

OK. Can you describe this for us?

Well, this is the inside of the synagogue, which goes back to the year 1,000 or 1,200. It's been burned down and rebuilt several times over the years. And this is the Torah shrine. And the men's section. It was-- it's an Orthodox synagogue. Separate. This is the men's segment-- men's section.

And this photograph-- I mean, I know it's a postcard-- but can you give-- do you know when this picture was taken approximately? What year? Do you have any idea?

Have to look at the back of the photo.

Oh, look at the back. Let's look at the back.

I think it's recent.

OK. Actually, it doesn't say. It just says the year that it was built, which is 1,213. OK. That's all right.

I think this is the renovated one, which was rebuilt sometime in the 1960s, late '60s. Yeah, I think in the '60s.

OK. And?

And this is the Jewish cemetery, with actually the dome of the Lutheran dome in the background. But that cemetery goes back to I think further than the synagogue. I think it does give some information on the back of the card.

Nope. Just says what's-- just--

OK.

--that it's a cemetery.

All right. In this book, I have. There's one from the year 1,076 and one from the year 1,086. Wow. Let's get a shot of that.

These two.

This is amazing.

Actually, that there's some German scholars from Worms who are now saying that there were Jews in the town of Worms before there were Christians.

There were Jews before?

There were Jews in the area around Worms and the Rhineland before there were Christians.

Really? What date would that come in?

They came with the Romans.

Whoa, that's amazing. So these are two headstones from that cemetery. One is from 1,076 and one is from 1,086. It's 10 years after the Battle of Hastings.

It's amazing.

Wow. That's great.

But I have no idea when my family came. I'm sure they weren't there that long.

Girl, I remember my dad talking about-- he tried to get a genealogy. And he thinks that he came from Spain, before the Inquisition.

Well, maybe we can film one again, you can talk a little bit about that.

Right.

Oh, it is. I thought you meant it off. Then I guess it's already been captured.

Yes, we got it all.

This is a street from the ghetto.

OK. Want to put it?

Yeah.

Hold one of these things.

OK. Do a long shot like that. OK.

Now, what is this?

This is the Judengasse that was part of the ghetto. And going up that street would lead directly to the synagogue and the school I went to. We used to take that street a lot when I went to school.

You said it was part of the ghetto. Do you mean literally the ghetto?

No, it was still-- I mean, the houses-- it's still there. But it wasn't. No, when I was living there, we didn't live there. There were some mainly very poor people lived there, Jews and Gentiles. And today, they renovated it, and they're supposed to be very beautiful. And they have very expensive apartments now.

It's kind of ironic, isn't it?

Yeah, in fact, I didn't bring it along. I have a book with all the renovated stuff. They're using what used to be the community house as an adult education building now. And I understand that these apartments are at a premium. People have said they're very hard to come by.

Are there any other photos in that book that you would like to include?

Yeah, I think so.

OK.

Yeah, I definitely want these. This was taken in 1945.

OK, let's put it up there and have you describe it for us when I get a close shot of it.

This is where the synagogue stood and OK.

OK. Start at the top here. Here it is. The ruins are where-- that was in 1945 and that is the way it looked after the Kristallnacht when it was burned down. There was nothing left to what you see now from the more recent pictures.

Actually, there was one historian in Worms who realized that in November 1938 what was going on, and he actually saved each stone by stone somehow. I don't know how he did it. But he saved them. And they used a lot of the original stones when they rebuilt it.

It's like just the foundation there.

Yeah, it's really nothing. And the building behind to the left is the schoolhouse where I went to school. And this is the other side, the other corner of the synagogue, with the old-age home behind it.

Are there other ones in that book that you [BOTH TALKING]?

There's one the next page, I think, that I marked.

Yeah, this is the corner of the synagogue after it was rebuilt. And this picture was taken in 1982. And that little curved building was the Rashi house, where the scholar Rashi, the French Jewish scholar Rashi taught when he taught in Worms. And that's where, in that little. They called it the Rashi house.

In fact, I just saw the reproduction of the interior is in Tel Aviv at the-- what's the name of that Jewish-- the Diaspora Museum. The outside of the synagogue, the inside of the synagogue, and a reproduction of the Rashi chapel was there.

This, then-- let's get a nice close-up of that. OK. So this is a piece from a prayer book.

It's the original prayer book that was written in 1,272.

Wow.

