 01:42:18,280  
It's no longer the  
way we remember it.

1509  
01:42:18,280 --> 01:42:27,460  
It's now a little town with  
paved streets and mopeds going

1510  
01:42:27,460 --> 01:42:31,210

constantly, day and night,  
and that wonderful fresh air

1511  
01:42:31,210 --> 01:42:34,495  
is full of carbon  
monoxide from the mopeds.

1512  
01:42:34,495 --> 01:42:38,620

1513  
01:42:38,620 --> 01:42:45,010  
So it doesn't, I mean, without  
this group of people there--

1514  
01:42:45,010 --> 01:42:47,020  
it was very exciting.

1515  
01:42:47,020 --> 01:42:50,090  
Most of the people, they  
would say hello, and I said,

1516  
01:42:50,090 --> 01:42:50,590  
who are you?

1517  
01:42:50,590 --> 01:42:53,800  
I didn't recognize them.

1518  
01:42:53,800 --> 01:42:59,230  
There was one man in his 80s.

1519  
01:42:59,230 --> 01:43:02,230  
He was a young man  
in his early 30s

1520  
01:43:02,230 --> 01:43:04,810  
or late 20s when I was there.

1521  
01:43:04,810 --> 01:43:09,610  
And here I am 61 years  
old then, all sweated up

1522  
01:43:09,610 --> 01:43:13,680

with a straw hat, and  
I'm walking with my son.

1523  
01:43:13,680 --> 01:43:17,260  
And this man is in a group  
with other people talking,

1524  
01:43:17,260 --> 01:43:22,570  
and he looks, and he's,  
[GASPS] oh, there's Lore.

1525  
01:43:22,570 --> 01:43:25,820  
How did he recognize me?

1526  
01:43:25,820 --> 01:43:28,060  
And I was only a little girl.

1527  
01:43:28,060 --> 01:43:31,150  
How did he remember me as--

1528  
01:43:31,150 --> 01:43:34,210  
I didn't even know  
he ever saw me.

1529  
01:43:34,210 --> 01:43:36,860  
I used to come  
talk to my parents,

1530  
01:43:36,860 --> 01:43:45,280  
but it was really incredible,  
yeah, to see all those people.

1531  
01:43:45,280 --> 01:43:49,930  
So had you spoken to your  
children all along about all

1532  
01:43:49,930 --> 01:43:50,740  
your--

1533  
01:43:50,740 --> 01:43:54,730  
Yes, and we had Sosua meetings.

1534

01:43:54,730 --> 01:43:58,630  
They have been going on for the  
last 50 years, once or twice

1535  
01:43:58,630 --> 01:43:59,303  
a year.

1536  
01:43:59,303 --> 01:44:00,220  
They were in New York.

1537  
01:44:00,220 --> 01:44:01,120  
They're in Miami.

1538  
01:44:01,120 --> 01:44:03,970  
They're in LA.

1539  
01:44:03,970 --> 01:44:06,400  
And we've had people  
coming together.

1540  
01:44:06,400 --> 01:44:09,370  
And then we had  
very good friends

1541  
01:44:09,370 --> 01:44:15,550  
that we saw on a regular basis,  
also, that my children knew.

1542  
01:44:15,550 --> 01:44:17,120  
People who had  
lived in Sosua also?

1543  
01:44:17,120 --> 01:44:21,490  
Right, that we kept in  
touch with over the years,

1544  
01:44:21,490 --> 01:44:25,180  
that my children saw over the  
years that they were growing up

1545  
01:44:25,180 --> 01:44:25,960  
and knew.

1546

01:44:25,960 --> 01:44:31,660

So Dan knew some of those  
people, and then others,

1547

01:44:31,660 --> 01:44:33,260

he was introduced to them.

1548

01:44:33,260 --> 01:44:38,020

And as I said before,  
the young people,

1549

01:44:38,020 --> 01:44:41,440

I had thought, well, how  
is he going to feel there

1550

01:44:41,440 --> 01:44:42,730

when we get there?

1551

01:44:42,730 --> 01:44:45,820

I'll be talking  
with my old friends,

1552

01:44:45,820 --> 01:44:49,180

and is he going to  
be feeling left out?

