

The worst period for me for two basic reasons. One, I found the army life very, very harsh. And of course, the war in Korea was going on. And all the people that were being inducted into the United States Army were basically being sent to Korea. And so basic training was extremely harsh and very difficult. And I was having a very difficult time.

And there was also a certain amount of antisemitism, again, directed at me in the army. I remember it very well. But every once in a while, I would want to get permission from my superiors to attend Jewish services on Friday nights. And I remember my superiors sort of laughing and saying, well, you're not Jewish or you know, they sort of started to make a little fun out of it.

But the main reason that I didn't care for the army was basically that it was a very, very harsh life. And I found it extremely difficult to go through. But I did get through basic training. I started going AWOL a little bit here and there, but I never intended to go. You know, I always intended to come back.

I mean, it was just AWOL in the sense that I just couldn't stand the weekend, sometimes having to go stay there. And so what I would often do, I would sort of quietly slip out of the camp on the weekend and go to New York to see my friends. And then I would always be back Monday morning when we basically had to report to our battalion again.

But I remember very well that one weekend, I went AWOL, so to speak, in the sense that I left camp without permission for the weekend. And I stayed at one of my friend's apartment in New York City. And this friend of mine was a South American friend of mine.

And he decided to play a little joke on me. And that evening, while I was at my friend's home, there were some knocks at the door. And we opened the door, and who was there in uniformed army MP, military police, asking for me. And he asked me whether I would please show him my permit to be on leave for that weekend. And of course, I didn't have one.

And the next thing, I thought that I happened this, that he was going to take me in. And then it turned out to be a joke that my friend had planted on me. This happened to be a friend of this friend of mine that I was staying.

And anyway, I got through basic training. And then basically thought that I was going to be sent to Korea to fight the war just like everybody else did. And I had written to my mother in South America, and saying that I was going to go to Korea. And that was fine with me. And my mother didn't react a great deal. Of course, she have to accept everything that was happening here.

But I was lucky. And when my basic training ended and my orders came, I was one of the very few people that was not assigned to go to Korea. Instead, I was assigned to a military intelligence unit near Washington, DC. And so I was transferred from Camp Fort Dix, New Jersey to Fort Meade near Baltimore, between Baltimore and Washington.

And where I then was trained, basically, to become an interpreter and being part of a military intelligence unit. That was a good experience for me.

And I basically thought I had to sit there for a while waiting to get my security clearance, which in my case was taking a very long time because I had lived in South America. And I'm sure the army had to inquire about me in South America. And so I took a very long time before I was able to get security clearance.

When my security clearance finally came, it was approved by the United States Army, I was considered to be sent to France, to NATO headquarters, as an interpreter. But it meant signing up for an additional year in the United States Army, and I did not want to sign up for another year. I had to serve two years. And then, of course, I knew that I was going to be able to get the discharge.

And I decided not to go to NATO headquarters in France because, as I said, I didn't want to sign up for another year. And I decided that I would finish off my two-year term in Washington, DC, nearby Washington, DC, and get out of the army. Which I did in 1953.

Well, the two benefits that were available to anybody serving in the army then was, number one, I was able to get the GI Bill of Rights, which enabled me to choose a college in the United States of my choice where I would be able to study for four years while getting paid at the same time by the United States government. So much a month, which was sufficient to live on.

And I decided that I would take advantage of the GI Bill. And the other advantage, of course, was that I was also finally being issued--

Your citizenship.

--my citizenship papers. So I got out in May in 1953 and didn't quite know what college to attend to or where.

But it just so happened that my intelligence unit, I found myself with some other people from California, who were telling me a great deal about the Bay Area. And were showing me all kinds of pictures, including the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. And when I saw all of that information and the pictures, I basically really fell in love with the place.

And I decided, this is where I wanted to come and study. Namely, UC Berkeley. And so I didn't even go back to New York, where most of my things were stored during this period. And I flew out to California.

Basically, I hitchhiked by military plane. And the funny thing was that I really didn't know exactly where California was located. And I couldn't get a direct flight from Washington, DC to California. I had to take short flights. And I never knew exactly whether they were getting me into the direction of California.