And you were saying it's--

And you can see how the Jews were depicted in those days, with the pointed hat. And there's also something about garlic. If you're looking at some of the figures, the emblem for the Wormser Jews was something with garlic.

And I just realized this week, my mother always hated anything with garlic, really. And I think she must have picked up a lot of the prejudice that came from outside, from the Gentile world, and internalized it. Because we had no garlic in our house. And whenever there was, like, Italian salami with garlic, she wouldn't eat it, she hated it. It's really interesting.

And even today, I heard a news report recently, with all the riots going on, that the Germans hate some of the foreigners because they smell of garlic. So it's still there.

The same prejudice. So this association of Jews and garlic, was the Germans or the outside culture that associated it--

I don't know.

--with garlic?

I don't know. You know, I could probably read up on it in this book. But it's written in German. And it's very-- what do you call it? Historical.

Scholarly?

Scholarly is the word I'm looking for. Very scholarly German language. And the words are yay, so long, it's too much

work for me. I haven't done it. I've read a little bit of it but I haven't gone through it all.

But did you see any associations of garlic in this particular depiction?

I'm not sure. I think the figure on the right has part of it. But I can show you some in the book.

OK.

Because obviously, this was a depiction done by Jews.

Right, they apparently--

And they recorded the garlic.

--accepted it. Now, whether they-- whether it came originally from them, I really don't know. This is something that my sister might know. You know, these little things. She might have a better recollection of it.

OK.

Let me see if I can find it there, right in the front of somewhere, and find it. The archivist of the city of Worms did a couple of-- call it shots that you may want.

Oh, yeah, I'd like that.

These are more recent.

Great. This is a good one, too.

OK, let's get those. Get the glare off. There it is. OK. This is a color photograph of the outside of the synagogue?

Yeah. And as far as I remember, this is the entrance to the women's part of the synagogue.

Did they sit in the back or in a balcony?

They sat in the back.

Behind? Was there a screen or a cloth of some kind?

Not a cloth, but like an iron. As far I remember.

Like a grillwork of some kind.

It's long ago.

Yeah, it was a long time ago. Yeah. Wow. The stonework is really, incredibly intricate.

But this is today's. I mean, this is the way it was reconstructed now. But it certainly looks, especially on the base of the building, that they used a lot of the original stones. It's really a very beautiful shelter.

Is it all marble inside? The pillars, those pillars, those are marble? Is that what that looks like? I can't tell from here.

I don't think so. I really don't know. I couldn't tell.

That's great.

It says dress of a Jewish woman in Worms. Ah, here's the garlic.

Oh, yeah, we got to get a shot of this. Oh, this is amazing. This is great.

So could you translate that at the top of the page then please?

It's the dress of a Jewish man in Worms. I would guess that this is around-- maybe 1,400, 1,400/1,500. You know, I'm beginning to wonder now if this can be reproduced. These pictures.

You mean, from a legal point of view?

Yeah.

Well, it's not being used outside of here. It's only for research purposes. We're not reselling it or anything like that. So I think it'll be OK.

What would be interesting to know is whether that painting was done by somebody Jewish or by somebody in the larger culture.

I don't know.

Because as you say, there's the garlic very--

Yeah.

--strongly.

I can take a look and see if I can find anything on those facing pages around there.

And now, on the other side, is the--

The woman.

--woman's dress.

I think that the duck is a nice touch. I like the duck. There she is.

But you know, it doesn't look like anything Orthodox Jewish from what we are accustomed to as Jewish clothing. It's very secular.

Schoolcap. Now, I don't know whether that is supposed to be a skullcap. It's shul, which is school.

Well, maybe that's it, like synagogue cap, a shul cap.

But the purse points to that he was a merchant.

It certainly sounds like a German, a Christian painted it. It doesn't sound like someone from within the Jewish community painted it.

Oh, OK. What he says over here, the Hebrew of shum. I don't see any Hebrew of shum over here. Or maybe shum is the garlic.

Yeah, shum is garlic.

Shum is garlic? Oh, yeah, you're Israeli, right? The Hebrew of the garlic points that he came from the town of Speyer, which is very close to Worms, and also very, very old. Oh, from the area, Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, which are-- the three towns are very close together.

OK.

All they're saying is that it came from a library from Hescher. No, I think you're right that the picture's of Marcus Lam. Could be a Jewish name, Marcus Lam.

Marcus?

Could be.

Traditionally, especially at that time.

They were 1544 to 1604 or so. I don't know.

OK.