1553

01:44:49,180 --> 01:44:52,870

They formed such an immediate,  
strong connection, all of them,

1554

01:44:52,870 --> 01:44:55,000

and they formed  
this organization

1555

01:44:55,000 --> 01:45:01,030

where they would like  
to keep up, do something

1556

01:45:01,030 --> 01:45:02,260

to keep up the spirit.

1557

01:45:02,260 --> 01:45:06,670

And they were talking about  
meeting back there in Sosua

1558  
01:45:06,670 --> 01:45:09,400  
on a regular basis, you  
know, whenever they can,

1559  
01:45:09,400 --> 01:45:11,180  
and things like that.

1560  
01:45:11,180 --> 01:45:13,960  
So they had their own  
meetings, and the young people

1561  
01:45:13,960 --> 01:45:20,350  
got together in the evenings  
and talked together and had fun

1562  
01:45:20,350 --> 01:45:20,860  
together.

1563  
01:45:20,860 --> 01:45:26,650  
And at the same time, Dan did  
not miss out on his snorkeling.

1564  
01:45:26,650 --> 01:45:29,320  
I had no idea that you  
could snorkel in Sosua,

1565  
01:45:29,320 --> 01:45:31,570  
because there was no such  
thing when we were there.

1566  
01:45:31,570 --> 01:45:36,650  
But he said, yeah, it's  
got to be snorkeling there.

1567  
01:45:36,650 --> 01:45:41,440  
And he went out on the  
boat and went snorkeling.

1568  
01:45:41,440 --> 01:45:46,210  
And I'm going to finish

this up right away.

1569  
01:45:46,210 --> 01:45:52,900  
But before I do, there  
was on Sunday afternoon--

1570  
01:45:52,900 --> 01:45:55,600  
we left Monday morning--

1571  
01:45:55,600 --> 01:46:01,900  
Dan and I went shopping  
for some souvenirs, gifts

1572  
01:46:01,900 --> 01:46:05,140  
that we were bringing back, and  
we were walking down the street

1573  
01:46:05,140 --> 01:46:06,970  
together.

1574  
01:46:06,970 --> 01:46:13,990  
And we heard coming  
from the other direction

1575  
01:46:13,990 --> 01:46:19,810  
a group of Germans marching,  
linking arms, and singing

1576  
01:46:19,810 --> 01:46:22,105  
Deutschland,  
Deutschland, Uber Alles.

1577  
01:46:22,105 --> 01:46:28,600  
Now, this was like  
July 1st, 1990.

1578  
01:46:28,600 --> 01:46:37,120  
And Dan and I, I can't tell  
you the feeling that we had.

1579  
01:46:37,120 --> 01:46:42,200  
I thought it has to  
be anti-Semitism,

1580  
01:46:42,200 --> 01:46:46,250  
because all over town, there  
were these big banners.

1581  
01:46:46,250 --> 01:46:49,960  
L'chaim was our symbol.

1582  
01:46:49,960 --> 01:46:54,140  
Sosua L'Chaim 50th was  
the banner, and everybody,

1583  
01:46:54,140 --> 01:46:56,840  
all the tourists knew  
what was going on in town.

1584  
01:46:56,840 --> 01:47:01,220

1585  
01:47:01,220 --> 01:47:05,480  
So we thought they were  
coming to meet us, you know,

1586  
01:47:05,480 --> 01:47:08,570  
and with anti-Semitism.

1587  
01:47:08,570 --> 01:47:12,320  
And we went into a  
little shop where

1588  
01:47:12,320 --> 01:47:18,920  
we were looking at amber  
jewelry, and one of the Germans

1589  
01:47:18,920 --> 01:47:20,780  
came into the shop.

1590  
01:47:20,780 --> 01:47:26,210  
And I had my hat on the counter,  
and he picked up my hat,

1591  
01:47:26,210 --> 01:47:27,410

and he was drunk.

1592

01:47:27,410 --> 01:47:32,240

And he was starting to  
say some things about,

1593

01:47:32,240 --> 01:47:34,760

do you want to buy a hat,  
he said to his friends,

1594

01:47:34,760 --> 01:47:39,740

and started to fool  
around in a drunken way.