But I finally, after a rather long, must have been at least a week or so, I finally managed to land in a place called Yuma, Arizona. And again, I had no idea where Yuma, Arizona was. But I thought it was somewhat close to the Bay Area. And I landed there and found myself in a very deserted little town, way on the border with Mexico. And said, well, the best thing I can do is to hitchhike up to the Bay Area. I did it

I was still in uniform, of course. And just had my honorable discharge. And came into the Bay Area, where I did have a cousin and his family, who had just settled here, who had emigrated from England. And so he was sort of waiting for me.

And I arrived in San Francisco about June of 1953. And decided that I would apply to enter the University of California at Berkeley to study there. Well, I went over to Berkeley, and I applied, and was told to show my Chilean school records, and I did. Sent for copies and gave them my school records.

And they told me that I would, first of all, have to go to a junior college because they felt that this was not quite proof enough that I could make a go of it at the university. But after a semester or two attending a junior college, they would be happy to consider my application again.

And so I decided to stay in San Francisco and enroll in the City College of San Francisco. And I did. And I was getting very good grades. And I was also getting very impatient to come to the university here because that's the place that I basically fell in love with.

And again, I said that that's where I was going to study. And I spent two semesters at the City College in San Francisco. Then came over to Berkeley again and was finally accepted here.

After one year?

After one year, yes, of being at City College, and showing them my grades, they accepted me on, I think it was, sort of a probationary period at first. But things turned out fine, even though I immediately flunked the English course.

In English A?

The English one.

We still have that subject A, yeah.

Subject A. I flunked English 1A and I had to go back and take the subject A class here in Berkeley. And that was not such a happy experience for me. I thought, again, the whole world was coming down. But everything turned out fine at Cal.

What happened in my private life when I came out to California was that, of course, my cousin was here who had lost his parents in the gas camps, and his sister. And he was the only one alive. And he's the only one that I had here.

And then I also had a friend here, a German Jewish friend with whom I grew up in Chile, who I had known very, very well, who had come here just prior to myself coming to California, who had settled here. And I became very friendly with him. I didn't have anybody else, except my cousin.

And what then-- I started attending the University of California. And actually, although prior to attending California, at City College, I was starting to check out a lot of the Jewish organizations here.

And I think the way I started rejecting was basically that this friend of mine, German Jewish friend, who I had known very well in Chile, had himself rejected Judaism when he came here, and joined one of the Baptist churches here, became very involved. He was apparently baptized and joined the church here.

And when I basically came here to California, as far as my Judaism was concerned, I was basically very unhappy in it because I had bad experiences. And I have to say that this friend of mine from Chile sort of influenced me a little bit to perhaps try to attend one of the Christian churches here.

And I started attending one of the Presbyterian Churches. Of course, I didn't know any of the churches here. But I was in a place where I just basically was rejecting anything that was Jewish. I didn't want to attend the synagogue here.

And even though I was-- I did make some Jewish friends here. But somehow, this friend of mine, somehow, this had a tremendous influence on me. And I went, decided, one Sunday morning to attend a Christian church.

And I remember it very well. It was the First Baptist Church in San Francisco. And I had a very, very emotional experience there at this church. And I was very, very influenced by what took place at this church. And I found myself attending church ever thereafter.

This was now 1953, when I first came to California. And as I said, I'm backtracking just a little bit. I was attending City College. And I was beginning to attend church. And I think, basically, what I felt was is that everybody was accepting me and reaching out for me. And somehow, this had a tremendous influence on me at that time.

And I got myself quite involved and continued attending the church every single Sunday. And I made an awful lot of friendships there. And it was a very warm experience. And that really overtook my life suddenly.

And the next thing that happened that I met another young person my age who was studying to be a Presbyterian minister, who was also attending City College. And I just happened to meet him. And he and I decided to share an apartment together in San Francisco while we were both attending City College.

And of course, he, too, had a big influence on me. He was studying to be a Presbyterian minister, and I was attending church and reaching out towards Christianity in a sense. And was very much being influenced by that experience.

And then we both decided to come to the University of California together. He also applied, just like I did. And he got his acceptance and so did I. And in June of 1954, we both transferred to Berkeley. And through him, I am able to stay at a Presbyterian Student Center in Berkeley, which was Westminster House. And again--

There's an airplane noise.

--found myself with some very, very warm people who accepted me full-heartedly. And what basically happened in my life is that I decided that I will-- basically, the church took hold of my life.

And I held on to the church. And I started attending church in Berkeley and became very, very involved there and met a lot of people. And I really don't know whether they-- I don't think they even knew that I was Jewish or had a Jewish background. It never really came up.

