Interview With LORI SHEARN
Holocaust Oral History Project
Date: Monday, January 10, 1994
Place: San Francisco, California
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(BEGIN VIDEOCASSETTE TAPE 1, SIDE 1)

Q LORI, I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN WITH YOUR FULL NAME AND YOUR FAMILY NAMES INCLUDING YOUR PARENTS AND ANY SIBLINGS.

A Okay. Well, my full name now is Lori Shearn. My maiden name was Beller, B-e-l-l-e-r. And I have one sibling. I have a brother named Eddie. And my parents were named Irma, and my father was Paul.

Q WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

A I was born in Vienna in 1925.

Q LET'S START IF YOU CAN JUST DESCRIBE YOUR CHILDHOOD, YOUR FAMILY LIFE, YOUR RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING, SCHOOL, FRIENDS. YOU CAN BEGIN WITH WHATEVER YOU WOULD LIKE.

A All right. Well, my childhood was a very happy one. My parents were very different from each other, and I think that had some bearing on the way our family was put together, let's say.

My mother was Viennese. And her mother and father had died. So she was orphaned at a very young age. And she had five siblings. And she ended up keeping house and doing whatever they had to have done while they went out and worked.

This was during the war. Austria was at war. And all the eligible young men disappeared. And her brothers disappeared and her sisters. And she felt really pretty awful. They were not well off. They lived in a poor neighborhood of Vienna. But she was very beautiful, blue eyed, jet black hair. And she had many admirers. She was very charming.

And my father was what they then called an immigrant. He was from Poland. He had been born in Poland in a small shtetl. And he was one of nine children. He left home pretty much because there was a progrom predicted for the town. His town was called Kabuszowa. It was actually one of the shtetls zeroed in on in the Jewish Museum's show on shtetls recently. So I was quite amazed that it had this kind of a place.

But they were going to have a progrom, which, you know, it sounds so silly; but that's what they did periodically. And so his parents packed up

the kids and him, and they went to the nearest town to try and get away. And to him that seemed like freedom. And after a while, his parents returned to their home, and he decided to keep going. And he eventually went to another small town. He had lots of adventures.

His older brother had left before him. And when he came to this town called Tarnow, he looked around in a pawn shop for something that he needed; and there he saw a watch that had belonged to his father that his brother had clearly ripped off in order for him to leave and go to America. So my father redeemed it and kept it all his life long.

And he got a job there doing various things. All his family for the many years that they had lived in Kabuszowa were tinsmiths. They were amongst the people asked by this Polish count that ran this particular town to come there because they were artisans of one sort or another. They were trying to get this area of the country to be a little bit better economically. And so they didn't suffer terribly much anti-Semitism. But then they lived in a shtetl, and everybody knew

his place.

So he did have this trade. And he got a job working with a roofer. He was afraid by this time that he was going to be drafted into the Polish army because, again, this was the first world war. He was the right age. And they tended to take Jewish guys because they were much more expendible than Polish kids. So he didn't like that idea very much, and he was trying to escape that. When he got this job with the roofer, he got to be pretty good at it. It's sort of related to tinsmithery. And the man didn't tell the authorities that he was there. And so he got away with it.

After he had been there awhile, he fell off the roof at one time. And he always told this story with a laugh. He probably broke his leg or hip or something, and he had a limp all his life, a very mild limp which got worse as he got older. And so that came from that particular experience.

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And then after the war he made his way to Vienna which was fairly close, the big attraction in Europe at that time, the city where things were happening after the war. And he always wanted --

he knew how to make money by working hard, by going into some kind of a business. And he did this in Vienna.

He bought a failing paint shop. He and a friend put in a few dollars, not very much; and they did quite well. And for some reason there was a shortage, and various contractors after the war needed what they had to offer. And they did extremely well. And somebody wanted to buy them out as soon as there was an opportunity. And so they did. They sold out, made a lot of money, and he then felt he was set to go into the next business.

So when he met my mother, he was really smitten; and he didn't really think that he had much of a chance. So he got a friend of his to approach her at some party or some occasion. She liked this friend a lot, and she said that she would go out with him. But then my father showed up instead with presents and gifts and candy and flowers and in a -- Viennese what they call the fiaka which is kind of like a horse and carriage. So that was their first date. He was prematurely bald, and so he looked even older than he was.

And, you know, this wasn't the man of her dreams. But he was persistent.

And she actually made her sister take back all the presents sort of the next day because everybody said, What are you going to do? Are you going to marry him? This is terrible. He's nothing but an emigrant. He's not even Viennese. And all that kind of stuff. And my father was always very angry with that sister for having been that messenger.

Anyway, they were married in 1920. A strange thing happened the day the marriage was to take place. My father got the hiccoughs. And it was so bad that they had to postpone the marriage. It was just amazing to me. I get hiccoughs pretty badly, I think. So that's what happened. And they were married the following week.

And the problem then became where they were to live. So this was in 1920. She was very anxious to get out of the housing that she shared with her brothers and sisters. They had a one-bedroom apartment over the store with all these people falling all over themselves, and it was really something to get out of. I think that's why she

got married really.

And they got an apartment, which was very difficult at that time. People were bidding against each other for all kinds of apartments after the war. Times were very bad. And her step-mother who had taken over -- her father had these six young children when the mother died, and so the step-mother was never very popular. But she was a good woman. Then when my mother's father died, she left and eventually needed an apartment, too. So they were in competition for this one little apartment.

For some reason, I don't know, my mother got it. And they started out. And, of course, within the year, she was pregnant with my brother. They did stay married for an awful long time. They were married until they both died. They died about three months apart 68 years later. So that's the story of their marriage.

My home was very happy. I was a very happy child. In fact, my mother always called me Sunshine. I thought everything was just wonderful. And we lived in a small apartment, very primitive. We didn't have a bathroom. One

bedroom. We, my brother and I, slept in the bedroom with our parents. And we had a maid, and she slept in the kitchen. We had no bathroom. There was a toilet down the hall. Baths were taken in the kitchen in a kind of a tub arrangement. And that's where we lived.

Now, they both worked in a store that my father had bought selling tailors' accessories. Tailoring was a big field in those days, and all the things that tailors needed was a big thing. And so he was quite successful. They never expanded or anything, but they were frugal. They worked together, and they saved money.

3 And by 19 -- I think it was '34, maybe -- no, it was earlier than that -- they bought an apartment building. And with it they took a very lovely, beautiful, large apartment with five bedrooms, or five rooms anyway, and lovely appointments. My room had little pictures along the edge of the wall, little children dancing, that kind of thing. Each room was heated with the Austrian tile ovens which were floor to ceiling, beautiful creations of ceramic. They were really very lovely.

They also had a view. My mother always liked to be able to look out of the window and see things. So they did have that. And from that time on, they were quite comfortable. And things were going very well. I guess I was about six when that happened, when they moved to this new place.

Even before that, I always had the feeling that I was able to do lots of things. I was definitely raised to be self-reliant, to take care of myself. My mother went to this business to work. And when I was only about four or five, I went to a kindergarten or I guess a nursery school really which was, oh, maybe a fifteen minutes walk away from our house. And I walked all on one side of the street until I came to the store, and then my mother would walk me across a very busy street. And then I was able to walk there. And after a while, I didn't think anything of it. At first I thought it was great. I felt very proud. And I think that attitude had a lot to do with my ability to get through what came later, that I was always able to take care of myself really.

It was very warm. My father was not an

educated man, but he was very smart and loved books. And he didn't spend a terrible lot of time with us. But, you know, it was not the custom in those days. He was business, and children were something else. I remember when I was very young he used to ask me to get dressed up in my best clothes so he could take me for a walk on Sunday when the store was closed. So that was always kind of special.

We did spend weekends together in the Vienna Woods. Everyone was athletic in a sense. You know, in a much milder sense than today. But my mother was a very good swimmer and taught us early to be swimmers. We played soccer and whatever else kids played. I wasn't allowed to have a bicycle, but my brother did.

We spent all of our weekends, all of our vacations and festivities, birthdays, that sort of thing, with several of my mother's siblings who had children about the same age. So there were two families besides ours mainly who each had one son. That was Eric and Fred. And we were very close, the four children. It was more like all siblings, really.

And on weekends, there were street cars. We had no car. And we would go to the Vienna Woods. And there would be picnics and lots of hiking in the winter on skis. In the summer there was a swimming pool where we all went. And it was a grand life all in all.

Q WHAT WAS YOUR SCHOOL LIKE? DID YOU GO TO A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL --

A No.

Q -- OR JUST IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL?

A We had really no religious training. My brother did have a Bar Mitzvah. But I don't remember ever going to synagogue except my brother's Bar Mitzvah, really. Although it's interesting, one of the keepsake photographs that I found in their belongings was that of a Rabbi, the man who had married them. I have no idea why or how. It was just one of those things. But, no, there was no religious training at all.

We did celebrate holidays. You know, it was all very matter of fact. We were Jewish. There were others who were not. We had a friend who lived on the same floor with us with a daughter my brother's age, and we were very close with that

family. We always went to their house to decorate the Christmas tree. It was simply not an issue that ever came up.

In fact, an early friend of mine in elementary school also was not Jewish. In fact, both of those girls were very attractive to us because the mother did not work. And so after school the mother was available, and ours was not. We always had a maid who was there.

We went to school basically from 8:00 to 1:00. Even in elementary school, I think we probably did. I don't remember that. 8:00 to 12:00 maybe. In public elementary school I was a good student. I was a good girl. I liked it. There was no problem.

My brother is four years older than me. So when I got to be in the fifth, sixth grade, at age ten the decision had to be made in Europe whether you were going to go on to an academic kind of school or just ordinary school. There was compulsory education until fourteen. So when I got to be about six, my brother -- or I don't really remember the exact age -- he was not a very good student. And they were worried about him and

what he was going to do. And they finally enrolled him in the textile high school, a specialized high school for weaving. You can imagine what that was. It was really quite a coup for him. And it was very exciting all around.

But in my head the idea began why should he go to a special school and not me. And so I began to think that maybe I should have an education, too. No one had really thought about it particularly. But I squawked quite a bit, and eventually I did get to go to a lyseum which is a private high school kind of on the French order, I think it was. But it was an excellent school.

So I began there when I was ten. And we were given a foreign language the first year and another the third year. So I had French and then Latin and lots of math. We had wonderful teachers although we certainly treated them with immense respect. We stood up when they walked in the room and bowed. You know, we would make fun of them behind their backs but not to their faces. So I did well in school.

And what else can I tell you about my childhood?

Q SO YOU MOVED TO THIS HOUSE AND EVERYTHING WAS FINE, AND IT WAS ABOUT 1927 APPROXIMATELY?

A '31. I was born in '25. So '31, yes.

Q HOW MANY YEARS, ABOUT, DID ALL OF THIS HAPPINESS LAST? IT SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS A WONDERFUL CHILDHOOD. HOW LONG DID THAT CONTINUE?

A Well, it continued. We went to camp in the summer. And in the year that I was eleven, I was sent to camp in Czechoslavakia near Prague. And usually my brother and the two cousins and I would all go to the same camp each summer. And there was lot of athleticism, and it was just grand. We all loved it, had a wonderful time there.

The only thing I didn't like was they made you eat. And the one thing, I once spent about four hours sitting at the lunch table because we were supposed to eat this mushroom sauce, and I simply could not. But aside from that, it was great. We learned to be good ping-pong players and good swimmers and so on.

And I guess by that time my brother and the other two were kind of beyond the age of going to camp. And so my mother made arrangements for me to go to this other camp. And I don't quite know

why. Her people had come from Czechoslovakia, and she prided herself that she could speak a few words of Czech until the day she died. It wasn't very many words, but she could.

And this was a religious camp. It was run by a couple of -- it was orthodox. And I just loved it. I mean, I loved the structure. I loved learning the laws of Kasrut, the Friday night. It was just marvelous. I think I was just the right age. I had never seen any of it really, and I enjoyed it tremendously. So that was when I was eleven. It was when I was twelve, I guess.

And then the March after that is when Hitler marched into Austria. And we were not very political. At least, I didn't know anything about politics, of course. I was still only twelve. But there were things being said around. People were looking worried.

I really didn't know anything until the day Hitler's tanks walked into Austria. And they came by our house. We were on a very major thoroughfare. Vienna has kind of two circles around it. You know, Vienna? Oh, all right. And so we were on this Gurtel. That's the outer band,

so to speak. And there were all these tanks and soldiers and guns. And it was very frightening. And the radio was blasting. And, of course, my parents told me what had happened.

And then the radio was never off. And we heard that the Chancellor Schuschnigg was asked to resign. And he didn't want to; but, of course, they made him. And then they had an election scheduled for April 1st to vote for the Nazis. I mean, there was really no choice; but that was -- everyone always said, Well, wait. Things will get better. It won't be a problem. I mean, it doesn't have to be a problem. I mean, everything's going to be all right. They were just waiting to see what would happen. I'm sure my parents must have been aware of what was happening in Germany. But certainly I wasn't aware of any of it. And so we, you know, I was still not aware of anything terrible happening except that it sounded pretty ominous when the Chancellor was asked to resign.

And then the next day I went back to school. And we walked into class, and we were told that the Jewish children will now sit in the last row.

And that was pretty shocking. It was really quite devastating. This was in March, March 13th. And that's what we did. There was nothing we could do. Pretty soon there were other children who were more politically aware than I was who would say about a certain teacher, Oh, yeah, she's a Nazi. She's a Nazi. But nothing else happened at that point. We were just told that that's what we would do.

Well, then the next thing that happened was the election on April 1st. And then the government changed very quickly. And then the rules changed very quickly. And just to zero in what was happening to me personally, we were told that we would be allowed to finish out this particular semester in school but that we could not return. We were expelled. And that's what it was. So we began to wonder what was going to be happening to us.

But then by that time our parents, you know, they kept their worries mostly to themselves, certainly with regard to me. And they continued to go to business. And whatever their thoughts were, I don't know for sure. They just went on as

if nothing had happened. And then there began to be various incidents. People that we knew were being picked up in the street and either arrested or just bothered or beaten. The young men that we now know were Hitler youth began to walk around in their uniforms, and they were always jeering at the Jewish children. We began to be very afraid of walking in the street. Everybody had a story of horrible things happening in families. But ours managed to go along.

