

1 Interview with JOHN FRANKLIN

2 Holocaust Oral History Project

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4 Place: San Francisco.

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8
9 TODAY IS OCTOBER 6, 1995, AND AT THE SAN
10 FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, INTERVIEWING.

11 WE WERE REDOING PORTIONS OF AN EARLIER
12 TAPE THAT HAD INADVERTENTLY -- THE SOUND HAD INADVERTENTLY
13 BEEN TAKEN OUT IN DIFFERENT SPOTS, SO WE'RE GOING TO TRY
14 TO RECOVER PARTS OF WHAT JOHN SAID AT THAT TIME, AS WELL
15 AS ASKING FURTHER QUESTIONS.

16 Q. OKAY. LET'S START WITH ALSO SOME INFORMATION THAT
17 WE HAD ON THE LAST TAPE. WHAT WERE YOUR MOTHER'S PARENTS'
18 NAMES?

19 A. My mother's parents' name were (Etta) and Samuel
20 (Frankentower).

21 Q. AND HOW DID YOUR NAME COME TO BE --

22 A. Franklin.

23 Q. M-HM.

24 A. Okay. My mother's brother emigrated to the United
25 States in 1912, he called himself (Franken),
26 (Frankentaller). My brother came to the United States on

1 the last ship from Holland, was able to flee in 1940, his
2 name was (Frankentall) and he called himself Franklin, so
3 when my mother and I arrived in the United States in 1947
4 we called ourselves Franklin.

5 Q. ALSO HOW LONG WAS YOUR GRANDMOTHER HIDDEN?

6 A. A little over two years.

7 Q. TWO YEARS?

8 A. Actually, closer to three years.

9 Q. AND SHE WAS ALONE IN THE SPOTS SHE WAS HIDDEN?

10 A. No, there was another Jewish couple from Holland
11 hidden also in the same house, but she was in one room on
12 one floor and they were in another room on another floor.

13 Q. DO YOU KNOW THEIR NAMES?

14 A. No.

15 Q. OKAY.

16 A. I only met them after the war.

17 Q. THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO HID YOUR MOTHER?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THEIR NAMES WERE? AND AM I
20 CORRECT, WERE THEY ALL SINGLE?

21 A. They were all single. There were two sisters who
22 owned the house. The house was built in the 17th century.
23 They had no running water, no toilet. There were
24 facilities, there was a pump in the yard. It was a very
25 old home, and it was in the name of the two ladies, Cora
26 (Funghoef) and (Yoe) (Funghoef).

SR 1 When they were young they took in an
2 acquaintance of them, (Tome) (Funguged), no relationship
3 at all, a bachelor. There was nothing between the ladies
4 and him, it was a good friendship. He was an alcoholic at
5 that time, and they took him in, and he didn't have a
6 drink since they took him in.

7 Delightful people, good Catholics, who
8 believes that life is sacred, that whatever religion it
9 should not be exterminated. And at the risk of their own
10 lives they hid my grandmother.

SR 11 (Tom VanUden) was an acquaintance of my
12 uncle who sold him German wines and (Tom VanUden), at the
13 risk of his own life also, during the war when we lived in
14 Amsterdam brought us food. We didn't have much. He lived
15 in a country where food was more available, and he came
16 once a week with a basket and brought us fruit. They were
17 wonderful people.

18 Q. DID YOU STAY IN CONTACT WITH THEM?

19 A. Yes, I did. After the war we stayed in contact
20 until they passed away in the mid '50's.

21 Q. MAY SEEM TO SKIP AROUND A LITTLE BIT HERE, BUT
22 THAT'S PART OF THE INFORMATION THAT WAS MISSING.

23 YOU MENTIONED BEFORE THAT YOUR UNCLES TOLD
24 YOU STORIES OF THE U.S., WHAT THEY HAD SEEN, AND I WAS
25 WONDERING WHAT THEY HAD TOLD YOU. WHAT IMAGES DID YOU
26 HAVE OF THE U.S. WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?