OK, I think that's all.

OK.

OK. What have you-- you brought some other photographs of your own, right?

Yeah.

Great.

This name goes back to-- I mean, don't bother with that in the-- goes back.

OK. What do we have here?

This is my Kennkarte, which was my-- what do you call it?

Like an identification card?

My ID card, yeah. And it goes back to, I think, 19-- oh, November 25, 1938. So it was within weeks after the Kristallnacht.

Was this normal for everybody to have to have a card like this?

They came out with that law that yes, that's what we needed to have. So yeah, everybody had to have-- at that point, had to have that ID.

OK.

OK, oh.

So this particular one is a Kinderausweise, this was a particular, a special one for children. Although I don't know what the difference is between that one and the adult ones. Can you bring the name down?

Sure. Can you read any of this? I know I'm not getting very close.

Yeah, a family name, and first name, and the birth date, and the citizenship. Now, I notice that at this point in November '38, this Sarah is not included in the name yet. So that law must've come out after that. Because after that, everybody was-- every woman was Sarah and every man was Israel.

Under citizenship, can you-- I can't read what it says.

[GERMAN]

And what have they written in there?

Deutsches Reich.

And what is the last category down there?

[GERMAN] is you're living-- the town that you're living at. What's the English word for that? Address.

Like the address?

Address. Yeah.

And so that would be the city, and street, and number where you were currently residing at that time?

Yeah. This was [GERMAN], I think.

OK.

I have trouble reading the--

Yeah, the writing is.

--German script myself at this point.

OK.

Well, this is the photo from the concentration camp in France, from Gurs that I talked about with the barrack that my father had organized, taking care of all the very old people. And you want-- when you're finished with that, turn it around because my dad wrote all the names and ages of the people on the back.

OK. OK. Can you just describe this one more time?

Yes. This picture must have been taken in the winter of 1940, probably around December, 1940, in the French concentration camp, the Gurs in the Pyrenees. And it was-- there was a group of men in the barrack that were all older, very old people that my dad and a couple of other younger men decided to take care of them. Helped them, rather than having them take care of themselves.

They needed assistance to go to the latrine, and to wash, and generally. So needed help. One of the men in the front is 97 years old.

Can you read off those names then?

Where is the 97-year?

There he is.

79, Albert Mayer? I can't read them all. 79, I can't make out the name of the next one. The one after that is Sturnweiler, Weiter. 72, Hirsch, 74. Goldstein, 63. Oh yeah, Abraham Levy, 97. Hugo Mayer, 77, and Leopold Levy, 63. Yeah. Camp de Gurs, France, 1940s, [INAUDIBLE]. Uffenheimer, Adolf Uffenheimer, 76. Actually, my grandfather was in that barrack, too. But he's not on the picture.

OK.

Do you know who took that picture?

No, I don't. It's amazing that somebody had a camera at all.

Yes, it is.

And so I have no idea how my dad got it. This is Gurs, December 1940, Barrack D, [INAUDIBLE]. That's still my dad's handwriting, also, in the back.

Somebody must have had their finger there. I don't know whether you want to bother with that one.

Sure.

What is this one?

Also the group of men in the camp.

Is your father in there?

No.

Just really would like to know who had camera and film.

And able to develop it.

Yeah, in 1940, in a camp.

Yeah. Well, but it was in France, don't forget.

True. They had more access to supplies.

They may have given it to someone who was able to go into town or maybe someone who spoke French was able to. It wasn't very difficult to get out and in in Gurs. The problem was that people didn't know the language. But if you could speak French, wasn't very difficult to escape. And a lot of people did.

This is the inside. It's a little on the gray side.

Inside of the barrack.

We're going to try to get the shot.

I don't know. All you can see is some laundry hanging up and the fact that there was nothing there. Yeah, you can see. Actually, it's coming out better on the screen than there because you can see the cot.

There's a cot here?



Yeah, that's the cots.

And there's laundry hanging up here.

There's laundry.

And there's a light, looks like a light bulb up there.

No, that's more laundry.

That's more laundry? OK. So these are just cots.

I think there was probably one light bulb, or maybe two, for the entire barrack. It was very dark inside. We just had daylight coming in through the doors. Obviously, whoever took her picture didn't have a flash.

This is one of the Spanish prisoners from the Spanish Civil War, which were-- that had escaped to France, which were also interned there.

Do you know how your father got all these pictures if he wasn't the one with the camera? Is this early?