And my father continued to be very optimistic. One day he went to business even though in the morning when he got up he had a terrible pain in his back, terrible. And they had these heavy roll shutters made of metal or something, I don't really know, that he had to open. And he hurt himself pulling that thing up. And so very soon after he came into the store some of the Nazi boys or men from the neighborhood came in and hustled him out of the store. And he was one of about six or eight shopkeepers in the neighborhood who was taken up some street. And they told them that they were to scrub the streets. Scrub the streets? Scrub the streets on your hands and

knees, down on your hands and knees. And so that's what they did. He did it. And there was some women in the group. And then he came back to the store. And, of course, he was somewhat shaken although always an optimist he said his back got better by doing that.

But I think that was the time when he realized that something terrible was going to happen and he was going to have to take some steps. He was beginning to take it seriously. So after that summer we kind of struggled along the way it was.

The Jewish children -- so I was now 13 -- were asked to go to a school. They sort of set aside one school where we could go. And we were told where it was. And we walked there, and there were lots and lots of incidents. My friends and I -- these were girls -- were really beginning to be quite frightened by these hooligans that hung around there.

Around that time we joined a -- my brother joined a Zionist group. And he said, well, I have to go, too. I did whatever I was told. And it was my first exposure to Zionism and really my first exposure to sort of semi-adult activities.

I liked it very much. It was being part of a group.

And one of those boys had a ferocious dog. I think it was a mastiff. At least that's how I remember it. It was just huge. And every afternoon when it was time for us to get out of school, he would stand there with the dog. And the troublemakers would disappear. He would walk us home or at least a few blocks. So that was one of the experiences there.

Q CAN YOU DESCRIBE -- I WANT TO GO BACK A LITTLE -- THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, THE CHANGES IN THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE IN AUSTRIA WHEN HITLER FIRST MARCHED IN DURING THE EARLY 30'S, IF YOU REMEMBER ANY CHANGES TO BUILDINGS OR THINGS HANGING UP.

A Oh, yes. Sure. There were lots of -- every building had a swastika on it one way or another. That's the main thing. And lots of uniforms and guns on the street, including tanks. I think that's the main thing.

And people walking differently, I think. Or maybe I imagined it. I don't know. But, you know, everyone was looking behind them to see what was following them. And these cocky young men

walking, strutting across, six across on the sidewalks. I didn't get to go very far from home except just a little bit later when we began to make arrangements for emigration. That's about all I can remember.

Q NOW, YOU HAD MENTIONED THAT YOUR FATHER KEPT MOST OF IT TO HIMSELF SO YOU DIDN'T KNOW HIS THOUGHTS. BUT DID YOU HAVE THOUGHTS AND DID YOU ASK QUESTIONS OF ANY OTHER ADULTS AS FAR AS WHAT WAS GOING ON?

A Well, I think I listened to everything. Sure, I must have asked. I don't really know. I know it was clear that they were going to vote on April 1st and that it was just a proforma thing, that Hitler had taken over Austria, and that the Chancellor had given it to them. And that was not a good thing to do, but he probably didn't have any choice. I think they talked mostly to each other about what they were going to do.

Q YOUR NON-JEWISH GIRL FRIENDS, WERE THEY STILL FRIENDS WITH YOU, OR HOW DID THEY REACT ONCE HITLER MARCHED IN?

A Oh, everyone was terribly frightened to talk to Jewish children. There was no more fellowship. I

mean, you could talk to them in the hall, but you could see the doors closing before you reached that part. They tried, but they knew that the dangers were there everywhere.

And I think the people that -- my father was a very popular man. I really don't know why. He was very jolly later in life. But when I knew him as a father, he was not really jolly. He was always very business oriented and serious, and he didn't joke or anything like that. But he was very popular amongst his customers.

And I often asked him about that in his late years. And he said, Well, times were very tough, and he would give them credit. And he would jolly them along, I suppose. But he was very popular with customers.

And he was also very popular with the janitor in the building that he owned. He must have treated them well because I really think they saved him on the 10th of November when all the Jewish people got picked up. I mean, it was pretty horrifying. In my apartment, friends from all around the neighborhood and much further came to our door crying, you know, What happened? What

happened? And their father had been picked up, and they didn't know what to do. They didn't know where to go.

That was the most horrifying thing because no one really knew what the Nazis had in mind. We knew that they were wrecking synagogues, but we didn't know what they were doing with people. And so a lot of friends' fathers were picked up. My father was not. And I have two theories about it. I think that our janitor, they must have asked him where the Jews live in the building. And he probably told them nobody -- there's nobody here. That's one thing.

And then the other, I think my mother was very conscious of what was happening. And she was very conscious of how my father appeared as a foreigner. And I think that she kept him hidden in some ways. Where he would deal with business, she would do it. And she had never done that before. But I think she must have done that because he was saved.

Q WHAT YEAR WAS THAT WHEN THE JEWS GOT PICKED UP?

A 1939. That was the year Hitler came to Austria. And this was in November.

And then we began to hear about family members. My father's brother had been picked up and taken. He was younger than my father. And he had been taken to what they call the police station, but it wasn't, in some basement. And he had been beaten up very badly and threatened with all kinds of things and then let go. So he was very lucky. He came and he said, I'm leaving.

And my other cousin who was three years older than me, the day after Hitler came, he left. Now, I have asked him since then how he knew what to do. He just knew that things were going from bad to worse and that he -- he also said that his home situation was not very good and that he didn't get along with his parents, and he was looking for an out. And he wrote to some relatives in the United States and they had sent him papers and he just left.

Q AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AFTER YOUR FATHER HAD THIS EXPERIENCE WITH HAVING TO CLEAN THE STREETS AND THINGS WERE PROGRESSIVELY GETTING WORSE? HOW DID YOUR FAMILY REACT? DID THEY TAKE ANY MOVES TO DO ANYTHING?

A Yes. Well, my brother had decided now that he

would make his way to Palestine. He was old enough to do that. He was 17. And they had a lot of training programs for young people so inclined. Not only the Zionist group that we belonged to, but there were others as well where they were taught trades and how to get along and just many things. And he was very serious about that, and he thought he would do that as soon as possible. And so he was accepted into this program. This was out of the city of Vienna. And so he was in country. And he made arrangements after that particular thing was over to go to Holland and to work on a farm. And there he would be trained directly for the work in Palestine. So he pretty much did that on his own. He was old enough.

And my parents decided, well, they would try to come to the United States. And so then my father had a brother here. And they contacted him, and he was willing to send the appropriate affidavits. Of course, all of this took a lot longer in those days than it does today. But in the meantime they tried to get passports, and they found out that that was easier said than done. It was very difficult.

And the most important thing that they found out was that the United States had a quota, a quota system that would not allow people who were born in Poland until many, many, many years hence. The numbers were very large. The numbers admitted under the Polish quota were very small. And since my father, even though he was a citizen of Austria and had paid taxes and voted and done all the things he was supposed to do, his country of origin was Poland; and so we all were considered under the Polish quota. And it seemed certain that we would not be able to come to the United States for many years.

So then what to do next? So then my other cousin, Eric, found out that there was one possibility open. And that was to go to Shanghai. They all had a little bit of money, and you could buy a ticket. All you had to do was get a passport, buy a steamship ticket to Shanghai, and that was it. You would be accepted there. So he and his parents and my cousin Fred's parents and all the relatives really that they were in touch with decided to go that route.

So all my mother's siblings made plans to go

to Shanghai. And my parents decided they would, too. But my mother had great misgivings about that. It was the other side of the world. She was worried about it. It just never sat right. And so she thought of other possibilities. And somehow she dreamed up this idea that if I could be taken care of somewhere in a foreign country, she could come to the United States under her own quota because she was born in Vienna.

And so she went downtown in Vienna. Remember, none of us spoke English. She was beginning to. She hired an English tutor so that my brother and she studied English. Not I. Too young. I just sort of sat around, but I heard. And anyway, she decided to place an ad in a London newspaper asking if someone would like to take care of a little girl. And that's what she did. So she went downtown. And the only newspaper she had
8 ever heard of was the London Times. And she went to the London Times' office. And she looked in the window thinking about what she should say and how she should say it. And she realized that the ads, the classified ads were very, very tiny, just as they are here. And she thought to herself, who

is ever going to see an ad that small. It isn't going to do any good. And she rethought it, and she decided, no, this isn't going to work.

And she turned around, and across the street there was another English newspaper. And she walked across the street, and she looked at their ads, and indeed they were larger. So she went in and she placed the ad, and it turned out to be the Jewish Chronicle. So that was what she did. It was just a very simple two-line ad. "Would anyone like to take care of a little blue-eyed thirteen year old girl?"

And she received one response, and they agreed to take me. And they never spoke on the phone. People didn't make those kinds of phone calls. There were several letters, not many. And they said okay.

So then we began to make arrangements for me. I became center stage. And we went downtown to begin to get -- I have to blow my nose. Okay.

Q ARE YOU OKAY?

A I'm okay. It just seems like such a remarkable thing to do. And so we began to go about getting passports. And by this time the Nazis made that

very, very difficult. It wasn't just mailing in your application or anything. You had to go to a certain office, and the lines were around the block twice.

And the officers really were sadistic, and they tried to make it as difficult as possible. They very often closed the offices at their whim without notice. We would stand in line really for days. And then you would get a number and you would be next and they would say, No, we're closing. And it was a terribly degrading kind of experience.

I do think it was much, much worse for my mother than it was for me. For me and other young people, I really think there was a comraderie about the whole thing. It was kind of exciting. It was what we were doing. It was, you know, things were happening, and it was a positive experience really. But not for my mother.

And so we eventually did get passports. It was really quite a lengthy ordeal. My parents had to meet all of the requirements for tax payments. And I have my parents' papers that were left when they died, and I sometimes look at them. And

there were such repeated statements of taxes paid and certifying that and way back to the beginning of his business life. And it was really incredible what they had to do to get the passport finally approved. Then on the last day just as we were about to get it, there was some other tax thing that needed doing.

And then when we got our passport, they put a great big red "J" on the front. And for people who had lived in Austria for that long period of time, it was really a very difficult thing to realize that they were now something -- not something special in a good sense, but something special in a bad sense. So we finally did get our passports.

Then in the meantime my father was told by people in the neighborhood -- there were officers assigned to districts who were supposed to regulate things. And apartment buildings were always something that they kept their eyes on. And the apartment building that my parents owned was very attractive. And he was told one day, sort of not in a hostile way but just very matter of factly, that there was a high officer of the

Nazis who wanted to buy the building. My father had no interest in selling the building, of course, but he was then told that he should develop an interest in selling the building, that they were not -- that was not really a choice. That was what their intent was.

And this is where I got the idea that my mother sheltered him because he was certainly more of a businessman than she was. But she took me by the hand, and we went to the office of this big -- this man who had arranged for us to sell the building to see what could be done. And he was restrainedly polite. He wasn't particularly nasty. She always thought I would be a bit of a buffer for any of these happenings.

But they did have to give up the building. And they were going to receive something for it; but the amount, of course, was ridiculous. But it was a legal procedure that they had to sign for. And not only that, but he wanted our apartment. So there was no longer any question that we had to go. And I don't remember the exact timeframe, but the whole thing was not going to be very long. It was going to happen, and they might just as well

get to work on it. So that was what they found out. And so we knew we had to leave, and we knew they had to give up the building.

Q WHAT ABOUT ANY BELONGINGS? WERE YOU ABLE TO KEEP THEM?

A There was nothing said about that. Yes, we could keep them if we could figure out what to do about it. Some things were eventually shipped. My father built several overseas trunks, I guess, out of metal. I don't know. With false bottoms. And all of our things were placed in those including some jewelry. And I was very worried about that. I thought if you're not supposed to do it, then why should you do it and what if they get mad.

And by this time he made some contact with someone. There were companies who were doing these things, and they were going to ship this to Switzerland. And somehow or other when we were ready, we could claim it. Eventually they also shipped some of the furniture. But I really don't know exactly how that -- I think it was just sent to America. Some of it. You know, things like beds.

So there we are. And he was also told, and

again by people who were on his side, and people began to come into his store telling him that all the Jewish shopkeepers were losing their stores and that he really ought to sell out. And so he began to run some kind of sales getting rid of a lot of merchandise so that he could do it sort of a little more gradually than to have someone walk in and take everything.

He had a lady that worked for him. She was very young and very good. And I think she was sweet on him, to tell you the truth. But she was just marvelous, and she did everything. She was always very wonderful to us, too. And I met her after the war, and she told me a little bit about what it was like and that she just thought it was very unfair that they were trying to take these things away, and she wanted to help.

Q SO SHE WASN'T JEWISH?

A No, she was not Jewish.

Q WAS THE SHOP VANDALIZED AT ALL DURING THE PROCESS?

A Just the outside. Marked up mostly. I don't know. It feels like grafitti, but I don't think they had that then. I don't know what they did. But they never broke the windows, and only at the

very end when it looked like it was going to go anyway.

Q WHAT HAPPENED TO IT? DID HE GRADUALLY SELL THINGS THE WAY HE HAD PLANNED?

A For a while. For a couple of months. I don't really -- a number of weeks, certainly. The men that he had dealings with, these tailors, were really most of them proper, decent people. And they were willing to pay for things.

There was one of them who I know was a Nazi. And my father had lots of dealings with him. My father, as new emigres always do, wanted the best for his children. And we had this wonderful apartment, and he wanted to get his children a piano. And so he bought what was considered the best piano, still is, a Bosendorfer. Are you familiar with that? And so he bought this very beautiful grand Bosendorfer. And I took some piano lessons which didn't take.

But the piano really was quite beautiful, and he was very proud of it. And when things began to fall apart he knew that even if we could take things with us, there was no point in thinking of taking the piano. And he sold it to this one

tailor who then was able to keep it because he was a Nazi. And I don't know whether he got a fair price or not, but my father always said, well, it was better to sell it to him than to have someone take it and smash it or whatever. That was a very hard day for them to let that piano go.