1595

01:47:39,740 --> 01:47:43,820

And I wanted to tell  
him off, and I couldn't.

1596

01:47:43,820 --> 01:47:46,160

I kind of froze.

1597

01:47:46,160 --> 01:47:49,460

There was nothing that  
I could say to him.

1598

01:47:49,460 --> 01:47:52,940

It turned out later that  
they were celebrating

1599

01:47:52,940 --> 01:47:55,310

because the Germans  
had won a football

1600

01:47:55,310 --> 01:47:59,960

game in Germany, or  
in Europe, and it

1601

01:47:59,960 --> 01:48:05,090

had nothing to do with an  
anti-Semitic expression.

1602

01:48:05,090 --> 01:48:08,910

But even my son thought

that that's what it was.

1603  
01:48:08,910 --> 01:48:10,560  
So just to--

1604  
01:48:10,560 --> 01:48:11,060  
[INAUDIBLE]

1605  
01:48:11,060 --> 01:48:12,200  
To show you, yeah.

1606  
01:48:12,200 --> 01:48:17,090  
And to have this, it was almost  
like being in a time warp.

1607  
01:48:17,090 --> 01:48:19,280  
I just didn't know what  
to do with that thing.

1608  
01:48:19,280 --> 01:48:24,252

1609  
01:48:24,252 --> 01:48:27,610  
So as you said, 50 years  
hasn't erased it all.

1610  
01:48:27,610 --> 01:48:28,510  
Yeah, right.

1611  
01:48:28,510 --> 01:48:31,100

1612  
01:48:31,100 --> 01:48:33,860  
Yeah, it was weird.

1613  
01:48:33,860 --> 01:48:36,740  
Hey, don't you forget  
us, we are still here,

1614  
01:48:36,740 --> 01:48:40,910  
is what it felt like  
to me, in a way.

1615  
01:48:40,910 --> 01:48:42,300  
[INAUDIBLE]

1616  
01:48:42,300 --> 01:48:43,790  
Yeah, right.

1617  
01:48:43,790 --> 01:48:46,850  
That's apparently what they--  
that's what they were singing.

1618  
01:48:46,850 --> 01:48:50,265

1619  
01:48:50,265 --> 01:48:53,110  
I want to go back  
with you to tell

1620  
01:48:53,110 --> 01:48:59,310  
about how your grandparents  
fared, that the last you heard

1621  
01:48:59,310 --> 01:49:01,570  
of them when you set out  
was that they had gone

1622  
01:49:01,570 --> 01:49:08,550  
to this other camp and under  
these very sad and trying

1623  
01:49:08,550 --> 01:49:11,010  
conditions, where you were  
just ripped from each other.

1624  
01:49:11,010 --> 01:49:11,610  
Yeah.

1625  
01:49:11,610 --> 01:49:19,200  
And then what happened, as  
far as your knowledge of them?

1626  
01:49:19,200 --> 01:49:26,340

We did correspond with  
them from Marseilles.

1627  
01:49:26,340 --> 01:49:30,360  
We knew where they were, and  
we did get some postcards

1628  
01:49:30,360 --> 01:49:33,010  
from them.

1629  
01:49:33,010 --> 01:49:37,260  
And as I said  
earlier, we did also,

1630  
01:49:37,260 --> 01:49:44,110  
we received some mail from  
them from in the camp.

1631  
01:49:44,110 --> 01:49:48,088  
I don't know-- from  
the camp when we

1632  
01:49:48,088 --> 01:49:49,380  
were in the Dominican Republic.

1633  
01:49:49,380 --> 01:49:52,470

1634  
01:49:52,470 --> 01:49:57,480  
I don't know exactly  
when we found out

1635  
01:49:57,480 --> 01:50:01,320  
about my grandfather's  
death, how much later.

1636  
01:50:01,320 --> 01:50:03,210  
I don't remember  
that, and I don't know

1637  
01:50:03,210 --> 01:50:06,610  
if there's any record of it.