And I was really, basically fearful of even expressing that to anybody, that I am coming from a Jewish background. I'm sure that I mentioned it to a few older people that I met at the church. But they were, of course, very, very warm towards me and wanted me in the church. And it was an experience that just overtook my life for a very, very long period that followed then.

I lived at Westminster House, and became very active there in the student affairs, and attended church, and made a lot of friends there at the church, in youth groups and college groups. And finished my studies at the University of California. I majored in business, specializing in accounting because of my accounting experience in Chile.

And then I continued corresponding with my mother. And of course, the very first thing that I informed my mother was that I had left Judaism and that I was part of the Church.

And I thought that my mother would be very disappointed, but no, she wasn't. She said, if that's what you wanted to do, that was fine with her. That she said, of course, she could never do that herself. And would never consider it. But if I'm happy, that this was her concern. And this is fine with her.

And that was not all the case with my relatives in Brazil when I informed them. And then sort of, you know, I was going through such a happy period in my life experiencing Christianity, which as I said, you know, just totally overtook me.

My relatives in Brazil, of course, told me just the opposite. They were very, very upset of what I had done, and never accepted it, and told me so in very clear words. But that didn't have any effect on me. I continued very much actively in the church in Berkeley. And graduated in 1957.

You got your AB degree or BS?

BS, I believe it was. And immediately was offered a job with one of the big CPA accounting firms in San Francisco, Arthur Young and Company. And started to work for them as an auditor, junior auditor, in 1957.

At the same time, I was becoming more and more involved in the church. And I worked for some other companies. I only had about a year with Arthur Young and Company and found that a little difficult, the auditing experience. I had to do a certain amount of traveling. And there were some other things that I was not quite to my liking on somewhat difficult.

So I decided, after working for some CPA firms, that I would probably be better off in industry. And so I started applying to some of the big corporations in industry. And worked for companies like Standard Oil of California, and Bethel Corporation, and Stauffer Chemical, mainly as an auditor and as an accountant.

And at the same time, my whole social life basically took place at the Presbyterian Church here in Berkeley, where I was very involved. And I basically never saw another Jewish person ever again. In the next 20 years here in the Bay Area, it was all Christians, Presbyterians, what have you.

My cousin in the meantime had moved to Marin County, but I had very little contact with him, and didn't see that much of him. And so I worked basically as an accountant auditor until about 1962.

And then I was-- I had a number of changes in industry. And suddenly, slowly, came to realize that perhaps accounting was not what I should pursue in life. And those were the Kennedy years, the '60s, when Kennedy was in power.

And there was-- I realized that there was a tremendous demand for foreign language people because languages, foreign languages, were being taught at the elementary levels. And many of the school districts were crying for foreign language people, or people who had a good knowledge of languages. And that idea appealed to me.

And I got the idea that perhaps I would leave industry and pursue a teaching career. And I did. I went back to college. I enrolled at Haywood State in Haywood. And decided that I wanted to get a teaching credential and begin to teach at the secondary level.

And I wanted to teach Spanish. I could have taught German, but I certainly didn't want to teach German. I decided that Spanish was the language I wanted to teach.

So I went back in 1962 and enrolled in Hayward and got a teaching credential there. Also took some classes at San Francisco State. And in 1963, I was immediately, upon completion of my teaching credential, I was almost immediately offered positions in many school districts in the Bay Area because the language people were in high demand and there was a shortage of foreign language people.

And I decided to accept an offer with the Mount Diablo Unified School district in Concord and started teaching at a secondary school, or high school, by the name of Clayton Valley, Clayton Valley High School. And taught Spanish there.

Again, I had a very difficult beginning there because I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, suddenly facing 180 American high school students every day. That was something I just really didn't quite realize what that was going to be all about. And so my teaching career at the beginning was not an easy one. It was rather difficult.

But I managed to get my tenure there after one year. I almost lost it, I think. But I managed to get my tenure there, being accepted as a teacher.

And at the same time, my activities, my social activities at the church became very, very involved, more and more so every year. And my whole life really basically centered within the church. My whole social life.

And I met a woman at one of the Presbyterian churches in San Francisco and fell in love. And of course, you know, I was determined to marry a non-Jewish woman. I was determined. It was very important for me to marry Christian girl because of my involvement in the church.