Q SO WHILE ALL OF THIS WAS GOING ON, THE SHOP HE HAD TO GRADUALLY SELL THINGS AND THE BUILDING WAS BEING TAKEN OVER, WAS THIS SIMULTANEOUSLY HAPPENING WHILE YOU WERE ALSO TRYING TO GET YOUR PASSPORT AND YOUR MOTHER AND YOU WOULD STAND IN LINE DAY AFTER DAY?

A Yes.

Q WERE YOU ALSO CONTINUING TO GO TO YOUR ZIONIST ORGANIZATION?

A Yes.

Q COULD YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT, WHAT WAS BEING DISCUSSED THERE?

A Yes. As I said, it was my first experience, and so my group was sort of the youngest group. We had a young man who was the leader, and we were all crazy about him. And they told us things about the history of Zionism. They taught us many of the songs of Zionism, taught some Hebrew. It

was a wonderfully rich, loving, great experience.

I played an accordian as a youngster. I had two. I started with what's called a twelve base which is about this big. And just about the time the Anschluss happened I had gotten a very large accordian with 120 bases. And I wasn't terribly good, but I could accompany us on the songs. And so that was one of the nice activities.

And so we learned. It was a wonderful learning experience for us about this country far, far away and how there were people there who were building it up. We learned about the Balfour Declaration and about some of the fighting that had taken place there. It was just really the only flame of hope that burned at that time for all of us. And we became very close to each other.

I remember one incident in particular. It must have been, I don't know, it was in the winter. So it was probably around November when the Kristallnacht took place, or a little later even. We had gotten permission to meet in this school. I don't know what it was. My memory is that it was a building with many stories. And it

was very dark, and then there were meeting rooms downstairs. It may have been a synagogue. I just really don't know what it was. But it was like a clubhouse. And by this time, of course, the numbers of children who were in this Zionist group and young people was growing every day. Everybody felt that this was one possibility that existed for all of us.

And our leader, the guy who ran the whole thing that we had there, was leaving. He had gotten his papers, and he was leaving. And so they were going to have a little get together, the whole group, to kind of send him off. And we went to this meeting house. And there were many smaller rooms and then there was one large room where essentially we were having a party for him.

And the lights suddenly began to be dimmed. And somebody came running down the stairs and said, They're here. And it was a bunch of Hitler youth had come to grab us. And so there were some people who were much older and wiser and knew where we had to go and what we did. And they left the lights turned off. It was terrifying, just absolutely terrifying. And we younger girls were

sent this back alley way so that we could come out in the street somewhere else at a grating. And we were just told to go, to leave, to don't stick around.

And these guys came down and beat the fellows up, took several of them with them including -- they knew that this was what was happening, that this was their last night and if they didn't get to go today, they would have to start all over again. And so all of them that were there together somehow got ahold of Bert -- he was the one who was to leave -- and got him out with us. And although he was beaten, he managed to get to someone's house and made it to the train and got away.

But that was my most terrifying experience of terror at the hands of the young hooligans. It was terrible. It was just terrible.

Q WAS YOUR BROTHER INVOLVED IN THAT AS WELL?

A No. My brother had left to go to the --

Q TO GO TO PALESTINE?

A No. He was living on this farm in the country. So he was away. But we were all -- anyway. That's one incident I really remember.

Q SO OTHER THAN LEARNING ABOUT PALESTINE IN THE ORGANIZATION, WERE YOU ALSO DISCUSSING THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT --

A In Austria?

Q -- IN AUSTRIA?

A No. It was just taking -- We knew what we knew, and that's all we stayed with. By that time I was beginning to ask questions. And I learned about the fact that the Nazi party had been pretty strong in Austria for a long time. And I learned about an incident that I remembered when a previous Chancellor Dollfuss had been assassinated in some building where workers had gathered. And so I began to learn about the previous years of what had been happening in Austria.

But there was certainly no interest anymore in anything in the present. We all knew we had to get away and it was just a question of how.

Q DID BERT GET TO PALESTINE?

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A No. He came to the United States.

Q OH, A CHANGE OF HEART.

A Yes.

Q SO APPROXIMATELY WHAT YEAR DID YOU LEAVE AUSTRIA? WOULD YOU CONTINUE WITH WHEN YOU RECEIVED YOUR

PASSPORT?

A Okay. I got my passport. So the next thing was to get a permit to go to London stamped in my passport. This was a temporary permit for one year.

Q AND WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?

A This was still the end of '39 -- '38. And I left on January 8th, 1939.

Q WERE YOUR PARENTS STILL IN VIENNA?

A Yes, my parents were still in Vienna. My brother was, too. Although I just don't know. I think they knew enough to make themselves scarce. He worked on this farm, and he probably came home. He was certainly part of the home, but he wasn't around. But my parents were.

Q WHAT WERE YOUR PARENTS DOING AROUND THE END OF '38, BEGINNING OF '39? DID YOUR FATHER HAVE THE SHOP?

A It was about that time that the shop was closed. He was still involved with it. I think it was probably right around the same time that he finally signed the papers selling it all to this other woman. Somebody bought it, actually, I think. And, you know, all of the things that were

happening with the building as well.

Q SO WHERE DID YOUR PARENTS MOVE TO WHEN THEY LOST THEIR APARTMENT?

A Well, as it turned out, my father, they decided that -- first they decided they would go to Shanghai. Then when it looked like I was going to go to London, they were still going to go to Shanghai with all of their family. That was going to happen -- in the beginning of March that was to take place.

Q IN '39?

A '39. Right. So very soon. I mean, this was all coming right up. And when I left, that was in January -- well, I don't know exactly when this happened because what happened in the end is my mother decided that she was not going to go to Shanghai. She was not going to leave her children in this hemisphere while she went to another hemisphere. And then she just would not do it.

And they decided that my father was going to go without her. And although it was a decision they sort of made together, as I understand it, he was always very resentful that she left him. And so I left in January. And then my brother left in

February.

Q TO HOLLAND?

A To Holland. To Rotterdam where he worked on a farm. Actually, they were all the 8th. Each day was the 8th. My father left March 8th on a boat to go to Shanghai.

And my mother stayed. Now, I can't imagine how she managed the next four months. But eventually, and I don't know exactly when, she did have to give up the apartment. And she moved into some room with strangers that were -- you know, there were always people, committee people, who helped when you didn't know which way to turn. And in Vienna, after all, she knew her way around very well. So she moved into an apartment of other people like herself who were kind of in between trying to make things happen.

She finalized the sale of the apartment building. She had to turn in all of her silver, her table silver. And she took it down there. And again I have one -- I have two pieces, one soup spoon and one fork, and a certificate from the authorities that said that she could keep that.

And I don't know exactly what they did with regard to jewelry. I do know that my father managed to get some of -- he had a watch collection. His father's watch was one, and then he had several others. He put some of them into these gigantic trunks. And some of them made it to the United States, the ones that he packed in this way. I guess I just really don't know exactly how everything was handled,

My mother would never go back to Austria. Never. She must have been so horrified. In coming over here today I was thinking about her again. I always thought of my mother on the sort of parallel time when I reached her age, how old she was at that time. She was born in '97. So '38, she was 31. 31? 41.

Q 41.

A 41, 42.

Q 41.

A And I just don't know how she did it all. And, oh, what I was going to tell you is I don't know what she suffered physically. Maybe somebody took advantage of her. Maybe they raped her. I don't know. She never told me. Maybe they didn't, you

know. She dealt with officials. She had to go to these offices over and over again. Everything was a nightmare really.

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And in the meantime, here she was losing all of her family. And she in the meantime had received an affidavit from relatives in the United States. What Jewish people did in those days, including my brother, was go through the New York telephone book and pick out names that we might in some mysterious way be related to. And some of the names they looked up were the maiden name of my father's mother. And there were a couple of other names that might have in some way. The Viennese certainly didn't go to the United States. So there was nobody from that side of the family. But from Poland there was a possibility.

And so my brother wrote to all of these people. And several of them did answer positively. They offered help either by sending papers or by helping when we got to the United States. So there were a lot of good people really. Nobody knew what you were supposed to do in those days. You know, people come out of the blue into your life, and you don't know what

you're supposed to do.

Q SO YOUR MOTHER WAS IN AUSTRIA THEN FOR FOUR MONTHS ALONE --

A Yes.

Q -- AFTER MARCH 8TH --

A Right.

Q -- SHE WAS THERE?

A March, April, May, June, July.

Q JULY.

A Four months.

Q AND YOU WERE IN LONDON; YOUR BROTHER WAS IN ROTTERDAM; AND YOUR FATHER WAS IN SHANGHAI?

A That's right.

Q WHAT DID YOUR MOTHER DO AFTER THOSE FOUR MONTHS?

A Well, she had received permission to come to the United States. She had gotten her papers. She had gotten everything together. You were not allowed to take any money with you. No money. But whatever money they had, she could spend. And, of course, they could also stash some of it, which I assume they did. I don't know how much or how successfully.

She very adventuresome, and she bought herself first class tickets on the Queen Mary crossing the

Atlantic. She decided to fly from London to Rotterdam and then to London to check on her children because she would take the boat from Southampton. So that's what she did.

Q AND SHE DOESN'T DISCUSS WHAT HAPPENED THOSE FOUR MONTHS THAT SHE WAS IN VIENNA ALONE?

A Well, I think she -- I asked. They're both dead now, but I asked many questions. But I think I didn't ask all the right ones. I just kind of asked the mechanical questions, you know. I know what they did, what happened. I have several letters from people that she had to deal with during that time.

One woman who was not Jewish who was very good about helping, non-Jewish people, and her name comes up many times over. She had some dealings with her step-mother who was married to a non-Jew. And I don't know exactly what that was about. Everyone tried to do what they could, and everybody knew -- those who were willing to help, the non-Jews, the Gentiles that were helpful, had a line of people that they could help.

There was one girl, one of my very good friends; her name was Ilsa. She was an actress, a

child actress. She played in the Vienna (Buktiat) which is a pretty fancy place for a child to be acting. She was really an up and coming actress. And she was very vivacious. Her home wasn't that fantastic, and lots of people spent time at my house. And after I left, she spent a lot of time with my parents until she herself left. So that was kind of helpful.

And then, of course, the other thing, I -- my father again, you say how these things were not discussed, and they were not. When my parents took me to the train to go to London, I was very excited. I thought it was an adventure. It was billed as something temporary. It was, you know, these are going to be nice people; nothing physically bad was happening to me or anyone. I went around the apartment. I said good-bye to each thing that I loved, each room and each picture, good-bye, good-bye, good-bye.

And then when we got to the station, my father took something out of his pocket. And he handed it to me and he said, Put this on. And it was a star of David made of solid gold about this big. He said, You wear that. And we had never

worn stars of David somehow. We were a very assimilated family. And I kind of questioned it a little bit. And he said, No, you just wear it. And so I did. And I realized it was made of solid
13 gold and it was worth something. And I guess this was what he thought, that I would get a little bit of money if I needed it.

And so when I got on the train, I waved them good-bye and I began to see that this was really happening. And I got a little tearful and worried and what-not. The people in the carriage -- there were three other people in the carriage. There were two men who were Jewish and older and a young woman who was about 20, something like that. And they were all very nice to me, you know, a little girl. It was all very sad. But that was the times.

I was to be identified by my family in London by -- I wore a sign about this big with the number 61 which was the number of the house. So that was the identifying mark I was wearing. All they knew was the train I was coming on.

Q AND HOW OLD WERE YOU?

A Thirteen. So when I was in the carriage and they

started talking to me, I didn't quite know where I was going or what I was doing or anything. The men looked at me and they looked at my star of David and said, You don't want to wear that. And I said, Why not? He said, They're going to take it away from you. Why would they? Well, at the border they're going to stop us to make sure that we don't have anything valuable, money, jewelry; and they're going to take that from you. Well, what should I do? And this young woman said, I'm not Jewish, and I'm going to London, and I'll take it for you. And I had no experience with people particularly. I had no experience in anything like that at all. But the men said I should do it, and I did. I gave it to her.

And when we got to the border, we were asked to leave the train. And they examined our luggage very, very carefully. They took many hours. They also did a body search. And I certainly would have lost it if I had worn it. It was traumatic because I was very alone. I mean, you know, there was nobody there to hold my hand. I didn't know.

I had two suitcases. And when I packed my belongings, on top of each I had placed a favorite

doll. In one of them, I had these two ethnic characters that were about this big and some kind of probably Czech, I imagine. And the other one was kind of a blue-eyed boy about this big made of celluloid. It was kind of unusual. I guess most dolls were made of that or that heavy material like porcelain. So I had those in my suitcase. And they opened up my suitcases. And they looked at that, and they looked at me, and they kind of let me go. But I had to wait in line with all these other people. And they didn't bother anything. They just kind of stirred around a little bit. And then the woman who examined my body, so to speak, was very nice. She really didn't mistreat me or anything. It was very frightening, of course.

But the most frightening thing after this was all over was that it took many hours, and the train had left. They didn't keep the train. And so there we were. I wasn't the only one, but there were others who were trying to get somewhere. And I didn't know what to do. I had been rehearsed very carefully for what I was to do but not this.

And anyway I guess I found out that there would be another train that would connect with the boat train that would connect to London in about five or six hours. And although I couldn't imagine what I would do then and how I would be claimed or anything else, that's what I did. I waited for the next train and went the same route. I went across the border, finally free. I went through Belgium. I left Germany in Aachen, went to Belgium, got to Oostende. And there I took the boat across the English Channel.

By this time I was pretty exhausted and very upset and very worried. And the channel is a very rough body of water. I had never seen the ocean before at all. I mean, nothing like that. And it was terribly, terribly rough. And I was terribly, terribly sick. I wouldn't have cared if it had all ended right then and there. It was just awful. But it ended, and I came to Dover and caught the train and made my way to London.

14 And by that time, it was pretty close to midnight. I had been up for many, many hours and I didn't know what I was going to do. And I just got off the train and figured something would

happen. And, of course, the family had waited for me. They obviously found out what had happened, and they waited and they claimed me. And I just kind of collapsed into their arms. Fortunately they didn't ask me any questions. I didn't speak any English.

And they just took me and got my luggage together. And as we were walking out of the station, somebody called my name. And I turned around and I didn't know who it was. And it was the young woman with my star of David. Lots of good people in the world. So that was my arrival in London and a new life.