1638

01:50:06,610 --> 01:50:08,430

But we did know by  
the end of the war

1639

01:50:08,430 --> 01:50:12,450

that he was no longer alive.

1640

01:50:12,450 --> 01:50:16,500

Was there ever a worry that  
they would be sent off to--

1641

01:50:16,500 --> 01:50:18,960

Well, we didn't know  
about any of those camps

1642

01:50:18,960 --> 01:50:20,760

that they would be sent off to.

1643

01:50:20,760 --> 01:50:23,280

We only found out  
about that later.

1644

01:50:23,280 --> 01:50:27,000

We thought that our  
relatives in Germany

1645

01:50:27,000 --> 01:50:29,100

might still be there in Germany.

1646

01:50:29,100 --> 01:50:31,760

1647

01:50:31,760 --> 01:50:34,670

So only after the war did  
you learn of these camps.

1648

01:50:34,670 --> 01:50:35,510

Yeah, sure.

1649

01:50:35,510 --> 01:50:39,575

1650

01:50:39,575 --> 01:50:41,620

It must have been  
an enormous shock.

1651

01:50:41,620 --> 01:50:42,120

Yeah.

1652

01:50:42,120 --> 01:50:47,300

My uncle, as I  
mentioned earlier,

1653

01:50:47,300 --> 01:50:50,600

the last time that he wasn't--

1654

01:50:50,600 --> 01:50:53,990

he could have been in the  
Dominican Republic, he

1655

01:50:53,990 --> 01:51:00,050

and his wife, with us, if  
he hadn't gone back to--

1656

01:51:00,050 --> 01:51:01,850

if she had been  
with him that day.

1657

01:51:01,850 --> 01:51:07,220

1658

01:51:07,220 --> 01:51:09,800

Well, I'm thinking  
maybe I'll stop now

1659

01:51:09,800 --> 01:51:14,240

to let Emily or  
anyone ask questions.

1660

01:51:14,240 --> 01:51:17,600

And also I know you've brought  
some documents or pictures

1661

01:51:17,600 --> 01:51:19,730

that you'd like  
to have included.

1662  
01:51:19,730 --> 01:51:22,054  
So do you have anything  
you want to repeat?

1663  
01:51:22,054 --> 01:51:28,390

1664  
01:51:28,390 --> 01:51:30,040  
OK.

1665  
01:51:30,040 --> 01:51:33,770  
How was Jewish consciousness and  
tradition kept alive in Sosua?

1666  
01:51:33,770 --> 01:51:42,010  
In Sosua, the  
tradition probably took

1667  
01:51:42,010 --> 01:51:44,950  
a little bit of a back seat.

1668  
01:51:44,950 --> 01:51:48,220  
There was not very  
much attention

1669  
01:51:48,220 --> 01:51:54,010  
paid to religious customs,  
although there were

1670  
01:51:54,010 --> 01:51:58,930  
some people who were religious.

1671  
01:51:58,930 --> 01:52:02,180  
We had a synagogue,  
a small barrack,

1672  
01:52:02,180 --> 01:52:05,740  
which was, as I said  
before, was renovated then.

1673

01:52:05,740 --> 01:52:08,410

1674

01:52:08,410 --> 01:52:10,870

It was not very well-attended.

1675

01:52:10,870 --> 01:52:14,050

There were probably only a  
handful of orthodox people

1676

01:52:14,050 --> 01:52:14,550

there.

1677

01:52:14,550 --> 01:52:17,450

1678

01:52:17,450 --> 01:52:21,650

As a matter of fact, we  
had, in the early years,

1679

01:52:21,650 --> 01:52:24,100

we ate mostly pork because.

1680

01:52:24,100 --> 01:52:27,010

We didn't have  
the-- there wasn't

1681

01:52:27,010 --> 01:52:30,910

enough cattle to slaughter yet,  
so we ate pork, and especially

1682

01:52:30,910 --> 01:52:32,410

in the community kitchen.

1683

01:52:32,410 --> 01:52:34,510

There were some people  
who refused to eat it,

1684

01:52:34,510 --> 01:52:40,030

and we had a lot of chicken, so  
they could always eat chicken.