1 A. The stories -- naturally I was very young when I
2 heard these stories. My uncle had come, granduncle,
3 brother of my grandmother, had come to the United States
4 in the 1880's, before World War II, came to visit his
5 family in Germany and then everybody, so the story goes, I
6 heard it from my mother who told me various times the same
7 stories about how he came every two years and visited his
8 sisters and nephews and nieces and so on, and naturally
9 everybody sat around the table asking questions, what is
10 the United States like and so on.

11 And after a while or after a few years the
12 same magnificent stories about how life is so plentiful
13 over here, and they finally -- my grandmother finally
14 decided to ask him, "Don't you have any poor people in the
15 United States?" And his answer was, "Of those people we
16 don't speak."

17 And so the impression we had of the United
18 States was that everybody lived well, a high standard of
19 living, no hunger, no poverty, that's the impression we
20 had, and with my family that was correct. They were
21 immigrants, but he worked hard and did well financially.

22 Q. DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR FATHER EVER THOUGHT OF COMING
23 WITH YOUR FAMILY?

24 A. No. If my father -- my father was a successful
25 businessman in Germany. If he would have survived I don't
26 think we would have come to the United States. He was too

1 European, he was on in years. 1945 he would have been
2 close to 60 years old.

3 It would have been too difficult for him I
4 think to start all over again, and especially in the wine
5 business after World War II, there wasn't much wine
6 consumption in the United States in those days, Europe
7 was, and that's what he knew. I don't think we would have
8 come.

9 Q. AND THEN WHY DID YOU AND YOUR MOTHER MAKE A FINAL
10 DECISION TO COME AFTER THE WAR?

11 A. All right. After the war we found my grandmother
12 alive, and so the three of us lived together, my
13 grandmother, mother and I. And then my grandmother fell,
14 broke her hip, and I think I mentioned earlier my uncle,
15 my mother's brother came over with the first penicillin
16 that we had, and she came out of her unconscious state and
17 was able to talk to him for three hours or so, and then
18 passed on peacefully.

19 So my mother and I were the only ones left,
20 and my mother decided there is no future for us in Europe,
21 we have no family, with the experiences we had, and she
22 decided to join my brother and her brother in the United
23 States. This was in 1947.

24 Q. BEFORE YOU MENTIONED THAT AFTER THE WAR YOUR MOTHER
25 COLLECTED ON SOME STOCKS THAT YOUR FATHER HAD PURCHASED IN
26 THE U.S., ET CETERA, BUT HOW DID THE THREE OF YOU GET A

1 PLACE TO LIVE AND START SUPPORTING YOURSELVES BEFORE THAT
2 MONEY CAME THROUGH?

3 A. My mother's brother in the United States, in San
4 Francisco, sent her money so that we could live. He was
5 fairly well off, in business, and my mother borrowed money
6 from him.

7 Q. YOU ALSO SAID THAT THE DUTCH DID NOT GIVE YOU
8 CITIZENSHIP.

9 A. No, we didn't apply. When we entered Holland in
10 1938 we thought it would be an intermediate to the United
11 States. We had not thought of staying in Holland forever,
12 we thought it would be a short stop, but then Holland was
13 invaded, and that was the end of that.

14 After the war we were still considered --
15 well, I think the Dutch considered us Germans, the Germans
16 didn't consider us Germans, but the Dutch did, and when my
17 mother decided then to come to the United States. If we
18 would have stayed in Holland we probably would have asked
19 for Dutch citizenship most likely.

20 Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER'S
21 SIBLINGS WHO WERE STILL LEFT IN EUROPE PERISHED IN THE
22 WAR; WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?

23 A. My father had seven brothers and one sister. All
24 except one, who had gone to Israel, the rest of them all
25 perished. Their names were Ludwig, (Oinken), Morris,
26 Sally -- no, not Sally, Sally survived in Israel. Carl,

SR 1 and (Nami).