Q WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A BREAK?

A Yes. That's a good idea. Can we do that?

(PAUSE.)

Q SO YOU ARRIVED AT THE LONDON TRAIN STATION, AND THE FAMILY WAITED FOR YOU AFTER MANY HOURS.

A Right.

Q AND WHAT HAPPENED?

A They just collected me. Really, that's what I must call it. And they were a very, very nice, kind Jewish family, name of Steinberg. They had a daughter my age and a son who was older. And they

all came to get me. And they had a car and a chauffeur and a very lovely private house. And we drove there. I certainly fell asleep immediately in the car. And I don't know anything about where I was at that point.

When we got out, the only thing I do remember is that they had one of these trimmed hedges in the shape of a gigantic teddy bear. I had never seen anything like that before. Of course, in Austria people didn't live in private houses. This was considered a villa.

And they were just wonderful. They seemed to be very sensitive to my needs and where I was and trying to make me comfortable. And I said I just want to go to bed. And they showed me a bed to go to, and I went to sleep. And it wasn't until the next day that we really exchanged very many words.

The daughter's name was Stella. And she and I shared a room. And I think she thought that this was going to be a great adventure for her. And I think that the parents partially did it because they wanted to be doing something good and having -- They were Orthodox. They kept a kosher home. They were a very routinely Orthodox Jewish

family of the English sort. His parents still lived on the lower east side of London, wherever that is. I forget now.

But I think they thought it would be good for Stella to have a sister, kind of. And it was. For a short time it worked out to be a very nice experience for both of us. We went to school just about the next -- I don't know if it was the very next day, but almost the next day. And she took me to school with her. She introduced me to her friends. I couldn't speak any English, but I am a quick study.

And the teacher in the class was very sweet. Her name was Miss Turley. And she sat me in the corner in a very bright, sunny school room at a table with a bunch of books. And she made suggestions as to what I should do. And I worked at it by myself mostly. She kept an eye on me. She was very involved and all that. I'm no genius, but within two weeks I spoke English.

Q THAT'S GREAT.

A I had no choice. Nobody spoke German. They weren't going to learn German. If I wanted to say anything, I had to learn how to say it. I had

lots of confusions, of course. And I'm sure it wasn't that fluent. But by the time my mother came, which was in July, I was fluent.

Q HOW DID THE OTHER SCHOOL CHILDREN TREAT YOU?

A Oh, as a curiosity. I was definitely one of the first children of this sort that they had seen. It was a proper English neighborhood and school with girls. Did we wear uniforms or not? I can't remember that now. I don't think we did, but it felt like it.

The things like physical education, we had hockey. And there were just a lot of things we were supposed to do and not supposed to do. Behavior was very important. Most of the girls were probably more mature than I and more developed, more interested in boys. I really was a very young 13 year old physically.

And I liked many things. I liked school very much. They were very nice to me. They asked me lots of questions about myself, my family, what was I doing. It was exciting for them. After school activities, I was included. Stella very quickly resented my being the center of attention amongst her friends. And so I made friends of my

own separate from hers.

Every Saturday we went to temple. And then there were activities connected with temple there. I really liked that very much. And again the religious experience was sort of like a replay from my childhood, and here it was -- it was very enriching. It really was.

Friday afternoon cleaning up the kitchen for the Sabbath was exciting. And certain foods were prepared for that. We only got to use the living room on that day. Other days, you sat in the other room. And Mr. Steinberg was treated with a great deal of respect although he was very jolly and very nice. It was just very proper. There was a maid.

The house was a nice house. They had one room upstairs as a billiard room. And we were not to use the billiard table. That was one thing. The kitchen was what we would certainly now call very old fashioned with a wood burning stove. But they liked to cook that way. I guess that they always had the tea kettle right on top of it and that sort of thing. They had a garage. And the maid had a room. So there were three bedrooms and the

small maid's room in addition to the public rooms, so to speak. So it was a lovely house.

And he was a furniture manufacturer. And his son worked with him. And they just seemed so concerned about my parents. I mean, I didn't see why they had to be so concerned. They seemed okay when I left them, you know. They were going to be all right. I was very hopeful. Everything just seemed like it was going to be just fine. No problem, really. My mother and I corresponded quite regularly. We were both good letter writers. And she told me just what she wanted to tell me, obviously. My father in the meantime had gone on, and he wrote postcards occasionally from his travels.

And the next thing really that happened was that my mother was going to come on her way to America.

Q AND THAT WAS JULY, YOU SAID?

A That was July.

Q OF '39?

A '39. That's right. And so I was very excited about that. And then I found out that we were going to be at the seaside for a holiday just at

the time that my mother was to arrive. And I was just devastated. I mean, they wouldn't leave me in London by myself, and what could we do. Anyway, things can get solved. They made arrangements for my mother to come to the seashore. So it was not that complicated. It certainly seemed that way to me at that time.

So she flew to London after having seen my brother in Rotterdam. And she visited. And evidently she had the option of taking me along to America with her. And she wanted to check how things were and how I was doing. And she found that I was very happy and very well taken care of and doing great things, you know, safe and sound and everything. And she decided that she would leave me there so that when she came to America she wouldn't have to be concerned about that. So that must have been a very difficult situation but certainly for my best interest.

So we had a lovely visit. And then I was quite concerned when she left. I think I was beginning to realize that crossing the Atlantic at this time might be something out of the ordinary. And there was talk. We were beginning to hear

things about Hitler marching and Hitler marching into Holland and Hitler marching here and marching there.

And one day just before school was to start when we got back to London -- so this was now towards the end of August. My mother hadn't left. There was a time period between when she visited and then she made her way back to get back to the boat. I mean, you didn't fly. It took days, a number of days.

Q HOW LONG DID SHE STAY IN LONDON?

A I think it was about a week and a half, something like that. Maybe two weeks. It was really nice. And so I was playing on the street in London waiting to, you know, just wasting time, really. And I was jumping -- just like yesterday. I fell. And I had a very bad fall, and I cut my knee. It was about a two inch -- it was a really bad cut. It was a very clean cut. It was like a knife cut. And it was this long and very deep. And the blood was unbelievable. I got so frightened. And nobody knew what to do exactly. It was just a little neighborhood incident. And they called an ambulance, and they took me to the hospital. It

was a very wise decision. It was a very bad cut and needed lots of stitches, and it needed to be immobilized.

So I was taken to Middlesex Hospital. And that was probably one of the more frightening experiences up until then. I felt so alone, so deserted, so fragile. And here I was taken in this ambulance, an old London ambulance, this boxy kind of thing. And what was going to happen to me? And I associated all of that with my mother having just left. And the world was really falling in around me.

Anyway, I was in the hospital for a week, a full week because I really couldn't extend it at all. I was in a ward that they had in those days for people who didn't have any money. And I had very good care, no complaints. It was lovely. Then they discharged me, and they told me that the stitches could come out in two weeks. So that was fine. And I went home. I didn't know whether I had crutches. I think I walked normally by that time. So we were now very close to the end of August.

And on September 1st, Hitler marched into

Poland. And to me that was really the end of the world. I had associated war with -- somehow the Anschluss in Austria was not anything that affected me yet. You know, it did; but when it happened, it didn't. But war was something that I heard about from the first world war. War was something that adults talked about to children and people had had terrible things happen to them and had been starving and had been gunned and had been sick. And it was just all the experiences that I had ever heard about war were horrifying. And here we were going to go to war. And I thought now I will never see my parents again. I don't know how I imagined it was going to be, but it was the end of the world. That's all.

So the Steinbergs decided -- well, as you probably recall, the English evacuated all the school children to the country. Well, these people since they were fairly well-to-do did it privately. And so they packed us in a car. And they took us to the country. And how they found these places, I don't know. But the son, Herbert was his name, Herbert, he was in the R.A.F. And he left. So the rest of the family was packed in

the car and taken somewhere.

And all I remember about it was that the first place we came to they said they couldn't take us. I don't know how they arranged it or why they were supposed to take us or where we were or what it meant. But then they went on, and they went to another place and another place. And they found a farm in a place called Steeplemorden in Dorset where they agreed to take Stella and me. There was a farm. The lady was very nice. It was a small place and they said we could stay there. And so they left us there.

And so the two of us stayed in this farmhouse. And nobody said what we were supposed to do or anything. But we were 14 years old. We wandered around. We looked at the scenery. We got to know the boys that lived around there. We walked everywhere.

There was a count in the town. And his wife felt very strongly about helping the war effort. And she got all the young girls from the district to come to her house once a week, and she taught us how to knit. So this is where I learned to knit. We knitted socks for soldiers and scarves.

I loved it. I have always loved knitting. So that was one thing we did. And we didn't really do very much except hang out.

The Steinbergs came to see us and brought Stella's bicycle. And, of course, I had never had a bicycle. And they very kindly bought me one, a used bicycle. It was the first time. I knew how
17 to ride a bicycle. I just never had one. And so they bought me one. And we were mobile, and we really had a very good time.

One terrible incident -- well, there were two, actually. One was that one day we were told there was a rat that was causing trouble with the feed in the barn. And, you know, a rat, who cares. And there was this guy in town who has a dog who's a ratter, and the dog knows how to chase down a rat. So this began to be more interesting. So we all went over to the barn and we stood there while this dog was led around. He was supposed to find the rat. We were all standing there, and there were these big rafters. And suddenly this dog is barking like crazy. And I see this unbelievable rat. It was about the size of a cat. I swear, it isn't my imagination in retrospect. It was huge

with a long tail. And there was it was galumphing across the rafters. And all I could remember thinking was, my God, what it it falls on me. And they ran it down, and the dog chased it and caught it, and they got rid of the rat. That was the one excitement time we had.

It was a nice time. It was an interesting time. We learned a little about farms and what you do there.

Q WAS THERE ANY LEARNING, ANY ACADEMICS THERE?

A Nothing. No academics.

Q WHY?

A Nobody knew what was going to happen. Nobody at all. We were in war. Before we left, we had been issued gas masks, and we had those with us. And it was all a big game really. What were we supposed to do with this? And what did they think? Did they think planes were going to come after us? I mean, this is London, you know.

The only other thing that happened was I told you I was not very well developed physically. And one day Stella and I were sleeping in our respective beds. We shared a room. And suddenly I began to scream. I said, Oh, my God, I don't

know what has happened to me, but I am covered with blood. I had my first period. I had no idea what it was. I didn't know what it represented. I was so frightened out of my wits. I guess my mother just never got around to that during all of this terrible time. So Stella helped me.

And I was very frightened. It's interesting when you get your first period under difficult circumstances. I didn't get another period for about eight months. It influenced my life in some ways because later on I worked for planned parenthood for many years. I still do. And I thought that kids really need to learn about their bodies.

So let's see.

Q WERE THERE ANY REPORTS GIVEN DAILY AS FAR AS THE WAR?

A Oh, no. Nobody told us a thing. Nothing. We were not told a thing.

Q YOU WERE JUST HAVING A GOOD TIME?

A Well, see, one other thing did happen to me. Don't forget I still have my stitches in. And I was very conscious of the fact that the two weeks had passed and the stitches should come out. And

what was going to happen if they stayed there and they grew into me? I just knew that wasn't right. And I kept thinking, Well, what should I do. What will I do? Where will I go? Maybe I could pull them out myself. It was a real dilemma. I didn't know what to do.

And so one day, very early the second day we walked down the street, and there was a young woman in a nurse's uniform. And I quickly ran over to her and I said, I'm so glad to see you, you're a nurse. And she said yes. And I said, You have to help me. And I told her my story. And she said, Oh, blood. She was a volunteer nurse. She had just joined up. That was the last thing in the world she thought she should do. But she did help me to get a doctor to do it, and we got them out. You know how we learned to take care of ourselves when we have to.

Q WAS THIS COED WHERE ALL THE CHILDREN WERE?

A Oh, there weren't that many children. We were the only ones on this farm. There were no other children that I remember. There were village children and farm children. There probably was a school. The children that -- you know, they were

young adults by those standards. They were very flirtatious. I know that. And I was beginning to enjoy understanding what that meant. We didn't have much to do with the boys in the village, that I can remember. But it was just one of the things that happened.

Q DID YOU HAVE MUCH CONTACT OR ANY CONTACT WITH YOUR MOTHER OR BROTHER OR FATHER WHILE YOU WERE THERE?

A None. None. None whatsoever. There was no way at that point. The only contact I had maintained was with my mother. I knew she had arrived.

Q IN THE UNITED STATES?

A I knew she had arrived in the United States. And she had sent me an address. She got a furnished room in someone's house through the relatives who had guaranteed her arrival. And she was pretty miserable. I don't know how she managed to be optimistic, but she was in her letters to me. She just knew that that was one problem; this is another, you know. And I found out later that she managed to learn English very quickly. She had taken lessons for about six or so months. And then she lived in this furnished room.

And she got a job. She got a job. She

learned how to sew as a young girl. She had gone to school beyond the required age. And when she was about 14, 15, I guess, she did go to a sewing school for about part of a year, I guess. In fact, she got a certificate. I knew about it all along. But she was a good seamstress, and so she figured she would get a job. And she ended up getting a job in a hat factory. And she worked very, very hard. And she worked piecework. So it was pretty horrendous, really.

Q IN WHAT CITY DID SHE ARRIVE?

A In New York. In New York. In the Bronx, East Bronx. And she just managed on her own in this little room and started to go to work and do what she had to do. The relatives were nice, but they were not her first choice of people. I met some of the people that she met at that time later on. This one couple kind of took her in. The woman used to like to tell me how she would walk in the park and sit on a park bench and cry. And they would go over to her and talk to her, and finally they befriended her.

So it wasn't so terribly long after that that my brother came. I know he left Holland about two

weeks before the Nazis entered there. And I don't remember when they entered Holland. So it must have been right after Poland probably.

Q IN OCTOBER?

A Something like that. I think that's right. So I guess when she went to Rotterdam, he was still planning to go to Palestine. And she must have talked him out of it and said that his place was with the family and that she needed him. And so he came to New York about a couple of months after she did. So he got a job just doing anything. And they got an apartment.