1685

01:52:40,030 --> 01:52:42,940

But culturally, absolutely.

1686

01:52:42,940 --> 01:52:48,450

1687

01:52:48,450 --> 01:52:53,760

And I don't think that we  
even celebrated any Seders.

1688

01:52:53,760 --> 01:52:56,730

I don't remember us,  
other than having

1689

01:52:56,730 --> 01:53:00,780

a service for the  
high holy days,

1690

01:53:00,780 --> 01:53:06,570

I don't remember ever having  
any kind of religious ceremonies

1691

01:53:06,570 --> 01:53:11,820

at all, even when  
children were born.

1692

01:53:11,820 --> 01:53:15,960

Obviously, the boys  
were circumcised,

1693

01:53:15,960 --> 01:53:20,880

but I don't remember any  
kind of religious ceremony

1694

01:53:20,880 --> 01:53:23,760

for the circumcision.

1695

01:53:23,760 --> 01:53:29,490

But culturally, we had so  
many talented people that--

1696

01:53:29,490 --> 01:53:31,250

oh, wonderful.

1697

01:53:31,250 --> 01:53:35,910

We had a wonderful artist,  
a wonderful painter

1698

01:53:35,910 --> 01:53:47,620

who did very, very nice  
decorative watercolor

1699

01:53:47,620 --> 01:53:52,350

sketches of life in  
the Dominican Republic,

1700

01:53:52,350 --> 01:53:57,460

and with a wonderful  
sense of humor.

1701

01:53:57,460 --> 01:54:01,540

I may bring one of those along.

1702

01:54:01,540 --> 01:54:07,120

And his skill was  
also used for--

1703

01:54:07,120 --> 01:54:12,730

he designed some of  
his figures, and they

1704

01:54:12,730 --> 01:54:17,410

were traced onto cloth, and  
women embroidered tablecloths.

1705

01:54:17,410 --> 01:54:23,980

That also became one of  
the things that was done.

1706

01:54:23,980 --> 01:54:25,330

And we had entertainment.

1707

01:54:25,330 --> 01:54:28,660

We put on shows,  
wonderful, wonderful shows,

1708  
01:54:28,660 --> 01:54:31,120  
with just a wonderful  
sense of humor,

1709  
01:54:31,120 --> 01:54:35,700  
making fun of our situation.

1710  
01:54:35,700 --> 01:54:41,440  
I'm reminded of one story  
in particular, where there

1711  
01:54:41,440 --> 01:54:47,500  
was so much red tape, you  
know, and this guy did

1712  
01:54:47,500 --> 01:54:51,580  
a skit on trying to get a roll  
of toilet paper, where he had

1713  
01:54:51,580 --> 01:54:53,830  
an urgency, and he  
had to run everywhere

1714  
01:54:53,830 --> 01:54:56,410  
for this piece of  
paper and this,

1715  
01:54:56,410 --> 01:54:58,790  
OK, and that, OK, to get  
a roll of toilet paper.

1716  
01:54:58,790 --> 01:55:00,430  
And then finally  
in the end says,

1717  
01:55:00,430 --> 01:55:04,220  
I don't need it anymore  
now, never mind.

1718  
01:55:04,220 --> 01:55:07,420  
And those were really  
precious evenings.

1719  
01:55:07,420 --> 01:55:17,650  
And I have, fortunately the  
words for many of those kids.

1720  
01:55:17,650 --> 01:55:19,330  
I have them at home and.

1721  
01:55:19,330 --> 01:55:21,550  
Every once in a while,  
I read through them.

1722  
01:55:21,550 --> 01:55:25,060  
As a matter of fact,  
they're on my night table.

1723  
01:55:25,060 --> 01:55:27,880  
And I'm laughing and  
laughing, you know,

1724  
01:55:27,880 --> 01:55:32,370  
I'm going to my husband,  
and he can't get the humor.

1725  
01:55:32,370 --> 01:55:35,350

1726  
01:55:35,350 --> 01:55:40,040  
So in that sense,  
yeah, it was wonderful.