2 Q. AND YOUR MOTHER?

3 A. My mother only had one brother who came to the
4 United States.

5 Q. OKAY.

6 A. But a lot of my family, my grandmother's sisters
7 and their husbands, all perished.

8 Q. ON YOUR MOTHER'S SIDE?

9 A. On my mother's side. In those days they had large
10 families. The boys all came to the United States, the
11 girls stayed behind and married German husbands.

12 The last one came over in 1901 on a sailing
13 ship, and he fell off the mast and broke his neck, but the
14 three brothers that preceded him all did very well in San
15 Francisco.

16 Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR MOTHER HAD SISTERS THAT
17 MARRIED?

18 A. Not my mother, my grandmother.

19 Q. YOUR GRANDMOTHER HAD SISTERS THAT MARRIED GERMAN
20 MEN?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. AND FROM THE OTHER TAPE IT SOUNDED AS IF THEY WERE
23 STILL LIVING?

24 A. No. One sister was hidden with her husband, she
25 survived, and her children who had come to the United
26 States before World War II brought them over. And they

1 were on in years, in their 70's and early 80's, and lived
2 here in San Francisco for three more years before they
3 died.

4 Q. SO SHE WAS HIDDEN?

5 A. She was hidden with her husband not far from my
6 grandmother, the next town over.

7 Q. YOU MADE A STATEMENT IN THE LAST TAPE THAT ONCE
8 THINGS STARTED CHANGING IN HOLLAND JEWS STARTED GOING INTO
9 HOLLAND AND TO SWITZERLAND, AND A PORTION WAS LEFT OUT;
10 WAS THERE SOMETHING ELSE THEY DID, OR WAS IT JUST GOING
11 INTO HIDING?

12 A. They had three choices of being arrested, going
13 into hiding, or trying to find an intermediary or a guide
14 who would lead them to a neutral country.

15 In the beginning there were people who took
16 chances on fishing boats to England, that was in 1940 just
17 after the German invasion, but that stopped fairly soon.

18 So there were offers by guides for money to
19 take you across into Switzerland; however, we heard that
20 quite often it happened that the guides turned you over.
21 They had their money, they turned you over to the Germans,
22 so there was no assurance that this could be reached.

23 My father and his two brothers and my
24 mother at that time decided not to take advantage of
25 that. We had the money, but we didn't like the risk
26 involved, we thought we could somehow save ourselves other

1 ways. Naturally we didn't know about the concentration
2 camps.

3 The earliest -- the people went into hiding
4 were the earliest, okay, they didn't go into hiding after
5 1943, they went into hiding in 1941, '42, when they saw
6 things coming. They were Dutch, so they had a lot of
7 Dutch friends, and the Dutch were heroic in their help to
8 the Jews. They -- there were -- not many, but there were
9 quite a few Dutch Jews that were hidden during the war.
10 Again it depended.

11 Some of the people that hid their Dutch
12 friends did it for free, at the cost of their own lives,
13 and shared with them the rations that they received. It
14 was quite a sacrifice.

15 There were some who took payment for it
16 when they could, and others didn't feel like hiding and
17 didn't want to hide, so when -- as time passed they
18 started closing the provinces. There was so many
19 provinces in Holland, and Jews had to move to a central
20 place where at least it would be easy for the Germans to
21 pick them up, to arrest them.

22 So by the time that we moved from (Limbost)
23 to Amsterdam, shortly thereafter there was no more Jewish
24 population in (Limbost), and then we all moved to the
25 ghetto in Amsterdam.

26 Even Amsterdam itself was ghetto-ized,

1 people from one part of Amsterdam had to move to the
2 ghetto part of Amsterdam.

3 Q. IN 1943 WHEN YOU WERE PICKED UP HOW DID THAT
4 HAPPEN?

5 A. Okay. I was going to a Jewish school, which is the
6 only one I was allowed to. Jews had to wear stars, they
7 were not allowed out after dark. We lived in the ghetto.
8 The Dutch and the (spares) or Nazis did the dirty work for
9 the Germans under the command of the German S.S. who were
10 in charge.