She was just unbelievable, what she did. She somehow managed with her charm to get to know a banker. She opened an account and started talking. And they guaranteed her papers for my father and my brother. I mean, she really didn't have any money. But she said she would work and they would work and it was going to work out. And, you know, she was -- she was great.

Q SO SHE WAS IN CONTACT AT THIS TIME WITH YOUR FATHER?

A Well, they must have been. I just don't know exactly what they did. My father joined this

colony in Shanghai, which was very large, of Jewish immigrants from Germany and Austria. And to him it was not terrible. He often talks about it -- talked about it. And he was looking to see how he could make a little money.

And he tells this one story about how he bought a -- what do you call it? A bundle of goods, you know, cloth, a roll or whatever, a roll of cloth from somebody in Shanghai. And he wanted to sell it. And so they told him that what he should do is go across the bridge to the other side where the richer people were.

So he was carrying this thing, and he was walking along the bridge, and he was going over there to sell it. And he was thinking in his head, how much he paid, whatever it was, thirty something; and he was going to sell it for sixty. And it was going to last, whatever it was. You know, The business mind at work.

And suddenly he was stopped by this huge man. He looked like a gallump, this huge man with a big beard and big black eyebrows and telling him to stop. And he said he was terrified. He said he thought it was an apparition from God or

something. And then he thought, well, he must be a policeman. And he was figuring he wanted -- he wasn't supposed to cross that bridge. He had been told, but he didn't see where that was a big problem. And, of course, they couldn't communicate. They didn't have the same language. And the guy kept pointing to this thing.

And somehow, somehow, they managed to communicate that he, this guy who was a police, wanted the goods. And then he wanted to know how much. And so my father, he was so frightened he gave him a much lower price. But he managed to get still something in the neighborhood of what made sense for him. And so he said okay, and they agreed on a price. And then he, again he says he looked very sternly at him and he said, Okay, come with me. And he thought again it's the end; he's going to take him down to the police station. Well, he took him down to the police station but only because that's where he kept his money. And so then he gave him the money. And he took off. That was one of his adventures.

Q DOES IT SOUND LIKE YOUR FATHER HAD A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN SHANGHAI?

A Well, I don't know. I think I heard many, many reports about the experience in Shanghai. And it was a terrible experience. It was dirty. It was crowded. They were not treated particularly well. They were frightened. However, there were things you could do. They were not with the Nazis. There was a community of sorts. There were people who cooked and had food for others.

And my father and my mother's brother, so they were brothers-in-law, saw that one thing that the Viennese liked better than anything else is whipped cream and pastries. And so they opened a Viennese bakery in Shanghai. And they did very well. Not millionaires or anything, but they did well.

And my cousin who was there and all of that family, again, it was very tough. I mean, things were really hard. My cousin became a dance teacher. He and a friend opened a dancing school. Here were all of these young people, lots and lots of young people who wanted to meet others. And so they gave dancing lessons because he was one of the few who had dancing lessons in Europe. So people managed in some weird way.

Q HOW LONG WAS YOUR FATHER IN SHANGHAI?

A He was there about a year. So let's see. If he went there about March of '39, about a year, yes, something like that. It was just before war broke out there between the Japanese and the Chinese that he got out.

Q AND THEN HOW LONG WERE YOU AND STELLA ON THIS FARM?

A We were there for about three months. And then they decided that, well, nothing was happening in London. The Germans were not bombing London. And they decided to bring us back to the city. It was very hard on the family. Obviously, they had to pay this family. They had to come and visit us. It was difficult, certainly. And so they brought us back. And again nobody knew what was going to happen.

Mr. Steinberg lost his business. And they lost their chauffeur and their maid because of the war effort, no gasoline and all that. And they were told that everybody should build an air raid shelter. So they then proceeded to build an air raid shelter in the garage. They had a grease pit in the garage. You know how if you want to work

under the car. And they outfitted that in some way and put sandbags on top of it in some way. I don't remember exactly how it was done. But it was an air raid shelter that held all of us, four of us. And then when the blitz really did start in earnest, which wasn't until some months later, we spent every night there.

Q CAN YOU DESCRIBE THAT IN MORE DETAIL?

A Oh, sure. Do you mean the blitz or the shelter?

Q BOTH.

A Well, the shelter was, as I said, first you start out with a hole covered with a wooden plank. So they took off the wooden plank, and it was large enough for four people to stand if you had to. And they put some kind of aluminum siding under it and put mattresses in there and made it warm and fairly comfortable. Not anything luxurious, but it was certainly not bad. And then the upper part was one place to sleep, and then there were two places here. And then they had kind of corrugated metal over the top to make it larger and sandbags in all directions. And there was an entrance way that could be sandbagged.

And so when the blitz started, we began to go

down there every night. When the siren sounded, we would go there, and we would go to sleep there. That was our bedroom, for the children. The adults soon wandered back into their own rooms. But the two of us just stayed down there.

Q WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS DURING THAT TIME SLEEPING DOWN IN THAT SHELTER?

A Well, it was frightening. But it was a kick, also. At first, especially. My preoccupation by that time had become how was I going to get back together with the rest of the family. I knew that my brother had gone to America and my father had. And it was beginning to sound like a wonderful place. And I wanted to be there, too. I didn't know exactly what was going to happen. They kept writing me. And they could have sent for me right immediately, but my mother felt that it was best for me to -- if they could just establish themselves a little bit, not living from hand to mouth as she did at the very beginning.

Every night when we woke up, I wrote a post card to say that I was okay so that once those caught up with the mail, she knew that I was all right. And so then when the air raid sirens began

to sing at night, that was in September of 1940, then it became more frightening, of course.

And then we began to see houses that had collapsed, had been burnt out. And we would come out of our shelter in the morning and walk down the street and see the smoke rising from the buildings on both sides. We learned to recognize the whistling of the bombs as they came down. We were told that, you know, you would hear this loud whistle. And if you heard the whistle stop, then you knew you were alive. And then we would walk around and just look through some of the rubble as kids do. I brought a little thing that I picked up there one day.

Q AMONGST THE RUBBLE?

A Yes.

Q WOW, BULLETS.

A Well, some bullets. And this is a piece of shrapnel.

Q IF YOU COULD, HOLD THAT UP TO THE CAMERA.

A Oh, good timing.

Q SO YOU SAID YOU WERE WALKING AROUND THE STREETS AFTER THE BLITZ AT NIGHT AND YOU WERE THERE IN THE MORNING?

A That's right. And then we would see all the buildings that had collapsed. And, of course, we knew the neighbors that had lost their homes. And each day we would just feel very, very lucky that we were still there. The buildings weren't destroyed in blocks usually; although sometimes they were. But we would look to see what we could find of interest. And that's where I found this piece of shrapnel. It just looked so ominous to me thinking of my goodness, if that went into a person, can you imagine what damage it could do. And there were shells around, obviously. There were a lot of anti-aircraft guns that were shot during that time, and the empty shells would fall to the ground. And we would find them.

Q WERE THERE LOTS OF FIRES?

A Lots of fires, horrible fires, all around. It was really very devastating to see. It was very frightening. And each day I would think I just have to hold on long enough to get to America.

Q WERE THE SCHOOLS SHUT DOWN AT THAT TIME?

A What happened with schools was when -- actually even before the war broke out, Stella and I had finished our compulsory schooling at the

elementary school. I don't remember the exact numbers there. So they decided that she would need to be trained for something and they would send her to some kind of a secretarial school.

And they didn't really know what to do with me. And I certainly didn't know what should be done with me. And I didn't feel that they should have to provide education for me that would cost them because clearly they were much more strapped now than they had been before. And so since there was no maid any longer, I decided to take over the household.

And since Stella by this time had gotten very, very tired of me and the competition and we were really fighting very badly, and it was very difficult for me because I felt she was totally in the wrong. But I also felt that it was her house and her family and that I had to somehow get along within the setting. You know, there was nowhere I could go. And she knew that. And so when she -- the words that were the hardest were when she said, "You are stealing my parents." Because her parents really got to like me very much. I mean that's how I had intended it.

She was not a very nice person. She really wasn't. It's funny. Many years later when her brother came to visit me -- Stella has since died of cancer. Everyone has died there. But Bert came to visit us, my husband and me, a few years ago. We were talking about those years, and I was sort of -- I didn't want to say anything negative about the family. But he had terribly negative things to say about his sister. Not just like a sibling saying, you know, she got more than I did. Nothing like that. She was just not a very nice person. And that was sort of vindication for me.

So what happened was they decided that we really couldn't stay in the same room. And I was perfectly willing to stay in the little tiny maid's room. And since I didn't really have anything to do, I said I would take care of making the fire in the morning and vacuuming. It wasn't like a terrible sacrifice. And they weren't terrible taskmasters. They were always good to me. They were never demanding or nasty or unkind. They were just really wonderful people. Especially he.

Oh, one of the things I forgot to tell you

that is kind of interesting. Early on when I had settled in and had become part of the family and spoke English, one of the complications was what to call them. And we didn't quite know how to go about finding something that would work. Now, obviously I wasn't going to to call them mom and dad. And Mrs. Steinberg or Mr. Steinberg was clearly too formal. And so we batted it around together. It was really an interesting process. And we came up with Auntie and Uncle. And it was Auntie in a kind of anonymous way. It wasn't Antie Betty or Auntie Steinberg. It was Auntie. That was who she was. And so they were Auntie and Uncle. And I could say that. I had a lot of trouble saying anything. I mean, we tried out various things, but that was all right then. That was a hard thing.

So to go along, where was I? Oh, Stella and I then moved into these separate rooms. And I was very happy to have something to do, really. I would get up in the morning, and it was very cold in England, you know, at that time. And I made the fire in the wood burning fireplace. And Mrs. Steinberg did the cooking, and I did the

vacuuming. And we cleaned the house together for Friday. And it was fine.

And I did a lot of reading then. I didn't do very much sightseeing in London. And I never quite understood why that happened. I guess they were not a terribly cultured family. I can't imagine. And, of course, the war had something to do with it, too. But I never went to a museum, never saw the Tower of London or Buckingham Palace. We did ride the subways and tubes and the buses, the double decker buses.

And the other thing that was very nice then when we came back to London was by this time I was beginning to be a teenager, and I had developed breasts. And the boys at the synagogue were beginning to be interesting to me. And we belonged to a youth club there. So as they went off to war, which, of course, they all did, we had parties and lots of get togethers. And I got to know them very well. And it was really a very nice teen experience all around. That's what we did most of the time, I guess. So she went to school, and I did not.

Q DID YOU RESENT THAT?

A I was through with school. I had had enough. I don't know where I got that idea, but I didn't -- I guess I wasn't very scholarly. I didn't miss it at all. It was wonderful not going to school. And there was nothing I particularly wanted to learn or study, and so there I was.

Q AT THE YOUTH CLUB DID YOU DISCUSS POLITICS AND WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH THE WAR?

A Yes. Oh, yes. But then it was a totally different situation. I mean it was victory for Britain and Churchill. And wonderful things were happening. And everybody wanted to be part of the war effort. And they couldn't wait to enlist and fight. Oh, it was very exciting, this part. I continued to do lots of knitting for these soldiers. And everything was exciting about that, really. There was never any fear of anything going wrong with this war as far as England was concerned. It was going to go right.

Q SO THIS WAS ABOUT 1940?

A This was 1940.

Q AND WERE YOU GETTING NEWS FROM EUROPE, FROM THE CONTINENT --

A None.

Q -- REGARDING ANY OF THE --

A None that we knew of. I think that we certainly had no idea what was happening to Jewish people. If the Steinbergs knew anything, they didn't tell me. I don't think anybody knew anything. I really don't think so. There was one other girl. There was a girl next door who was from Germany who was a refugee child. And she and I were sort of friendly with each other. But whether she was or not, I don't know. But she felt terribly mistreated. And I know lots of people were mistreated by English families and felt very bad. But I did not. They were wonderful. Really, they were.

Q SO WHAT WAS YOUR TYPICAL DAY LIKE DURING THIS PERIOD?

A Well, I would get up early, make the fire. Then we had breakfast. And I cleaned the house every day, kind of dusting and sweeping and that sort of thing. And Stella went to school. So that was nice for me. I don't remember what I did.

I guess we had music. We had a Victrola, and we had radio. They had lots of friends. And then I began to have lots of friends of my own through

some of the girls that I had known in school. There were two that I became quite friendly with and continued to be my friends. And I saw them even later when I went back. And then I hung around a lot with young people.

Q AND MR. STEINBERG, YOU HAD SAID HE HAD LOST HIS BUSINESS?

A Yes.

Q SO WHAT DID HE DO THEN?

A Nothing that I know of. And I assume he did, too. I don't know. My memory isn't too clear on that. There was all that help with air raids and air raid warnings and blackouts. And he may have worked as a block warden or something like that. I would expect that he did, but I don't remember it.

Q SO DID HE SUPPORT EVERYBODY?

A You mean supported financially? Well, he must have. Maybe his business continued in a minor way. I know that the car was gone. He probably continued. I think that the business was probably switched over to some kind of war -- yes, I'm pretty sure that's what it was. He did continue to go to work.

Q DID YOU HAVE A LOT OF CONTACT WITH YOUR FAMILY? AT THIS TIME THEY WERE ALL IN THE U.S., CORRECT?

A Very little. Very little. It was terrible. It was just terrible. I missed my mother especially so badly. I mean, I could taste it. I always thought of her, her touch. She had particularly soft skin and, you know, just rubbing against her and kisses. And she was just such a wonderful person. I missed her terribly.

And I also felt she was having a very hard time. It wasn't as hard as it would have been in Europe, and she knew that. But I knew it was very hard for her. And then around sometime in the spring, she got very ill. She got pneumonia. And she was hospitalized in New York. I didn't hear about this until later, but that was just so frightening. Don't forget, pneumonia was still a deadly disease.

And strange, strange -- you know, it makes you believe in numbers. But her mother had died of pneumonia when my mother was -- I think when my grandmother was about 42. I can't remember the exact numbers. And that's how old my mother was when she got pneumonia. And what must have gone

through her head, I can't imagine. She was so sick. And the thing that worried her the most was was she going to lose her job. And she was given one of the first antibiotics against pneumonia, and so she survived. Not penicillin. What was it called? Streptomycin. Streptomycin. And so she survived.