1727  
01:55:40,040 --> 01:55:42,280  
And now the settlers  
who have stayed,

1728  
01:55:42,280 --> 01:55:44,980  
have they gone back to a more  
traditional Jewish style?

1729  
01:55:44,980 --> 01:55:47,080  
Yes.

1730

01:55:47,080 --> 01:55:53,230

Yes, now they do  
celebrate the holidays.

1731

01:55:53,230 --> 01:56:01,900

And there's just a wonderful  
scene on that video

1732

01:56:01,900 --> 01:56:05,720

where one of the  
Dominican young women

1733

01:56:05,720 --> 01:56:10,030

was helping to make matzah  
balls in the kitchen

1734

01:56:10,030 --> 01:56:17,140

for a big community Seder, and  
the interviewer of the tape

1735

01:56:17,140 --> 01:56:20,500

asks her what this is all about.

1736

01:56:20,500 --> 01:56:23,050

And the way she  
explains it, oh, it's

1737

01:56:23,050 --> 01:56:27,340

just a holiday that the  
Jews have, just like Easter,

1738

01:56:27,340 --> 01:56:29,170

and we do this every year.

1739

01:56:29,170 --> 01:56:34,270

And they enjoy it,  
and it's really

1740

01:56:34,270 --> 01:56:36,655

a lovely exchange on that tape.

1741

01:56:36,655 --> 01:56:39,520

1742  
01:56:39,520 --> 01:56:42,100  
What was the common  
language used?

1743  
01:56:42,100 --> 01:56:43,210  
Spanish.

1744  
01:56:43,210 --> 01:56:43,720  
Among you?

1745  
01:56:43,720 --> 01:56:44,345  
Oh, the common?

1746  
01:56:44,345 --> 01:56:45,880  
No, German.

1747  
01:56:45,880 --> 01:56:50,020  
So were most of the  
settlers Germans?

1748  
01:56:50,020 --> 01:56:53,020  
Yes, most of them were Germans.

1749  
01:56:53,020 --> 01:56:55,840  
They were some people  
from Czechoslovakia,

1750  
01:56:55,840 --> 01:56:59,890  
and they all speak  
German, the Czechs.

1751  
01:56:59,890 --> 01:57:03,010  
Austrians, there were more  
Austrians than Germans,

1752  
01:57:03,010 --> 01:57:05,500  
and that was an issue.

1753  
01:57:05,500 --> 01:57:08,560  
Because there's a lot of  
friction, was a lot of friction

1754  
01:57:08,560 --> 01:57:10,100  
during those days.

1755  
01:57:10,100 --> 01:57:12,490  
The Austrians didn't  
like the Germans.

1756  
01:57:12,490 --> 01:57:15,070  
They made fun of them.

1757  
01:57:15,070 --> 01:57:18,820  
And the majority were Austrians.

1758  
01:57:18,820 --> 01:57:21,380

1759  
01:57:21,380 --> 01:57:26,450  
So was there more Australian  
tradition in your music,

1760  
01:57:26,450 --> 01:57:28,460  
or the food that was  
chosen, and so on?

1761  
01:57:28,460 --> 01:57:30,320  
Yeah, absolutely.

1762  
01:57:30,320 --> 01:57:31,340  
Yeah.

1763  
01:57:31,340 --> 01:57:35,060  
I took to it like  
a fish in water.

1764  
01:57:35,060 --> 01:57:46,040  
I loved all the Australian music  
and the dialect, the speech,

1765  
01:57:46,040 --> 01:57:48,590  
I liked very much.

1766

01:57:48,590 --> 01:57:52,880

And the Germans were  
considered too straitlaced,

1767

01:57:52,880 --> 01:57:55,220

which they are.

1768

01:57:55,220 --> 01:58:02,840

The Austrians are much more laid  
back, and I enjoyed that a lot.

1769

01:58:02,840 --> 01:58:05,720

Well, how and when  
did people in Sosua

1770

01:58:05,720 --> 01:58:09,740

start learning  
English and otherwise

1771

01:58:09,740 --> 01:58:12,622

preparing for the transition  
to the United States?

1772

01:58:12,622 --> 01:58:13,580

And how was it for you?