And I really basically sort of put Judaism out of my life completely, really, basically. I had no contact with anybody Jewish. My entire life was centered around the Presbyterian Church. And I met this woman, and decided, after courting her for about six months, to get married.

And we did get married back in Ohio, where her family was from. I sort of insisted on meeting her family, and going back to her hometown, and getting married there. At a Presbyterian Church, of course.

And never really opened up to my wife about much of anything in my life. I think, I basically was very, very fearful of disclosing anything about my Jewish life to anybody, including my future wife. So that unfortunately, my wife really basically knew very little about my background and what I had gone through in South America, or in England, or Germany.

I just simply was not going to open up about my experiences of being a Jew or being the so-called dirty Jew. That was so ingrained in me that I just simply, I'm sure, wanted to put this totally out of my life forever. And I just did not want to touch on that subject ever again.

And so she knew nothing about it, practically. Of course, she knew that I had a Jewish background and that I had

converted in the Presbyterian Church. And that was good enough for her, I'm sure.

And in fact, I was really basically the one who talked her into attending church with me and becoming involved. She had no involvement at all. But I insisted on it. And so she became-- at least she attended with me.

Then, of course I had my next unfortunate experience. And that was that I was getting a divorce a few years after being married. And it was a divorce that I really basically to this day never quite understood how it came about. It basically happened that we had gone to Europe one year together.

We were shortly married and decided to take a vacation in Europe. And we went to Europe for eight weeks and came back. And then the following year, we decided that-- my wife was a school psychologist in the Oakland school district, and I was teaching at the time. So we both had our vacations at the same time, during the summer months.

So the next summer we decided that we would have the in-laws come out from Ohio to visit us. And we thought we would spend the whole summer with the in-laws here. They all had a great deal of interest in fishing. And my wife enjoyed fishing. And she introduced me to fishing. And I got very excited. And so the plans were to go fishing for the whole summer, basically, with the in-laws.

Well, what happened was that they came, the in-laws came out to visit us. And I thought that the first few days were very happy. But I suddenly got a divorce with my in-laws being out here. And of course, it didn't just happen without anything happening. But I don't know whether the in-laws and my wife had this all preplanned or not. I really am not quite sure.

But one night, after them being out here, I had a little argument with my father-in-law. And you know, we were at the point of starting a family. We wanted very much to have a family. And my wife had quit her job with the Oakland School District. And we were looking at homes. And we wanted to start a family.

And I had a little argument with my father-in-law. And he didn't like this argument maybe, or he sort of confronted me, and the thought of maybe-- gave me to understand that maybe I should consider not having any children because maybe there were some problems here.

But anyway, my in-laws, very quickly that night, decided with my wife to leave. And I did not know what was happening. And the following day, I realized, after seeing them at a bank where we had our bank accounts. I finally realized that I was getting a divorce initiated by my in-laws and by my wife.

And of course, that was a very tragic event in my life. And I was very, very-- well, I was devastated at the time. And I didn't understand exactly what was really going on behind their minds and the reasons for it when we were beginning to-- thinking about a family and her already having quit her job.

But anyway, I did get it. I got a divorce. And the in-laws stayed with my wife, apparently, for a long period until the divorce was finalized. And then the in-laws went back to their hometown in Ohio. And my wife, at that point, started making contact with me again. And maybe she did have some second thoughts about the divorce.

But she was very, very attached to her father. And I was very much aware of that. And obviously, something must have been going on. And I already had many inklings about this, even already at the time that we were getting married, that her father was not going to let her daughter go that easy. They were very, very much attached to each other.

Anyway, the divorce was finalized. And I was facing life alone again, which was a tragedy for me, certainly. Because I was very much looking forward to family and home, and this did not come about.

But this was now about 1970 to 1971 or thereabouts when the divorce was finalized. And the good thing that came out of the divorce was that I decided that I wanted to have a little better understanding of my life, and my contact with Christianity, and my involvement there.

And I decided after my divorce that I would want to get some counseling and contacted the Jewish Family Services in the Bay Area. And they came up with a recommendation of somebody that I could see.

And it proved, in a sense, to be a life saver. Because I finally realized, or at least got a little better understanding, why I had joined the church and why I became involved in Christianity. And I also suddenly realized that that certainly was not my place, and that I certainly needed to come back where I started out. And I did.