And it was around that time right as she came out of the hospital that my father arrived. And it was just horrendous for them. They didn't know what to do at all. She was taken to a convalescent home for rest. And she thought that was the greatest spot she had ever been in in her life. She didn't have to worry about anything or anybody.

When my father came, it was very, very difficult for them to reconnect. She had become her own person in such a big way that she never really had been before. And it was hard for her. It wasn't just she always wanted to do something and she could finally do it. She had to do so many things. And then he came back into her life. And I don't know how romantic they were with each other all along, but it made it difficult for her.

She wasn't so sure that she was so thrilled to have him back there.

But he was. He was quite thrilled. I think he always loved loved her much more than -- well, I don't know what love is really. But he just was so thrilled to be back with her. And he probably had expectations that she couldn't meet at that time because she was sick.

Everybody worked, and things were better for them in the United States. And my father, he just had a golden touch, I guess. He could always make money. I don't know exactly what he did. He probably sold fabrics. And then he got a job in an artificial flower factory where they needed some kind of containers, some weird thing where he worked. And it turned out that he actually -- he was very well liked at that particular job.

And then after I came, I wanted nothing more than to go to work. I mean, I really wanted to be part of this family. And so that summer after I came -- we're talking a year later -- he got me a job there. That was my first job, putting artificial flowers into these little frames. It paid $15 a week. It was just great. And the

subway.

So my father did well financially. He always managed. He was very frugal. He was a bit of a miser. How they managed together, I can't really say at that time. I just know it was difficult.

And my brother, of course, was a teenager. And he wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do with himself. But he did get a job very soon after with the training that he had had at the textile high school. He got a job in Rhode Island at a mill. And that was very good for him. And he did well, and that was okay. He didn't stay in that field, but that's what he did.

And then as the years went by, my father, after the war broke out, my father got a job in a shipyard doing sheet metal work. And he did very well indeed. And it just was such an amazing thing that his father and his grandfather had been tinsmiths, and he had learned this when he was a young boy. And here so many years later this was what he did in the war effort. And he eventually went into his own business and made bar and restaurant equipment in New York and did well and saved money and bought real estate. A success

story.

Q THAT'S WONDERFUL. SO LET'S GO BACK --

A Okay. Let's go back.

Q -- TO 1940. YOU'RE IN LONDON AND YOU'RE MISSING YOUR FAMILY.

A Yes. You asked whether I resented. I really didn't. I would have liked to go to this secretarial school as well. It was something that interested me, but I realized that that was just not to be at this point. And then by that time my parents, my family, had let it be known that I was going to be able to come. It was a question of months rather than years. They were working on it. They realized that the war was getting hairier. And they were seeking permission for me to cross. There were no luxury liners, certainly. And they were trying to work out some kind of a way that I could come on a ship.

And getting the papers was not very difficult. It was a totally different experience now. It was so memorable that now when I went to get my American visa, you just walked into the consulate and you got your American visa. And I used my old passport with the J on it because I had to have a

passport, and I was not a citizen anywhere, I guess, except maybe in Austria. I guess I was still an Austrian citizen with that passport. And so they updated my permit to stay in England whenever it had to be updated, and they updated my passport. And then I just received -- That's all I needed really, just a visa. And so I really was counting the days to leave.

It was scary. It was getting very scary to be bombed every night. And it was very upsetting, to say the least. The excitement that I described was very short lived.

Q WHAT WERE THE DAYS IN LONDON LIKE? WERE THERE A LOT OF PEOPLE ON THE STREETS? WERE THEY OFF THE STREETS? WAS THERE FEAR?

A There was tremendous fear, absolutely tremendous fear. I was living in very much what you would call here a suburban area with all private houses on streets with little gardens in the front. And they didn't know each other particularly well.

I think Jewish families kept very much to themselves. I think there was probably lots of anti-Semitism in London. Certainly all of my friends there were Jewish, the two girls. And I

don't know quite how that happened, probably self-selection, I don't know, by that time. That's what we did. So we didn't know our neighbors particularly.

And people did not walk down the streets. They just didn't. Even in the best of times, I think people walked from here to the main street where they caught a bus or a tube. So the walking was very limited in those neighborhoods. There were no stores. The stores were on the main streets. And we could go there, but we didn't normally.

Q WAS THERE ANY ANTI-SEMITISM DIRECTED AT YOU PERSONALLY?

A Not in London that I can remember.

Q WAS THERE ANY VANDALISM THERE?

A No. No, there was not. I think that the war effort united people so strongly that everything else simply disappeared. I mean, there was simply nothing else in anybody else's mind. Listening to the radio, you got a pep talk every day. Everything you did was designed to make it happen sooner. That part was exhilarating. It really was. There was never any question.

Then in September 1940 the bombing started again. And this time they bombed civilian sites very deliberately. And this is when we slept in the bomb shelters. And so the days were cut very, very short. Every time the alarm went, we went. We didn't go very far from home, really.

So when it came time for me to leave, I was thrilled and excited. I mean, I really was so thrilled. I couldn't see how anything could happen bad that would interfere with this wonderful thing happening to me. And the Steinbergs, of course, were much more realistic about the whole thing. They knew it was going to be very difficult to cross the ocean, very dangerous. And there was a curfew. That was the other thing. You couldn't go out at night.

Q WHAT TIME WAS IT?

A This was at dark or before dark or around dark. So this was now November.

Q 1940?

A 1940. I had to go to London to the city to take a train to go to Southampton to get the boat. That was the arrangement. And so they didn't know how they could take me to the boat, and they didn't

know how they could take me to the train even because there was a curfew. So we all agreed. And I was pretty self-reliant, and they decided they would take me to the station, near the station. Near the train station there was a tube station. And, of course, the tubes in London were being used as air raid shelters. So they took me there, and I would spend the night hours until my train in the tube station. The train was leaving at maybe 5:00 or 4:00 or whatever it was, 4:00 maybe. So that's what we did. And so they took me down to the train.

And I was simply unbelieving when I saw the subways, the tubes. The structures there are very multi-layered, you know. You've been to London. And you go down one step and down one staircase and over another. And there were people sleeping everywhere. Families with babies lying down, eating, drinking, everything. This was their life. And this is what these people did every single night. And I thought, my goodness, I have been very lucky. I haven't had to do this. But I also knew this was what I had to do tonight.

And so they walked with me, and we just kind

of looked around. And they knew they had to leave because the hours were getting close. So they bought me a book. He was the one who came with me at the end. And he signed it. And it was Gone With the Wind. That's what I wanted. And he signed it for me. And I still have it. And he said good-bye. And it was very warm and very loving and very caring. She didn't come downtown to see me off because it was all so difficult to maneuver all of this.

And then I was alone. And I assume my luggage had been checked because I wasn't carrying anything major. But there I was, and I wondered what I would do. So I just kind of walked down one line and down the other. First I decided I better find out where I have to go eventually, where am I going to catch this train and down which tunnel will I find the train station?

And then I just saw that every once in a while between a family there would be a space where there was a little room. They all sat against the wall because don't forget these tubes were being used in rush hour. People were rushing by in all directions. So I went near the area where I would

have to be at the end, and I just kind of sat down very gingerly and waited. And people were nice enough. You know, there was a certain class difference, I guess. And they were talking differently. They were speaking Cockney type, and they were loud and jolly. It was a frightening experience.

And it's very deep down. When we left the ground, the main level, the bombs were falling. They were whistling all the time. So here I was and anything could have happened. I mean, I wouldn't know. Did Uncle Steinberg make it home all right? And how did it go? And how did this happen?

So I spent the night there. I guess I napped a bit. I think it was about midnight that I began to walk towards my train and found it and went to sleep on the train. And then early in the morning I was in Southampton. And somebody directed me to my boat.

And that was an unbelievable experience to see. I felt like I was three-inches tall, and this boat was the size of a skyscraper. And I had to walk down this aisle near the boat. I'm not

even on the boat yet, and I'm looking at it. I was so frightened. I don't know if I was more frightened of dying, being sunk, or being seasick because I knew that that would be another ordeal for me. I had learned since then that people who get seasick get seasick all the time. So it was really a very, very frightening experience to make myself walk down that plank and enter the boat.

It was a merchant ship. And I think there may have been three or four passengers but not very many. And most of the people on the boat were sailors going to serve somewhere. I don't know where. Were they going to Canada? I don't know where they were going. But like I say, it was a merchant ship. They showed me the place where I was to sleep.

And I was alone. It was kind of a dingy little place. And I was all right. And I didn't know what I was going to do or anything. There was no steward to show me the dining room or anything like that. But then I began to find out that for one thing we were not going to leave today because the mines had been dropped all around the area and that there was a big German

battleship, the Deutchland, in the same waters, and they were planting mines and torpedos everywhere. So they were trying to decide when to leave and how to leave and what to do. So that was the first thing.

The next thing was that we were given boat drills. But these were real boat drills, not like you get on a luxury liner. We had to sleep with our life jackets on every single night. You were not allowed to go to sleep without your life jacket on because you never knew what was going to happen. And we were assigned boats and shown where they were. And we did the drill all except going in the water. It was really very serious. And that began to seem very, very scary to me.

And then the next day they said he we would set sail. That's not what you call it -- take off. Now, by this time, the next day, we were going to leave very early in the morning. It was going to be November 8th. My lucky day again. So I thought, well, that's a very good omen. So we left.

The journey was rough. It was difficult. I was very seasick. I thought I would die again.

Really, it was just so awful. But I was young and cute, and I could play ping-pong. And the sailors had nothing to do for the time they were on this ship. And we became friends, and it was kind of cute. It was very nice. They were very nice to me. We played ping-pong. And there was one who kind of became my boyfriend, my protector.

And there was an older man who kind of told me what I had to do to get over my seasickness. When I didn't appear for two days, they got worried and they sent someone down. And they fed me some soda crackers and made me drink water and told me I had to go up on deck. It was very difficult to push myself, but I did get over it after a few days. And after that I was fine. And we had some very rough seas. I mean, fifteen foot waves. And I was on the top deck, and it didn't bother me. It was fine. So it was great.

This older man, one of the sailors, when I was feeling at my lowest trying to eat a little tiny bite of a cracker, made me this little toy. I'll show it to you even if it doesn't show up.

Q HOW NICE.

A See, it's like that. And all you have to do --

you won't be able to see it -- but you just have to disconnect that from this. He made that for me. And I've had it ever since. You figure it out. It will take you a while. So that was nice.

So actually after that, the journey was -- it was a nice experience. They were very matter of fact about the dangers. We knew that it was very dangerous. We knew there were torpedos around. We knew they were taking certain precautions. It was going to be all right.

Then when we had been on the ocean for a number of days -- I think the crossing is supposed to take about a week, I believe. And after about the ninth day, I think it was, the eighth maybe, they said that we couldn't land in New York because of the dangers of torpedos and that they were going to go to Halifax first.

So that's what they did. And as we approached Halifax, everything was totally blacked out from Canada being at war. And you couldn't see a thing. But we didn't go ashore or anything. I don't remember exactly why they went that way. I think the sailors went ashore there. And then I guess they could take some kind of a coastal route

back down to New York. But that's what we did.

And then came the day when they said we would arive. And it really was exciting. They told us that if we wanted to see the Statue of Liberty we should be on deck at 6:00 in the morning, whatever it was. So most of us who were there for the first time were up there at 5:00 in the morning. And it was very gray, and all you could see was the ocean. And then all of a sudden out of the mist, the Great Lady. It really was exciting. It really was a symbol of freedom. It was the end of the ordeal. And they were -- it was -- she was just beautiful.

So then I knew that was going to be the day I got to see my family again. And they made it as easy as they could for us. They brought customs officers on board, and it didn't take very long. And before long I was walking down, and there they were. It was really quite an ordeal, quite the end to an ordeal. My father was at work; he couldn't come.

And we went to my new home. I think we went by taxi. The first thing I remember is that my brother, four years older than me, was totally

obnoxious. And he said to me, Well, I've got you signed up to start school on Monday. I said, No way. I'm not going to school. I'm all done with school. I haven't been to school in over a year. He said, Yes, you're going to school. We had to sign that you would go to school. So that's what I did.

Do you want to know more?

Q WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF NEW YORK?

A Oh, it was just very bright and shiny and bustling and lots of people and different. It just seemed so new and different. Buildings were bigger. People were bigger. Everybody seemed to smile. It just seemed so wonderful, but everything was just so wonderful.

The family lived in a building in the East Bronx on the fifth floor of a walk-up. So we had to walk up five flights. The apartment had two bedrooms and a living room -- no, one bedroom. One bedroom and a living room and a kitchen and a bathroom. And my brother and I both slept in the living room on some kind of roll-away arrangement.

Actually, my bed from Europe had been salvaged and was there, and I got to sleep in that. So

that was one of the more exciting things that I discovered when we came. There was some furniture that I recognized. Not very much, but that was one. And I just thought it was wonderful. It never occurred to me that it was primitive or difficult.

My mother still worked very, very hard. She worked not only when she went to the factory, but she worked at night because piecework, you could do that and you could work at home. And I thought it was devastating that she should work so hard. I felt really bad about that. And I tried; I honestly tried to make things easier.

And since I was going to school, as I found out, you know -- I went to a very, very large high school, walked in all by myself. I thought it was just awful. And there were 1800 students. They were very nice, but I couldn't imagine going to a school like that. And then after school in New York especially -- I don't know whether they did this other places, too -- but the kids, they were very cliquish. And they hung out together on corners, like you would come out of school and then you go would to the candy store. And they

would hang out.

And I didn't belong to any of those, and nobody asked me. And I felt very, very alone. But I also went home and went shopping and cooked and did the house. It wasn't a chore. It really wasn't a chore. It was just wonderful. I loved doing it. And I learned some things.

And then after a very short time, I did like school a whole lot. And they got me into the right places and studying the right things. And when I graduated two years later, I was valedictorian. I didn't even know what that meant. That was the funny part of it. I really truly didn't know what it meant. It was a very gratifying experience. And the speech that I gave was about what I just told you, the arrival and what freedom means to me.