1773

01:58:13,580 --> 01:58:17,780

I guess it was on  
an individual basis.

1774

01:58:17,780 --> 01:58:22,115

I had already had some  
English lessons in Germany.

1775

01:58:22,115 --> 01:58:28,820

1776

01:58:28,820 --> 01:58:31,400

And we had English in school.

1777

01:58:31,400 --> 01:58:34,640

We had in English lessons

and Spanish lessons,

1778

01:58:34,640 --> 01:58:35,750

but we spoke German.

1779

01:58:35,750 --> 01:58:39,080

1780

01:58:39,080 --> 01:58:42,140

I had a Hungarian-French  
boyfriend,

1781

01:58:42,140 --> 01:58:54,785

and I spoke a lot with him  
in English when I was 14, 15.

1782

01:58:54,785 --> 01:58:59,150

As I mentioned, there  
was very poor pickings,

1783

01:58:59,150 --> 01:59:04,970

so an 18, 20-year-old  
wouldn't mind

1784

01:59:04,970 --> 01:59:11,120

dating a 14-year-old, which  
is, under normal circumstances,

1785

01:59:11,120 --> 01:59:14,120

not acceptable,  
but it was there.

1786

01:59:14,120 --> 01:59:17,300

1787

01:59:17,300 --> 01:59:20,780

But yes, and I started--

1788

01:59:20,780 --> 01:59:24,380

well, actually, I think I  
picked up most of my English

1789

01:59:24,380 --> 01:59:25,700  
in the movies.

1790  
01:59:25,700 --> 01:59:33,390  
As I said, we had films  
shown once or twice a week.

1791  
01:59:33,390 --> 01:59:35,210  
So they were all in English.

1792  
01:59:35,210 --> 01:59:42,530  
And yeah, my boyfriend  
spoke a lot of--

1793  
01:59:42,530 --> 01:59:46,221  
he spoke English fairly well,  
so we spoke some English.

1794  
01:59:46,221 --> 01:59:50,530

1795  
01:59:50,530 --> 01:59:56,025  
Did the films and the \$3  
a month and other things

1796  
01:59:56,025 --> 01:59:57,400  
come from the  
DORSA organization?

1797  
01:59:57,400 --> 01:59:58,630  
Yes, yes.

1798  
01:59:58,630 --> 02:00:00,700  
And how did they  
raise money for this?

1799  
02:00:00,700 --> 02:00:03,610

1800  
02:00:03,610 --> 02:00:07,330  
I'm glad you mentioned that.

1801

02:00:07,330 --> 02:00:09,193  
They had money from--

1802  
02:00:09,193 --> 02:00:13,270

1803  
02:00:13,270 --> 02:00:17,690  
the money came from the  
Jewish organizations

1804  
02:00:17,690 --> 02:00:18,610  
in the United States.

1805  
02:00:18,610 --> 02:00:22,330

1806  
02:00:22,330 --> 02:00:24,415  
But there is a very  
interesting story.

1807  
02:00:24,415 --> 02:00:28,720

1808  
02:00:28,720 --> 02:00:38,530  
My sister, up until she retired  
just now, this past December,

1809  
02:00:38,530 --> 02:00:42,490  
she had been working for  
the Leo Baeck Institute,

1810  
02:00:42,490 --> 02:00:49,720  
which is the German, the  
Jewish cultural organization

1811  
02:00:49,720 --> 02:00:52,270  
in New York--

1812  
02:00:52,270 --> 02:00:55,690  
not cultural, historical  
organization-- and they

1813

02:00:55,690 --> 02:00:59,800  
deal mainly with,  
I mean, anything

1814  
02:00:59,800 --> 02:01:03,760  
connected with the  
Holocaust and with what

1815  
02:01:03,760 --> 02:01:07,600  
she was from, from Germany.

1816  
02:01:07,600 --> 02:01:10,480  
Incidentally, they get  
most of their money

1817  
02:01:10,480 --> 02:01:16,100  
from the magazine  
Der Stern in Germany.