11 They raided the ghetto every night. They
12 had lists of people they wanted. How those lists were
13 chosen I do not know, but --

14 Q. SO THEY DIDN'T JUST GO FROM DOOR TO DOOR?

15 A. No.

16 Q. TO SPECIFIC DOORS?

17 A. Specific doors. They had lists of who was Jewish,
18 and they decided this person, that person, you had a half
19 an hour or something like this to pack your bags.

20 Most Jewish families had their bags packed
21 in advance. We knew that when they knocked at the door
22 that was it.

23 They came in trucks and they took you to
24 what was the Jewish theater in Amsterdam, which is today a
25 memorial to all the Dutch Jews that were killed in World
26 War II. They went through the Dutch theater, that was the

1 gathering place, and from there we were transported to
2 (Westaborg), which is a Dutch concentration camp, which
3 was a temporary place.

4 From there people went to the various
5 concentration camps in Poland and Germany.

6 Q. NOW, LAST TIME YOU EXPLAINED SORT OF HOW IT WAS,
7 THAT BEING TAKEN FROM (WESTERBORG) WAS DELAYED FOR YOU AND
8 YOUR MOTHER. YOU TALKED ABOUT A RELATIVE WHO WAS A
9 DOCTOR, AND YOU SAID AT THAT TIME YOU FELT IT WAS A SAVING
10 GRACE THAT YOU WERE TRANSPORTED AFTER MAYBE TWO OR THREE
11 MONTHS, THAT THAT MAY HAVE SAVED YOU. I WONDERED WHY YOU
12 THOUGHT THAT.

13 A. Well, not the (Westerborg) incident. A friend of
14 my uncle, (Umfrenavain), a Dutch man who had a bar and
15 restaurant in The Hague, was drinking with the German S.S.
16 (Lauterfendun), and I through his connection and his
17 friendship with the German I -- our name was not picked,
18 and I think that the delay perhaps saved our lives.

19 Q. SO YOU AND YOUR MOTHER WERE TAKEN AFTER YOUR
20 FATHER?

21 A. No, we were all interned at the same time in
22 (Westerborg), but my mother and a brother of my father
23 were sent to Auschwitz, and my father and another brother
24 and I were sent to Bergen-Belsen.

25 Now, Bergen-Belsen was supposed to have
26 been, as I found out after the war, an exchange place for

1 the Germans where they exchanged the Jews for German
2 prisoners. It never worked out that way, either the
3 Allies didn't go for it, or the Germans didn't want to,
4 but there was no better treatment for the prisoners than
5 there was in another camp, as I found out later.

6 These things we didn't know, naturally.

7 Q. SO WHEN YOU SAID YOU FELT THAT THE DELAY IN TIME --

8 A. Three months.

9 Q. -- SAVED YOUR LIFE?

10 A. Because in 1945 there wasn't much life left in me.
11 Perhaps three more months in that camp might have made a
12 difference. The same for my mother.

13 Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE -- YOU DESCRIBED THE TRANSPORT
14 LAST TIME, BUT CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS?

15 A. Of the camp?

16 Q. YES.

17 A. Well, we had -- Bergen-Belsen or (Westaborg)?

18 Q. BERGEN-BELSEN.

19 A. Well, we had been in (Westaborg), so we were used
20 to a concentration camp with the watch towers, but
21 Bergen-Belsen had electrified barbed wire. There were
22 camps within the camps.

23 We were the Jewish division, next to us
24 there were about 20,000 Russian prisoners who were dying
25 like flies. After going back after the war I think, I'm
26 not sure, but between 80,000 and a hundred thousand

1 Russian graves, I mean mass graves of Russian soldiers who
2 died in the camp. They were prisoners of war. Was
3 horrendous. We didn't know that. We knew that there were
4 Russians, we knew there were prisoners of war, but we had
5 no contact with anybody.