And then my brother and I on the weekends would do the laundry. We did it in the bathtub. No washing machine, no laundromat. We did it in the bathtub. And then we would carry the laundry one flight of stairs up to the roof and hang it out. And it smelled wonderful, and we loved doing it. There we were two kids from a fairly

sheltered background, but it never seemed like a terrible chore. We were really thrilled to be together again.

And I think that my adolescence was really quite calm in many ways. I didn't revolt against anything. And my children often ask me about those years. And it's hard for them to believe and for me to believe that I really didn't have any problems. I didn't hate anybody. I just thought it was wonderful, you know. It was so great to be in the family again. And it just -- it was a totally different feeling to have gotten over that awful feeling of "you're stealing my parents" and "go home". It was just great. It was really wonderful.

So a week after I arrived, some friends -- actually it was a man with whom my father had gone to high school back in Poland who lived in the neighborhood and they had reconnected -- invited us for Thanksgiving dinner because it was November 19th, by November 19th, the day I arrived. My mother, she was so moved. Every year on that day she would send me a card or call me. And she called it my second birthday. I came to her a

second time.

Anyway, a week after I arrived and I thought from now on nothing could go wrong, I came down with appendicitis. And I have heard variously that this is not an unusual occurrence, that somehow something about a new culture -- or I don't know what it is exactly. And my parents didn't know what to do. Doctors, I mean, nobody had doctors. And, of course, we didn't have any
8 money. So my mother did call a doctor in the neighborhood, and he came to the house by 10:00 at night. And he examined me, and he made the diagnosis. And he said I had to go to the hospital and be operated on. And nobody knew what to do.

And he made all of the arrangements with Mount Sinai. And they sent me down; I guess my mother took me in a taxi. And I was operated on. It didn't cost anything. I was taken care of by interns, I'm sure, that screwed up on my incision. But that's all right. I forgive them. I have tried to find out who they were since then just for laughs. Let's see. So that happened.

My mother, they had made some contact with

some of the families that they had received papers from, distant relatives. The way the family finally came was my mother got an affidavit from this brother of my father's, Jack, who had been here a long time. So he guaranteed her coming, and then she was able to guarantee everybody else, her immediate family. So we never needed all of the other families. Remember I told you my brother had contacted them. But we were in touch with them, first of all, because they had been nice.

And then one of them, this one man whose name was Beller, also was a doctor. He was related somehow distantly. He wasn't terribly interested in taking in these foreigners. You know, you never knew what you're going to come up against. But that's all right. It wasn't really bad behavior. But the day I went to the hospital, my mother called him and asked if he would come and help or do something or tell her what to do or whatever. He said I was in good hands. And I was.

Q HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE HOSPITAL?

A Oh, I don't know. A long time. I think it may

have been two weeks because I had an infection. It was a problem, you know, whatever. And then they wanted to send me to a convalescent home which they did routinely with patients from hospitals. But I wouldn't go.

In talking about hospitals, I want to tell you one other thing about way back in Vienna. One of the things the Jewish families did, and my family did as well, is to take care of problems that might arise in the future while they still could. And horror of horrors, both of my parents had all of their teeth removed. You know, they were not perfect, but they were certainly not all terrible. And they had full false teeth made. And my poor mother never really got over that. Her whole life long, she would never let anybody see her without her teeth. Never. I mean it was just, you know, never.

And again when I was a young woman here in California and I went to the dentist, and one day he said to me, Well, you don't have to worry about those teeth; you will probably have them capped by the time you're 40. I started crying, and he thought I was nuts. I had this vision of my

toothless parents and that was going to happen to me. So that was one thing.

And then the other thing, my father had had some problems with hemorrhoids. And so during that period, that in between period that you asked me about, he had himself admitted to a Catholic hospital because there they wouldn't come looking for Jewish people. And he had his hemorrhoids removed and stayed in the hospital for as long as he could. And I had my tonsils removed. But they wanted me to stay in the hospital overnight, but I wouldn't. I just didn't want to. So those were some of the things people did when they knew it was coming.

Q HOW WAS YOUR FATHER'S TRADE DOING IN NEW YORK?

A Well, he eventually after the war, he and his two brothers went into this bar and restaurant equipment.

It's funny when my children see this. I don't know if they can see my hands, but my mother always did this. She was always doing this with a Kleenex.

Q THAT'S INTERESTING.

A He and his two brothers went into business. They

made -- this was a new trade then with stainless steel. And business was just incredible after the war because it was all new. Every restaurant, every luncheonette, every cafeteria. They just really did extremely well.

And they had their own way of dealing. The business was located on the bowery. And so if they needed someone to come and work, my father would go down and he would jolly the wino on the next corner and tell him to come up and work. And he would come and work. And he would work for two or three hours, and he would say, Okay, Paul, pay me. And then he would leave and get his next bottle. And that was the arrangement. Everybody knew it.

Q DURING THIS TIME IN NEW YORK, THE '40s, THE EARLY '40s, WAS THERE A LOT OF TALK OF THE WAR IN EUROPE? ESPECIALLY AS LATE AS 1941. DO YOU REMEMBER?

A I don't think so. Not in my family. None, in fact. I don't remember hearing any of the terrible stories at all. We did read a German paper. But that's all. And otherwise, it would be just newspapers and radio. And there was

nothing said. We had no inside information. We had no contact with anybody in Europe.

The other relatives in Shanghai, that was really our biggest concern was to get them over to America and trying to get the right papers together and all that. And so that took some doing as well.

We were just so delighted to be in America and Americans. And everything about America was so wonderful. And my mother especially. My father, too. They spoke English only. We didn't speak German. You know, the past was gone. It wasn't like it was dead gone. It was just gone. It was not -- that isn't what was happening now. We were here. We were together. We were making a new life. And it was -- that's what it was.

So the business that my father had, this sheet metal, and he did quite well and eventually bought real estate. And they had one brother. His sisters perished in Poland, and their families were never heard from again. But one brother who also had a family there survived and made his way to Cuba. And he contacted the brothers in New York. And they brought him over by way of an

arranged marriage. So he came into the business as well.

And then my father worked into his seventies. Not because he had to, but because he just liked it. And he managed the properties himself. And my mother, when I graduated from high school in '43, what I wanted to do was to get a job so my mother could stop working, really. Two things, I must be honest. The other thing was I wanted to get a telephone. And they wouldn't let me get a telephone unless I paid for it myself.

So she stopped working. And we moved into a nicer apartment in Washington Heights. And so this is '43 now. My brother was -- I don't know. He was living there, too. Right.

Q DID YOU EVER FIND OUT HOW YOUR FATHER'S SISTERS PERISHED?

A No. I don't think anyone ever made an effort that I know of. One brother went to Palestine from Vienna. My father brought all his brothers except the one who was in America over to Vienna. So one went to Palestine. One came directly to the United States because he was single. He came -- I don't know how come he came. I don't remember

that. He was younger. Maybe he went across some border. I don't know.

Q SO EVENTUALLY DID THE FAMILY IN SHANGHAI, DID THEY ALL GET TO AMERICA?

A Eventually the family in Shanghai mostly came to Canada, to Toronto.

Q WHAT YEAR WAS THAT THAT THEY LEFT SHANGHAI?

A After the war. '48, '49, '47 maybe.

Q HOW WAS THEIR LIVING SITUATION IN SHANGHAI?

A Oh, it was horrible. My cousin Eric, with whom I shared the greatest conviviality all through our childhood -- you know how children have configuration. He was always on my side, and the other one was always against me and so. But he writes well; and I write, too. And so during the war, he and I corresponded at great length and described everything that was happening in both places. And he very often had my letters published in the newspaper over there, in addition to which he saved them. He recently sent me one. It was really very funny.

He finally got a job there in Shanghai with a British importer of some reputation who taught him business procedures and import-exporting. He did

very well in that regard. And his parents were even older than ours. And he took care of them in Shanghai where he married and then brought them to Toronto with him.

And so back to my father's family. So the one went to Palestine, and he disappeared. His wife said one day he just disappeared. And nobody really knows what happened. Another brother went there to look for him and they never could. I don't know if he was mentally ill or he committed suicide or he was shot. No one really knows what happened to him. But his wife made it okay.

And then the other brother, the remaining brother, also went to Shanghai with his wife when my father did and eventually came to New York. I guess we must have brought them over. No. They had some other relatives on her side of the family. That's right. She was pregnant, and she just wanted to get there in time for her daughter to be born in New York, which she did.

Q DID SHE?

A Yes. And so they came when I was 16. That's when she was born. When was that? '41. And then the others, the brother who had come directly to the

United States and then married and had children, he died very young of a heart condition. And his wife moved to Israel to live, took the children to Israel to live there.

Q YOU WERE 20, 21, WHEN YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

A I was 18.

Q SO YOUR FAMILY STILL ALL LIVED TOGETHER IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS?

A Yes.

Q AND HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE WITH YOUR FAMILY?

A Well, I lived with my family until I married. But I had a few adventures in between. I never thought I would go to college. I honestly never did. And when I graduated high school, one of the teachers liked me, and he asked me to work at a resort where he managed the office. And he had asked two other girls and myself. And so we went there. This was a hotel run by the National Ladies Garment Workers Union called Unity House. I don't know if you have ever heard of it.

And so I got a job there for the first summer. And it was absolutely heaven. It was the most wonderful thing I have ever done. It was the kind

of place that you hear about in the movies where the staff has everything and the guests just sort of do what they have to do. And swimming and tennis and dancing every night and shows. It was just marvelous. And I liked the job, too.

And I got to know a lot of people in the union. And I didn't have any great union convictions at all, but I thought these were good people. And anyway a couple of years went by, and someone offered me a job. And so I went to work for one of the officers of the union, one of the locals. So I did that for a while.

But before I even began to do that, I realized that I had a lot of empty space in my day working and, you know, I had a job. And what was I going to do? Well, I decided I would take a course at City College at night, which I did. And pretty soon I decided I really wanted to study. And I went all the way through college at night. I went to City College for about four years, and then I switched to Hunter College. And I graduated Hunter Phi Beta Kappa. But it was pretty good. It was nice to know that -- it was so wonderful to be able to come back to it later without ever

having had the idea before. I sometimes think we push our kids too fast from one school to the other before they know that it's what they want to do.

Q I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE WOMAN WHO WORKED WITH YOUR DAD IN THE SHOP IN VIENNA. YOU SAID YEARS LATER YOU SPOKE WITH HER AND SHE TOLD YOU SOME STORIES?

A Yes.

Q WHEN DID YOU GET INTO CONTACT WITH HER?

A She evidently contacted my father sometime. What happened was after the war when the Nazis lost, there were reparations made. And my parents were really not terribly interested in any of that. But they found out, you know, friends pushing them, that they could get their building back. And so my father contacted this woman, Mrs. Monig. And she helped him, I guess, contact a lawyer or whatever. I really don't know all the details. But the transfer was rescinded, the original sale. And he was given the building back. But, of course, he didn't want it, and he sold it. And I guess sold it for some kind of a moderate price by that time. But at least he had the satisfaction

of having that happen.

So then after I was married, my husband and I went to Europe in about 1961. And I decided I really wanted him to see Vienna. So we went there for a very brief visit just to kind of see it.

Q WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A Well, it's a very strange experience about my being Viennese. So many things had happened in my life afterwards in London and then New York and a very happy marriage with all kinds of unbelievably exciting things happening in my life in my marriage. My husband is a doctor, and we met very many fabulous people through all kinds of interesting experiences.

And my childhood was just that, it was my childhood. But during that period whenever you say to someone where do you come from, you know, I come from New York. Oh, were you born in Manhattan? I say, Well, actually I was born in Vienna. And people say, Oh, you're Viennese. And people's faces light up. And somehow Viennese conjures up an image of the waltz and the Vienna Woods and certain things. It was just as though they looked at me again then and said, Oh, I could

have told. There's something about -- you look so Viennese. There's something about Viennese. And so my identification with Vienna came much later through this process, I think. I don't have any particularly great memories of my childhood in Vienna that I yearn for. We all have them, but they're childhood memories mostly. And I don't have many really horrible memories except for those horrors that I told you about.

And so going back was almost like going back to this city that people have been talking about. I mean, for instance, one of the things that we did was we went around the city and photographed all of the composers' statues around town because it's so Viennese. But it was a really wonderful experience.

We did go back to the house where we lived. And the janitor, the superintendent, still was there. No, he had died; but his wife was there. And she was very pleased to see me and greeted me. And I didn't quite know what to say, you know. But she just said nice things about my father. That's all. I mean, that's the only one she really had any dealings with.

And then there was one other tenant in the building whom I had known when I was a little girl. They had no children, and I used to go upstairs and she would make a cup of hot tea or candy or whatever. And she was still living there. And she remembered me and my parents. Nothing much was said. It just -- it's over. It's over.

Q And you saw Mrs. Monig?

A Yes. And when I called her, she was so excited. And she had gotten married. She had been married. And she had twin girls who were now pretty well upper teenagers, I guess. And she wanted so much to show us Vienna. I just -- I could barely -- well, I just didn't feel like having her do it. It seemed like such a burden. But she insisted. And so they took us to the outskirts of the town where they have the Heurigen, the new wine, these little restaurants. And she packed this wonderful, wonderful picnic lunch for all of us. And we had a perfectly marvelous get together.

And the wine, I'm not a big drinker at all, and I don't drink wine hardly at all. And I really got looped. It was pretty amazing. And it

was very, very warm. Very nice. And again I didn't know what to ask. I really didn't know what to ask. The papers that my father had kept, I didn't see until many years later. And she just said nice things. That's all. And the terrible times were over.

Q IN NEW YORK WHEN THE WAR ENDED, WHAT WAS THE FEELING? WAS THERE A CELEBRATORY FEELING?

A Oh, my goodness, yes. When the war ended? Yes. But as Americans. As Americans. Each time that Hitler got really thrown back, in the Normandy landing, and then after that when the news finally began to be good, we certainly were very, very thrilled. But as Americans. Very much so.

My brother was in the service. But he got out as soon as he could, towards the end of the war. And a lot of friends were in the service. Everybody felt it as Americnas. We had no yearning for getting the Nazis out of Vienna so we could go back there.

Q WAS THERE ANY MENTION ABOUT THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS --

A Not that I know of.

Q -- AT ALL?

A Oh, after the war, of course.

Q BUT NOT IN '43 OR '45?