I contacted-- of course, I had some very-- I was full of guilt feelings about it. Tremendous guilt feelings. And I said, well, I can't just wander into the synagogue and become a Jew again. So I decided to contact one of the local rabbis here in Berkeley.

And I remember very well, it was Rabbi Abrami at one of the Jewish congregations here in Berkeley. Because I knew that he was from Europe. And he came recommended to me. And I decided to get an appointment with him.

And I talked it over with Rabbi Abrami, and said, this is what I've done, this is where I want to be now. And he assured me that everything was fine, and that I should not feel guilty about anything, and that I basically, as far as he was concerned, never left Judaism.

Excuse me.

Out of time.

Bad timing.

I'm sorry. You're right.

That's pretty good that it lasted that long.

I'm not sure whether I'm getting at the stuff that I really-- isn't so relevant.

Oh, that is tremendously fascinating, the fact that you as a Jew could come back. You didn't have to go through any kind of ceremony or anything else. And that work goes pretty fast when you have to change. I've never seen one of those close up.

OK.

I do think.

I could tell you exactly where you left off.

Yeah, I remember it.

OK.

So rabbi-- I had some sessions with Rabbi Abrami here. He was extremely warm-hearted towards me and assured me that everything was fine. And that I really, basically, as far as Judaism concerned, never left Judaism. And I should not feel guilty. And that I would be fully accepted again into the Jewish community.

And I decided to join the Temple Isaiah in Lafayette, a Reform congregation. And was very, very happy there. Although, again, I was having a certain amount of difficulties experience. And I got myself involved quite actively at Temple Isaiah, in the sense that I was a member of several committees there, and wanted to participate, and did.

But I also joined a Havurah group, which met once a month there, which I thought of very highly. But my next experience at the Temple Isaiah was that I did not fully participate in all the activities that the Havurah decided to

undertake. And basically, they met once a month, and I went to all of those meetings.

But they then decided to take a weekend or a couple of weekends away from the Bay Area. And they wanted to go up to the mountains and undertake some Jewish project in the Gold Country, I believe it was. And I felt a little uncomfortable being single. And this was a couple's group. I felt a little uncomfortable and decided that I was not going to partake that weekend with the Havurah group.

When I didn't go on the weekend trip, I was suddenly notified the following week by one of the members of the Havurah group that I was not fully participating with all the others in everything they did, and that the members felt that maybe I should look for another Havurah group. Well I took that somewhat very personal.

And I was a little bit shook up. And I decided just instantaneously-- I think I probably had a little bit of an overreaction-- and decided to leave the congregation. Because I said, you know, just because I didn't go on a weekend with a Havurah group, that they were sort of-- asked me to leave and look for elsewhere. I said to myself, that was a little bit too much. And I thought that I didn't want to stay in this congregation.

But I did begin to join many other Jewish groups in the Bay Area again, and left the church, and stopped attending the church. And even though I had transferred my membership-- I moved from the Berkeley area. I finally moved to Walnut Creek after my divorce because I taught out there. They transferred my membership first to another Presbyterian Church out there.

But I then attended, during my counseling, then I started attending many Jewish organizations in the Bay Area, and felt this is where I wanted to be. And even though I had somewhat of an unfortunate experience at Temple Isaiah, I still thought that this was my place, and continued attending many Jewish groups, both in San Francisco and the East Bay. And became very involved in many of them.

And suddenly realized that my 20 years that I spent in the church, you know, that there, I'm sure, were some very good reasons at the time for my being part of all of that. But I suddenly got what I thought to have some understanding why I did what I did. And that I certainly wanted to be part of the Jewish community again.

And I think that I'm coming somewhat to the end of my story. I do not belong to any congregation right now. And that's been a little bit of a disappointment to me, personally, that I have not joined a congregation. I have tried to rejoin Temple Isaiah again. And I was a little bit turned off because of some exorbitant fees that they asked of me in order for me to join there.

And so up to this point, I really haven't found a place in a congregation. But I'm sure that now that I'm retired-- I retired from my former teaching career I taught for 26 years and retired in June of 1989.

And finally, now that I'm a little more relaxed again, and don't have the pressure of facing 180 high school children every day, I'm sure that I will have time now to look into a congregation where I can feel part, and where I can be part of the Jewish community.

How about your mother?

Oh, yes.