6 We only had contact with each other in the
7 camp. There were not only Dutch Jews and German Jews,
8 there were Greek Jew and Rumanian Jews in the camp, from
9 all over Europe.

10 What I all of a sudden remember is that
11 when the war came to the end we didn't -- we had an idea
12 about the planes going over, et cetera, we were guarded by
13 Rumanian fascists who had volunteered into the German
14 army, and I don't know what strength, how many there were,
15 but many of them were Rumanian.

16 But Bergen-Belsen, we were a camp within
17 the camp. We had no contact with other parts of the
18 camp. I was lucky, I didn't have to work, which may have
19 saved my life. There was shoe repair business for German
20 soldiers, shoe making, clothing manufacturing and so on,
21 that slave labor was employed.

22 Q. WERE THERE SELECTIONS GOING ON IN YOUR CAMP?

23 A. For?

24 Q. TO TAKE PEOPLE OUT TO AUSCHWITZ OR OTHER CAMPS?

25 A. No. There were no gas chambers in Bergen-Belsen.

26 Q. TO TAKE THEM OUT?

1 A. To Auschwitz?

2 Q. YES.

3 A. No. The Jews that were sent to Bergen-Belsen
4 remained there as long as they were alive. They died like
5 flies, but there was no transportation.

6 Now, as I think I mentioned last time, as
7 the end of the war grew near then we were transported with
8 the intent of sending us to Theresienstadt, which was the
9 selection place for Auschwitz, but Auschwitz I think by
10 that time -- this is all after the war. I looked at the
11 map and looked at the dates and so on. I think Auschwitz
12 had been liberated by the time that we were sent to
13 Theresienstadt, but they still sent us there because the
14 English were approaching from the west.

15 We were shipped through a burning Berlin,
16 which we saw through the little opening in the slats of
17 the railroad cars, and it was burning, but we were guarded
18 by S.S. and there was no -- first of all, the people were
19 too weak; secondly, how do you escape in enemy country
20 where everybody is an enemy and there was no -- in the
21 camp once and a while somebody couldn't take it anymore
22 and threw themselves on the electrified barbed wire and
23 committed suicide, but escaping from a concentration camp
24 was practically unheard of. You were in the middle of
25 enemy country with very few sympathetic people around you
26 to help you rather than turn you in. And most of us were

1 in poor physical shape.

2 It was different with Allied soldiers who
3 were in good physical condition, but we weren't.

4 Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE LAYOUT OF THE BARRACKS THAT
5 YOU WERE STAYING IN?

6 A. Yes. The beds were four high, in other words, four
7 people slept above each other, and they were double next
8 to each other, they were narrow, they were bunks. The
9 mattresses were cheap hay covered by jute, and that's what
10 you slept on.

11 Q. WHERE DID YOU GET WATER OR DID YOU WASH YOURSELVES,
12 REST ROOMS?

13 A. There was one central washroom and open toilet for
14 30 people, 20 toilets. Everybody had diarrhea. There was
15 one stove for three to 500 people.

16 Q. FOR HEAT?

17 A. Per barrack, one stove per barrack. We didn't have
18 any fuel, or very little fuel. I think it must have been
19 the human bodies that kept the place fairly -- it was very
20 cold.

21 Q. WAS THERE WOOD PROVIDED --

22 A. No. No.

23 Q. -- FOR THE STOVE?

24 A. No.

25 Q. SO WASN'T IT USED?

26 A. No, it wasn't in use.

1 What was I going to say?

2 They were open, the barracks, families --
3 was not a male barrack, female barrack. These were men,
4 women, and children who lived together. Naturally we all
5 had fleas and lice.

6 We were given a shower once every three or
7 four months. The worst -- one of the worst experiences
8 was the reveille every morning. We had to stand sometimes
9 for hours in the cold, in the snow, in the rain in order
10 to count the bodies, and if it didn't count correctly, if
11 the number was incorrect, the Germans were there, they
12 decided it was incorrect and you stood for another hour or
13 two.