No, I don't. And I'm pretty sure that this one is [INAUDIBLE]. Now, these are passport pictures that were taken in Gurs at the time when we left. You might not have saw the pictures of my grandparents there.

And what year is this?

1940.

And tell their names again, please.

Sophie and Adolph Kerr. I think that was taken in Gurs. And the other one that she took earlier was taken in Marseilles, if I remember correctly. Obviously, they wanted the profile pictures. Because we were criminals.

A watercolor that someone did from Gurs of the camp. That gives a pretty good ID of the location, and what the barracks looked like, and the mud that I was telling you about.

Yeah.

It was a beautiful spot right in the middle of the Pyrenees.

Where is this?

This is the beach in Sosua, in the Dominican Republic, which is-- Sosua is on the northern coast of the Dominican Republic, on the Atlantic side. And that's where we emigrated to in 1941.

So this is your normal living habitat right there?

Exactly.

In those days.

That's, yeah.

What a change from the Pyrenees, is it not? Wow.

It's kind of a Shangri-La.

Must have been a very strange feeling to go from Europe and the way it is, the way it looks, and feels, and sounds, to a place like this.

Well, particularly from a detention camp.

Yeah, well, to go from-- yeah.

Well, it's really-- as an adult, when you're looking back, you understand things much better. And at that point, at that time, I was just very excited that I got to see the world. That was wonderful. But now, as an adult, I came to understand why I'm so attached to this.

And that's simply because that was the first time in my life that I felt, experienced any kind of freedom. Any kind of equality with being able to walk in the street without being afraid. And with people looking me straight in the eye and smiling, rather than looking at me with hate and looking away. And I just have an immense feeling of devotion and love for the American people because of the way they were.

Do you have any other photographs that you'd like to redo?

This is a photo which was on the cover of this brochure. And that was taken of a group of refugees on the boat going to Sosua.

Do you know any of these people?

I can't tell you the names, but I knew them all. Little things I was talking to you about in my interview. That the people, the American people, from the Joint Distribution that came to choose people to go to the settlement in the Dominican Republic were too cowardly to go into France, where we were, and help people to get out of there.

They brought people from Switzerland and from England. And so they looked-- they hadn't been in any camps, this group of people.

Isn't that amazing?

In 1990, we had a 50th reunion of the people in the Dominican Republic from the settlement. This is the brochure that they had made. These are all old photos. This is the photo of the-- obviously, the conference with-- this is the Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic.

Can we get this on film? Because I'd like to have you describe that for us. Because it's great. And I can go from one to the next.

Right, these are all shots. But I want you to--

I want to get the front cover first.

And this maybe. Maybe I should read this out loud.

OK

Afterwards.

Yeah, I can also scroll it down as we go.

Oh, OK. Because that's very important.

OK.

Maybe I should have-- actually, well, you're going to edit it anyway, right? Because I have other pictures from those days. And this is now.

Well, we can start with this and maybe kind of just go back with all the stuff that you have. No, this is great.

OK, let's start up in this corner. And you were describing this photo before.

Yeah, actually, the first time I saw this photo was in this brochure. But I recognize that this is-- that Trujillo is sitting, facing the camera. No, the other one, to the left.

This one?

This one.

This guy.

Right.

OK.

And I would assume that that was one of the conferences, setting up the organization of the Dominican Republic giving this portion of land to the Joint Distribution Committee, and allowing them to bring refugees. And this looks like it's a group of settlers arriving. Either arriving or it was taken shortly after they arrived. I'm not sure.

This is a picture of the principal and one of the teachers. Or actually, the principal and the co-principal. And the school children in-- probably taken sometime in the '40s. Mid '40s. Now, we had a wonderful crop of children. These are all babies born in Sosua.

This is, again, a picture of the schoolchildren and the principal who was at our reunion. And it was just wonderful to see him and hear him. What did you think of that?

Yes, oh, I thought this was great. Who is this person?

A good friend of mine.

Yeah, very heartfelt.

She was. This picture was one of the settlers. And it's a great shot. And it was used as one of the advertising photos. It was on the brochure, on the cover of the brochure. He's now a fat, old man.

Yep, that's the way it is.

Well, that happens.

It does.

This is self-explanatory. This is another picture of our crop of babies. And I have some of them in here that came to the reunion, some of those babies.

Does that look a little like the old pictures of Israel?

This one?

In general, these pictures.

Yeah, like kibbutz life.