Yes, let's hear that.

Well, my mother continued living in South America, in Chile, until about 1970. And at that time, elections in Chile were taking place, or were about to take place. And Allende was one of the front-runners. Allende was a socialist and was front-runner in that election. And the opinion, the public opinion in Chile at the time was that he would be the one to come out ahead in that election.

The Jewish community reacted very negatively towards Allende because they thought, basically, that he was number

one, going to take over all the property that Jews had acquired. And of course, many Jewish families had become very well-to-do in Chile, and owned a lot of the factories, and a lot of the industries.

And the fear spread that with Allende's possibility of coming into power, that number one, he would certainly take over all the property that Jews owned. And number two, Jews even feared for their lives. And there were rumors around that the Allende politicians had lists of names on there, including many prominent names from the Jewish community. People that he was planning to do away with.

And the Jewish community basically panicked, including my mother. And many decided already, prior to the election and Allende, which I believe took place in 1970. Many decided to leave. And my mother did not want to come to the United States, even though I suggested it to her.

I probably think that she felt that the coming here was too difficult a step for her, not knowing the language fluently, and making a new life here, my mother already being in her late 60s.

And so my mother, together with many other German Jews, who had lived in Chile for all these years. About 30 years they had lived there. They decided, a lot of them decided to go back to Germany, where I believe they were covered under German social security, and they had Medicare available. And of course, many Jews were getting reparations, including my mother, and were getting pensions from the German government.

And my mother's marriage did not turn out. And she separated already very early after getting married. They were not together a long time so that my mother was alone again. So basically, just prior to the election of Allende in Chile, my mother, with many other families, decided to go back to Germany.

And many of them decided to go on to one of the well-known Jewish homes in Germany. There were a number of Jewish homes in Germany that became quite known. And my mother decided to go to Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, which was located near Mannheim, where a very wonderful Jewish home was located. And she settled there with other families also from Chile.

And I managed to visit her there once. And we spent some time together both at the home, and then also spent a vacation together in Switzerland. But my mother felt that she was somewhat too young for that home, and decided to change, and leave the home.

And settled in the town of Wiesbaden, which is a lovely little resort town. Well-known German resort town near Frankfurt, where many other families from Chile had settled also. And she moved to Wiesbaden. And managed to get an apartment there, a one-room apartment.

And of course, she enjoyed it in the sense that there were many other families there with whom she had basically lived together for 30 years in Chile. So there was a whole Jewish community, so to speak, there that had settled back in Wiesbaden.

And unfortunately, in 1978, I did not see my mother then for seven or eight years. My relationship with my mother was rather strained, even with correspondence. It was a very, very strained relationship all throughout our life. And I did not see my mother after I saw her once in Germany. That was in 1970, shortly after her arrival there. I did not see her for about seven or eight years.

And then in 1978, I wanted to make a visit again to visit my mother. And my mother was looking forward to this visit of mine. And even suggest-- or I suggested that I for the first time wanted to make also a visit to Israel, and combine the two trips, and go to Israel.

And my mother had informed me that she had a lot of family in Israel. And that I could visit the family there, that she had there. And she was going to give me this trip to Israel as a birthday present. So I was all set to visit my mother in the summer of 1978, and fly to Frankfurt, and already had my airline ticket bought, a charter flight. And my mother made reservations for me to go to Israel for three weeks and visit all of her family there.

And about four weeks before I was to fly out San Francisco, I received a phone call in the middle of the night that my mother had been killed in an automobile accident. And my phone started ringing, as I said, in the middle of the night. And I usually don't answer the phone when my phone starts ringing. And I didn't answer the phone until about 4 o'clock in the morning. It continued to ring.

And I got onto the phone, finally, at 4 o'clock. And there was an American on the other line. And I thought, I had no idea who it was. And I just hang up. And then an hour later, about 5 o'clock, my phone started ringing again.

And all of a sudden, a couple from Chile, who I had known very well was on the line, informing me that my mother had been killed in an automobile accident. And that it had happened already four days ago. And that my mother had no identification on her. She was basically run over by a car by a young German driver who had just gotten his driver's license.

And my mother had no identification on her, and nobody knew who my mother was. And finally, the German police in Wiesbaden decided to put some announcements in the German newspapers asking for information about my mother. And nobody responded until the police decided to look at my mother's house key. And the house key had a number on it.