A Not that I know of. We just didn't know any people who came as survivors. I don't know why. I think they must have been in separate camps somehow that people either got away and then their family -- I don't know why. It's an interesting question I don't know the answer to. But, no. I was as shocked as anybody else when the pictures began to be shown and the news came out.

Q I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT THAT. SO AFTER THE WAR, WHEN DID NEWS AND PICTURES FIRST ARRIVE, TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IN AMERICA?

A Oh, I think right away. As soon as the war in Europe was over. I think even before the Japanese war was over. I mean, in '45. So the war in Europe was over in May, I think it was.

Q IN AUGUST OF '45?

A Well, the bomb. So that was the war in the Pacific. Wasn't it the same year? Yes, it was the same year.

Q MAY, '45?

A I think it was May '45. I might be wrong, but I'm not sure. I think it was May. And the pictures

began to come right away. I just couldn't believe it. I really couldn't believe it, that human beings could treat human beings like that. I think that it didn't sink in to my understanding until I began to read about it, like The Wall, and that French writer, the something of the just.

Q THE LOST OF THE JUST?

A The Lost of the Just. Yes, yes, yes. Those made such an impression on me. It was too painful to speak about really. So that was a couple of years later. I think I was already married and maybe even living in California.

Q WHAT YEAR DID YOU LEAVE NEW YORK?

A We got married in '51. We got married in '51. And then we came to California the following year in '52 for a fellowship. My husband did a fellowship at Stanford. And he became very ill, and we went back to New York not knowing what else to do, and stayed there for two years. And then we came to California.

Q SO THE DECISION TO COME TO CALIFORNIA WAS FIRST BASED ON THE FELLOWSHIP?

A Right.

Q DID HE CONTINUE IT AFTER GETTING ILL? DID HE COME

BACK?

A He finished the year in a fashion, you know, enough to get credit for it. But we couldn't make any career decisions. Also his mother, his parents, were in New York and they wanted us back. So we just thought we would go back. I was pregnant the second time. I had a baby. Oh, I tell you. We were very busy. We had three children in three years.

Q ONE IN NEW YORK AND TWO IN CALIFORNIA?

A All three in New York. We had one, came to California, went back to New York, had two more, and left. Like he wanted them to be citizens of the world.

Q HOW DID YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND MEET?

A Oh, dear. Well, it was -- I guess we have had a lot of fun in our life. Being a teenager in New York was very difficult for me. It isn't that I suffered, you know, psychic ills. I was very lonely because the American kids that I knew were the people in the building. I didn't have any real good friends of my very own that I was doing things with.

The friends that I had were all immigrants

that my brother had kind of gotten together with in a sort of a Zionist group type of thing that we had had before. And I was very welcome in that. And they became my friends. But, in truth, I never loved them as much as I have loved other friends. They were pulling in an immigrant way, and I was pulling in an American way. There was a big, big difference. There was only one or two in that group who really felt we were kind of lucky that we got to America and that we got kicked out of Austria. I mean, that's really how we feel.

And so I was lonely in many, many ways. And as I worked and made a little money, and I was busy, I was going to school at night. Skiing was something we did in Europe, and people talked about skiing in New York. And I thought, well, I would like to get back to that. And so I went skiing one time. That was kind of a going back to your childhood sort of experience. It was exciting. Really, it seemed like a healing sort of thing to do.

And then I worked in this country resort for a couple of years. And then I went there my next summer vacation. Anyway, one year, some friend

suggested that we go to this adult camp. You know, we were both certainly of marriagable age. And I wasn't meeting many people because of where I hung out.

And so we went to a place in upstate New York called Scroon Lake where they had an adult camp. And he was there. He had never gone to a place like that before. Neither had I. He was getting together with two college buddies who were sort of, you know, didn't quite know what to do. And his sister had just come back from a vacation and said, Why don't you go to Scroon Lake. And so they went. And that's where we met. And we actually still talk about it as if it were a miracle because we really are very happy that we met. So it was kind of -- a lot of coincidences make your life go right.

Q IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY ABOUT YOUR MOTHER AND BEING IN NEW YORK?

A Well, when my parents got old, I began to feel more and more that I wanted to take care of them. For many, many years they came to California each year to be with us for the summer. They were very active, very vigorous, very healthy. They loved

to walk. We always took hikes together. I took her once down a steep ravine when she was about 80 years old. And she says, You forget how old I am. And I knew she could do it. We went down -- Do you know Steeple Ravine?

Q YES.

A And we got to the bottom, and she was laughing. But she thought it was just terrible that I would do this to her. And then we were going to walk back after resting for a while, and suddenly she disappeared. She hitched a ride. She said she wasn't going to walk back up. So that worked out all right.

So they got to know our children very much and our life and our friends. And it was really we took care of them, and they were able to get their medical care here under our supervision, so to speak. My brother still lives in New York and he did all the time, and he has also been very caring about our parents all this time. But somehow, you know, daughter, son, that kind of thing.

So then one year when I guess it was in '72. '72 was the last year they were here. Twenty years ago. That was when they said that they

weren't going to come anymore. And they had said that every year, and I was sure that it would change.

But the following year my husband and I went to Brazil for a year. He worked on the Project Hope. And somehow then after that, they never came again. So I went to New York a lot, a couple of times a year. And my brother and I made a lot of decisions together. And it was very hard to see them get older and frailer. And I look in the mirror and I see my mother. It's very hard. It's a very strange feeling.

Q DID YOU HAVE MUCH CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY IN LONDON AFTER THE WAR?

A Yes. Yes. We kept in touch, I mean, as close as people do. We went to visit them. The time we went to Vienna, we also went to London.

Q WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A It was wonderful, really wonderful. They lived in the same house, but times had not been very good to them in terms of financial security. They had cut the house in two and were living in only half of it. And there was another family living sort of the other side. Well, you know how that's

done. And she was ill. She had diabetes.

But they were very warm and very lovely, a lovely, lovely, lovely visit. And it was wonderful. And they were so happy that we came and to meet my husband and me. And there was not much serious talk. But it was -- they know how -- I mean, I have certainly made it my business over the years to let them know how grateful we were and how they helped our whole family. And I continued to be in touch with Stella until she died of cancer four years ago. And we saw her then, too. And then Mrs. Steinberg died fairly young, whatever it was, sixties.

And he continued on into his nineties. And I telephoned him occasionally. And he was as bright as day. He could remember me and everything about what made him joyful to have had me. He was just a lovely, lovely man. And he was very fond of me, I know. And so then when Bert came with his wife after the war, his father was still alive. And he let me know when he died. So that was a few years ago.

Q ARE YOU IN CONTACT WITH ANY OF YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIENDS FROM VIENNA?

A Yes, as a matter of fact. All the people that were our friends, my brother's friends, I say, in New York, the immigrant friends in New York, he's in contact with them. And he married one of those people. And so he has contacts. And over the years whenever I come to New York, he will invite them over and that kind of superficial type of contact.

But with Vienna, the one Christian girl that was his age who lived very close to us -- I think they lived in our first house. No, they lived on the same landing. Her name was Lotte. And he contacted her, and he has seen her. And she was very anxious for me to be in touch also, but I never did. But he and she have seen each other and their families two or three times. He has been much better about keeping contacts really. Some of the families that went to Israel, he has kept in touch with.

But there were two friends that I had in Vienna in the school, this lyseum that I went to. And one I mentioned was this Ilsa, who was an actress. I am still in contact with her. She lives in L.A. She's still very theatrical. And

she still visits me, and we write. And, you know, it's a different world and a different place, but there is a certain warmth that takes us back to those years, which is nice.

And then the other one whose name was also Ilsa, I ran into her by chance in New York at a kind of a youth gathering. There was a place where these immigrant kids tended to go. It was called Midvale. I don't know if you have ever come across it in your reports here. But it was a pretty place in the country where they had a river and a lake and kind of like camping. Except it wasn't camping. There were huts and ping-pong, nice kinds of places that people tended to hang out. And we went there occasionally. And when she went there, I ran into her. And it was really eerie. It was like we hadn't seen each other -- we hadn't seen each other for many years, and it was like the next day. That's what I'm trying to say. It was like nothing had happened. It was very strange. She had gone to Haiti with her family. So they did get away. But we were friends for a number of years in New York. In fact, we were together the day the war ended.

Q IN NEW YORK?

A We were at a country resort. We took a vacation together. We went to this union.

Q WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A Oh, it was really an amazing day. I remember so well because she and I were so different which is -- it's puzzling really. I'm still not very political, but I do know what's going on. But I really did not keep up with things from day to day. And when the atomic bomb was dropped, it was an amazing thing that they had done. To me, it was wonderful that it was the end of the war, that they had finally found a day to stop this horrible fighting.

She was aware of some of the other factors, the -- not just, well, isn't it terrible to kill that many people, because I don't think many of us felt that way at that time. But just what nuclear energy is. She knew about those things, and she had read all about it. She knew kind of the process. I guess there were a certain number of leaks before that time about the atomic bomb, some of the tests that had taken place. People knew about those things. I did not. And she did. And

so I felt so inferior. It was really kind of like I couldn't quite be as joyful as I ought to have been because I was so dumb. It's really very interesting. But we remained friends for a number of years. After we both got married, we continued to see each other. She lived in New York near us. And I guess when we moved to California we lost touch.

Q SO YOU HAVE BEEN OUT HERE HERE SINCE '55?

A Well, '52, '55. Yeah, '55.

Q AND YOUR CHILDREN KNOW YOUR STORY. DO THEY ASK YOU A LOT OF QUESTIONS?

A They don't ask anymore. That's the interesting thing. I mean, I have talked about my life all along. They were very close to my parents. And some asked questions; some didn't. It was not any big deal of sitting them down and you have to hear this. But something would occur to me. So they have known it. And I have written it. And I have let them read sections often about both my parents. I have done a lot of writing about them. When my father died, we all kind of got together and wrote down some of the thoughts about it.

And now, of course, I have grandchildren. And

I feel very insecure about telling them too much or telling them something and have it be received as if it were yesterday's news or so what. It's a very strange feeling. I have two very young grandchildren and two who are eight and twelve.

Q DO THEY ASK QUESTIONS?

A No. Not really. So I don't really tell them. But I don't know. They have gone to a Jewish school up until last year. And so I know they heard stories. And I don't want to be repetitive. I don't want to bore them. I don't want to burden them. So I don't know. I don't know what the answer is. Maybe this is. Maybe they don't need to know.

Q HOW DID YOU RAISE YOUR CHILDREN? DID THEY GO TO A REGULAR HEBREW SCHOOL?

A They did. Well, we have raised them to be Jewish. My husband was raised sort of the same way I was, really, very assimilated, no religion, no Bar Mitzvah, kind of never denying his Judaism. His first experience with anti-Semitism kind of came in college when the dean called him in and said, Oh, I see you left this out on your application. What is your religion? Oh, I don't have any

religion. Well, you must have a religion. Everybody has a religion. I have no religion. Well, what about your father's religion? He doesn't have any either. I don't know. He asked, Are you from New York, some other kind of a question. Well, you're Jewish. And he put it down and that was it.

And he was very, very, very upset by this experience. And then that was sort of his first experience with it. And I think since then all of his experiences with the time and the Holocaust and his feelings have to do with me. He is just very, very angry that this happened even though we both feel we are really lucky that it happened for our best interest. But that's not what they had in mind.

And so our children were raised with Jewish holidays, talk about Judaism, about anti-Semitism, about no particular religious celebrations except, you know, food holiday kinds of things. I used to keep them home on Yom Kippur. And I would say, Well, now what should I do. I don't want to go to temple. That doesn't feel right. We would go to the beach, and I would talk to them about it. And

I was so happy not so long ago when my son told me that that's what he did with his son.

Q A FAMILY TRADITION.

A Isn't that nice? So that's all. And my son was Bar Mitzvahed. But it really was proforma. I wanted it. But they all feel they want to be Jewish. David married a woman who had converted to Judaism. And their children are being raised -- they're taking Daniel to Israel for his Bar Mitzvah this year. And there's just no question about any of it. And my two daughters are married to non-Jews. And they're very sensitive to my feelings about it because I don't understand my feelings anyway about it. But the religion does not play a large part. And I guess they're still trying to sort it out. Our new grandson who is now four-and-a-half months was circumcized ritually.

Q HOW MANY GRANDCHILDREN?

A Four.

Q IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES IN VIENNA OR LONDON OR NEW YORK?

A I can't think of anything right at the moment.

I'll probably think of something later, right?

Q ANY MESSAGE TO YOUR GRANDCHILDREN WHO WATCH THIS THAT YOU WOULD WANT THEM TO KNOW?

A I guess not. Just be good human beings. There are good human beings to be found everywhere. There really are.

(PAUSE.)

A This is from a document that I have been working on about my life. (READING)

Through my husband's work as physician and teacher, we have shared our interest in writing and self-expression. Together we have prepared and published many articles and books mostly on medical topics but also ranging into other areas.

In 1973 we lived in an underdeveloped area of northeast Brazil where my husband served on the hospital ship HOPE. It was difficult for me to leave our comfortable surroundings in California, but I also believed that it might offer my children something of the experience that had contributed to my maturity. Each of them spent a large part of the year in Brazil working with poor people and sick people, helping to ease the pain of the malnourished children. After that

exposure, each of our children has chosen to work in a health-related career.

Do I consider myself a Holocaust survivor? For many years I was not really sure for I always thought that the suffering of our family was minimal compared to what I read about and that we all escaped. But now I know that I am a survivor for the memories of the period have colored my thinking ever since. Whenever I reached an age in my life when important events occurred, I would think of my mother at the same age, wondering how she could have achieved what she did against such great odds.

I want so much to save my parents the pain and loneliness of their old age. And I find it difficult to learn that now as always they must do as they see fit for themselves. They lived in their own apartment in New York near my brother and his family. And I visit as often as I can. My mother simply cannot believe that she was one strong enough to live through the difficulties of the Nazi period.

My identification with Judaism has remained extremely strong although neither my husband nor I

nor our children are religious. I have not found a satisfactory answer for us to retain our Jewishness and to be assimilated. Only the State of Israel seems to be able to address that question with some satisfaction.

That's it.

(END)