14 And people died right there, falling over,
15 how long can one stand? And that went on every day.

16 I think I mentioned the experience I had
17 with one of the guards, I think I did.

18 Q. M-HM. (AFFIRMATIVE) HOW DID YOU GET YOUR FOOD
19 RATIONS? WHERE DID YOU GO AND WHAT DID YOU EAT?

20 A. All right. Some of the younger and healthier ones
21 worked in the kitchen, and the food was brought in once a
22 day. We were given bread rations once a week, maybe a
23 half a loaf per person, I don't remember exactly.
24 Whatever it was, it wasn't enough.

25 And some kind of soup we were given once a
26 day, it was mostly liquid with vegetables, beets, carrots,

1 maybe a few potatoes, no meat, and they were brought in in
2 big containers of maybe, oh, 50-gallon containers into the
3 barracks. And then the head of the barracks or the person
4 designated to do so with a cup gave everybody a portion,
5 and that was the food we received. Red Cross ration, we
6 never saw one. And I heard later that they were sent, but
7 we didn't see them.

8 Q. AND WHEN DID YOU GET THE SOUP, WAS IT ONCE A DAY?

9 A. Once a day.

10 Q. Either in the day or at night?

11 A. In the evening when the people came back from work,
12 after that.

13 Q. YOU SAID TOO LAST TIME THAT THERE WERE LIME PITS,
14 MASS GRAVES?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. DID YOU SEE THEM?

17 A. No, I did not.

18 Q. WHO BURIED THE PEOPLE, WAS IT PRISONERS, GUARDS?

19 A. Yes, all prisoners, under the supervision of the
20 S.S.

21 Next to us was a regular political
22 division, and you could see it. It was only barbed wire
23 that separated you from them, and they died like flies.
24 They wore uniforms, we did not. We wore civilian clothes,
25 the ones we had with them when we came from Holland.

26 Before the body was even cold the fellow

1 prisoners stripped them of every piece of clothing they
2 had. Then they piled the bodies on the cart, hundreds,
3 and the cart was pulled to the pits. And we heard about
4 it, and our people also were buried in the same manner in
5 the pits.

6 But there was a certain kind of, to think
7 back, I didn't realize it at that time, but to think back
8 of it now there was a certain kind of civility still among
9 the Jews, a kind of leadership, a kind of respect for the
10 elder, for perhaps a Rabbi. In the camps next to us it
11 was the worst thing I've ever seen. There were the rules
12 of the capo. Capo was an early inmate of the German
13 concentration camp who through brute strength and cruelty
14 was able to survive. Those were the people who ran the
15 camps at the behest of the Germans, those were the people
16 who killed their own people. I mean bestiality,
17 unbelievable. And I'm afraid that some of those survived
18 and were liberated. They were the ones that were able to
19 take the food from the weak and survive.

20 So compared to them we had a little bit of
21 civility left.

22 Q. LAST TIME YOU SAID YOUR UNCLE DIED OF HUNGER.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. WAS THERE ANY WAY BEFORE HE DIED THAT YOU WERE ABLE
25 TO HELP HIM?

26 A. No.

1 Q. OR CARE FOR HIM?

2 A. No, not at all. My father died of hunger, many
3 people died of hunger.

4 I mean we didn't at that time differentiate
5 how you died. People got weaker and weaker, and you
6 realized there was nothing you could do. People ask after
7 the war, especially American Jews, why didn't you defend
8 yourself? Why did you allow yourself to be taken?

9 The only exception was the Warsaw ghetto,
10 which was a very small example. Most of us were not
11 knowing -- did not know we were being marched off to the
12 death camp, we had hope that we would survive.

13 Jews are not people generally who
14 physically defend their lives normally, so it's -- looking
15 back in retrospect, sure, we shouldn't have gone, but who
16 knew? We didn't.

17 I think I mentioned before my father earned
18 his iron cross in the First World War, I mentioned this
19 before, and he thought this is something the fatherland
20 would recognize and respect. Made no difference.