That's what I was just thinking.

This must have been after we left. I don't remember a single bar mitzvah while I was there. Now, if you read this, it's really incredible. I didn't know about any of this. I just found that out in 1990. A bill of rights that they gave us.

Do you think your parents were aware of that when they got there? Were you made aware of that?

I don't think so. I mean, we knew how we were treated, you know, that we could do. It was better for us than the natives. But as a bill of rights, you know, in so many words, we didn't know that at the time.

You didn't know you had the legal rights.

Yeah, that it was actually spelled out in a document, I didn't know that. I just found that out.

That's great. That's wonderful.

So are there any more photographs?

Where he worked. That was the general store. That was the horse he had bought for me. And he managed the Colmado. And you can see on the side, it says, [SPANISH]. Those were all the products that the farmers brought in at the time.

This was a typical settler's house.

Were these houses there already?

No.

The settlers built them?

Yeah.

And they seem like very fine houses.

Well, they're wooden cottages. But that was more than adequate, you know, for that climate and for that time.

Not bad, huh?

OK. This is a nice place to live.

Yeah.

Wow.

That's what we had every night. I'm still having trouble when people get excited over a beautiful sunset. And I say, come on, you haven't ever seen a really beautiful sunset until you've been in Sosua.

No, this is spectacular. Wow. Wow, that's great.

Yeah, the story of Sosua isn't generally known. That's why I feel it's so important to tell that story.

No, that's true.

That was our basketball team.

And where are you?

On the right, second from the right, and standing up. And my sister's right behind me to the right.

Wow. That's a picture of my sister when she was working with the kindergarten, nursery school kindergarten, and her group of children. That must look like Israel, too.

We had a director coming to Sosua from Israel, as a matter of fact. They had problems finding the right person to direct us. And they had to get an expert from Israel. And actually, they did best on their own after everybody else left. That was taken just before my sister and I left.

How old were you at that time the picture was taken?

Almost 17. 16, almost 17. That house-- house, that shack is still there. Later. When we came for the reunion.

And who is everyone in this picture? In the middle is my son and I. And to the right and left is my sister and her son. Just felt wonderful to go back there with the kids.

They could appreciate your past, yeah.

Well, these are current postcards from the area.

Because you said, it was developed into a tourist--

Into a tourist-type area.

--attraction.

Seems like a pretty nice place to grow up. Yeah. Is the water really that blue?

Oh, yeah. It's sort of more turquoise than blue. Yeah, the water is terrific. It still is. It's the principle that you saw in the other shots. And the rabbi was my rabbi from the wedding.

That's right.

This is the principle from those earlier photographs and those kids.

I'm on the left. And this was the congregation at the service. Oh, here's another great shot from the service, also.

These are wonderful. This, my sister and I in front of the Casa Grande, which was the administration building, back in 1940. Now, it's kind of-- I understand they want to renovate it and bring it up to make it into a historical building. But all they have so far is just that plaque. I understand there's a squatter in the building with the beauty parlor.

In what building? In that building?

In that building now, yeah, the settler's organization, they want to renovate it. And they can't get the people out.

That's great.

A new [INAUDIBLE].

Yep.

This is the synagogue the way it looks now from the outside.

How many Jews is-- are there any Jews still living here? I mean, is there still a group of people?

Yeah.

How many?

About 30, 40, 50, I don't know. I don't know exactly there. There are some settlers that stayed, and their families. And they are the ones who arranged all of that.

This is inside the synagogue and the man with a menorah is the carpenter who originally carved it during the days in the '40s. I don't know if you want this, but that was from the banquet that they gave us.

Sure, why not? It's part of a whole experience. How long did the reunion last?

From Thursday, Friday to Sunday. Just a long weekend. And this was also taken then.

There's got to be about one, two, three, four, five shades of blue in that picture. Unfortunately, the video doesn't quite capture it. Sheesh.

Now, the three women with my son, they're all just who were babies. We also had an opening of a museum at the time. And that was-- the inside of the museum.

We had those banners all over town. They had those banners. And that's the last one. That's inside the museum with some old photos behind me.

So this is the last photo? Well, thank you very much for making a whole special trip just--

Oh, you're welcome.

--bringing.

My pleasure.

Yes.

This part is really fun.

Well, still, thank you.

It's really completes everything. It gives us some images to put all the words. And that helps a lot. Thank you very much.

Yes. And thank you for doing the whole interview with us.

Well, you're welcome.