And the German police decided to publish the number of the house key in the paper. And sure enough, suddenly, the manager where my mother had an apartment building discovered the article in the newspaper, the house key number. And out of curiosity, decided to check the number with his records, and discovered the housekeeper belonged to my mother.

And so the German police then went into my mother's apartment. And my mother was very meticulous and had prepared all kinds of documents for me in case of her death. And the German police discovered those documents, and discovered that I existed in Walnut Creek, and immediately found out my phone number, and notified the American consul.

And the American consul was one of the people who called in the middle of the night. But I hung up on him because I thought-- I didn't quite realize what he was trying to tell me. And it wasn't until my mother's friends came on the phone in early morning, in May.

And of course, then I realized the minute I heard my mother's friends on the phone that obviously something had happened. And sure enough, my mother-- that's when I was informed that my mother had been killed in an accident. And I immediately flew to Wiesbaden that morning and settled the affairs of my mother.

And my mother, shortly before her death, had had a visit of her only sister from Brazil. My aunt from Brazil had just visited my mother and had just left my mother before her death. Had gone into Switzerland. And so I was able to notify my aunt in Switzerland what had happened.

And my aunt came for the funeral. I managed to locate my aunt by calling up South America, her daughter. And we managed to locate my aunt, and she came to the funeral.

Unfortunately, I had a very unhappy experience with my aunt at the time that she came in the sense that my aunt, for some strange reason, thought that the estate of my mother should go to her instead of me. And to her family, and not to me. And we barely got through with my mother's funeral in Wiesbaden, which was a very emotional experience for me, and a very sad experience.

When my aunt approached me and wanted to take a look at my mother's testament and will, and I said, why don't you come up, and I'll show it to you. And my aunt took a look at the testament, and my mother, of course, left everything to me, being her only child.

And my aunt yelled out at me, saying that this is not my mother's will, and there must be some other will. And there

wasn't. And my aunt left for Switzerland back to complete her vacation.

And the next thing that happened to me, basically, was that I suddenly got a call from my mother's German lawyer in Wiesbaden, telling me that he had received a letter from my aunt in Switzerland in which my aunt was accusing me of using a false will. And claiming that the estate of my mother should belong to her and her family, and not me.

Well, I was, of course, in shock and couldn't disbelieve that this was my only living relatives, my closest living relatives that had survived the Jewish Holocaust. And I was looking forward to having a relationship with my aunt again, being the closest relative. And I simply could not believe what was happening here to me.

But the lawyer, my mother's lawyer assured me that he already wrote back to my aunt, saying that he wanted no further correspondence with her on this matter. And that was the end of that. And my aunt went back to South America. And then quietly thought she would just ignore what she had done. She basically accused me of using a false testament. But she never mentioned it again.

But I obviously decided I did not want to have any more contact with my aunt in any shape or form. Although her daughter, who is my cousin, was [? alive, ?] also lives in Sao Paulo, probably is not aware of what happened at the time, and corresponds with me. And has visited here once.

You haven't brought it up?

And I decided not to bring it up either. So it's basically a forgotten matter. But that was the end of my mother. And I am now, you know, with-- I mean, I have a lot of the family mementos at home. And I'm going through some of them.

Of course, I have a really basic, very little knowledge about my family other than most. My mother comes from a family of five sisters, and two of which survived the Holocaust. Three did not with their family and were all gassed in the German camps.

And since I have no correspondence with my aunt and very little correspondence with my cousin, I don't have a very good knowledge about my family past. And although my cousin who survived and lives in Marin County knows quite a bit about the family. And from time to time fills me in whenever I--

What is this relationship? Is he on your father's side?

No, my cousin Rory, his mother is my mother's sister. And she died in the camps. And he is the only one that survived the Holocaust. He lost both of his parents and his sister. But he survived being sent out to Switzerland as a young boy. And then ended up in England. And then came out to California and settled here. And I think that's about the end of my story, at least what I can recall right now.

Thank you very much. That is a very fascinating story. And I certainly feel privileged to have heard it. I think that it bears telling. And I think it's historically of great interest, I find. Because there are many elements of it that are fascinating to me.

Great story.

Thank you.

Great story.

Very much.

So we are winding up at about 3:10, something like that. So we've been just about two hours.

Great.

Three hours.

Three? Oh, I mean three. See, it was so fascinating, I lost an hour.