1818  
02:01:16,100 --> 02:01:27,300  
Her boss, just before we  
went for our reunion in 1990,

1819  
02:01:27,300 --> 02:01:32,130  
her boss who was in his 80s  
said to her, by the way,

1820  
02:01:32,130 --> 02:01:40,440  
do you know where the  
money came from for Sosua?

1821  
02:01:40,440 --> 02:01:42,660  
And she had no idea.

1822  
02:01:42,660 --> 02:01:43,670  
Why would he know?

1823  
02:01:43,670 --> 02:01:48,060

1824  
02:01:48,060 --> 02:01:50,130  
So she said, well, I  
thought the money comes

1825  
02:01:50,130 --> 02:01:53,460  
from the Jewish organizations.

1826  
02:01:53,460 --> 02:01:56,550  
So he said yes, it  
does, but there is also

1827  
02:01:56,550 --> 02:02:00,990  
some money that came--

1828  
02:02:00,990 --> 02:02:09,130  
there was a collective  
farm in Russia

1829  
02:02:09,130 --> 02:02:14,950  
during the early days of  
the Bolsheviks, run by Jews.

1830  
02:02:14,950 --> 02:02:17,980  
It was an experiment  
that was maybe

1831  
02:02:17,980 --> 02:02:21,650  
started by Baron Rothschild  
or one of these people.

1832  
02:02:21,650 --> 02:02:23,480  
I'm not sure.

1833  
02:02:23,480 --> 02:02:28,570  
And it was in good  
working order,

1834  
02:02:28,570 --> 02:02:33,790  
and when the Bolsheviks took  
over, they had to vacate it.

1835  
02:02:33,790 --> 02:02:35,200  
Jews had to vacate it.

1836  
02:02:35,200 --> 02:02:40,330

I'm not sure whether it  
was taken over by them,

1837  
02:02:40,330 --> 02:02:43,450  
or whether it was  
disbanded altogether.

1838  
02:02:43,450 --> 02:02:48,775  
And they gave the  
Jews a mortgage.

1839  
02:02:48,775 --> 02:02:51,730

1840  
02:02:51,730 --> 02:02:57,440  
And the mortgage was  
actually paid off.

1841  
02:02:57,440 --> 02:03:02,740  
The Russians actually paid  
the money to the Jews,

1842  
02:03:02,740 --> 02:03:07,780  
and it went to New York, to  
the Jewish organizations.

1843  
02:03:07,780 --> 02:03:10,300  
And this is  
something that no one

1844  
02:03:10,300 --> 02:03:15,010  
has known until my sister  
found out from her boss

1845  
02:03:15,010 --> 02:03:24,023  
that the core of that money  
was used for the Sosua project.

1846  
02:03:24,023 --> 02:03:24,790  
That's great.

1847  
02:03:24,790 --> 02:03:25,360  
Yeah.

1848  
02:03:25,360 --> 02:03:28,930  
And they don't even  
have that on record.

1849  
02:03:28,930 --> 02:03:32,560  
Because when my sister talked  
about it, when we were in Sosua

1850  
02:03:32,560 --> 02:03:36,400  
two years ago,  
she talked to some

1851  
02:03:36,400 --> 02:03:39,650  
of the people who organized  
all the stuff for the museum.

1852  
02:03:39,650 --> 02:03:41,800  
And she said, are  
you aware of that?

1853  
02:03:41,800 --> 02:03:43,870  
And they said no.

1854  
02:03:43,870 --> 02:03:46,060  
So that's another  
thing that needs

1855  
02:03:46,060 --> 02:03:49,360  
to go on record, which  
is really fascinating.

1856  
02:03:49,360 --> 02:03:52,192

1857  
02:03:52,192 --> 02:03:56,480  
It would be interesting  
if you could meet

1858  
02:03:56,480 --> 02:04:00,130  
the people, or the families.

1859

02:04:00,130 --> 02:04:00,810  
Of those?

1860  
02:04:00,810 --> 02:04:04,240  
I doubt that they're  
still with us.

1861  
02:04:04,240 --> 02:04:07,950  
But who was the oldest  
person at the Sosua reunion,

1862  
02:04:07,950 --> 02:04:10,030  
and how was that--