21 I mean he should have known all these
22 things I learned after the war. The Jews weren't even
23 allowed to join the Veterans of the First World War, they
24 had to have their separate organization. They were not
25 allowed to join the General Veterans of World War I, the
26 others wouldn't allow them. They had to have their own

1 Jewish Veterans of World War I, but nobody could believe
2 that this could happen. It's unthinkable. Unthinkable.

3 Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT THERE MIGHT BE RABBIS IN YOUR
4 BARRACKS. WAS THERE EVER ANY KIND OF ATTEMPT TO HAVE ANY
5 RELIGIOUS SERVICE?

6 A. Oh, yes. There were small groups formed religious
7 services. Neither my father nor my uncle or I
8 participated in them. We were -- my father was religious,
9 but under the circumstances religion was not a great part
10 of the camp life. It just -- survival was.

11 Q. SO WHEN SOMETHING DID OCCUR WHAT --

12 A. Service, Friday night.

13 Q. YOM KIPPUR?

14 A. Yom Kippur I don't remember. I'm sure we didn't
15 get a holiday, I'm sure it was a working day. So people
16 fasted every day. I think they could explain that maybe
17 the ultra-religious tried to fast that day, but religion
18 took a holiday in the camp, which was understandable.

19 And yet many people respected their
20 religious leaders. There were prayer books, some that had
21 brought their prayer books with them. The things we had
22 with us were not confiscated. There were very few items
23 we had. We were only carrying -- maybe each person
24 carried maybe ten pounds of clothing and utensils, and
25 that's what we had.

26 Q. SO YOU WERE ABLE TO KEEP THAT?

1 A. We were able to keep that. We had a cup and a
2 saucer, spoon and fork. Those things we brought with us.

3 Q. LAST TAPE YOU MADE A STATEMENT THAT YOUR MOTHER WAS
4 CAUGHT, I DON'T KNOW AT WHAT TIME, BUT YOUR MOTHER WAS
5 CAUGHT TRYING TO GET A LETTER OUT.

6 A. M-hm.

7 Q. AND THEN THE TAPE SORT OF GOES OFF.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

10 A. Surely. This was probably the reason that my
11 mother was sent to Auschwitz. We are guessing. My mother
12 tried to smuggle a letter out to her mother, and that
13 would have endangered my grandmother a great deal if the
14 address would have been found out, it wasn't.

15 Somehow, I don't know what happened, except
16 that my mother was caught doing that and immediately was
17 separated from us. And I don't know my uncle, why he was
18 sent to Auschwitz.

19 In (Westaborg) they had their own list, who
20 was going when, where, we had no determination where.
21 Maybe somebody in the S.S. said, "We need 5,000 people in
22 Auschwitz." I don't know.

23 Q. WAS SHE TRYING TO SEND A LETTER FROM (WESTABORG)?

24 A. From (Westaborg) because my grandmother naturally
25 had no idea where we were.

26 Q. ALSO IN THE LAST TAPE YOU BEGIN TO MAKE A

1 STATEMENT, SAID YOUR FATHER WAS WORKING, AS 1935
2 APPROACHED I THINK YOU DESCRIBED YOUR FATHER'S CONDITION,
3 THIS WAS RIGHT BEFORE YOU WENT ON THE TRANSPORT TO
4 (ARASTADT). WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO YOUR FATHER?

5 A. My father was dying of hunger. He died ten days
6 before liberation. It is doubtful if he had been
7 liberated that he would have been able to survive, maybe
8 he was gone too far.

9 But every day the train stopped and mass
10 graves were dug and people were buried. They're unmarked
11 today.

12 I was very lucky, I found my father's grave
13 with the help of the Red Cross, it's unmarked but I -- the
14 Red Cross has a record of where it is exactly, where the
15 train stopped. And when I was in the army, the U.S. Army
16 in Germany I asked for leave to visit my father's grave.
17 And they sent two reporters with me, and I still have the
18 newspaper article at home. I found the place that he was
19 buried. It was unmarked, but --

20 Q. WERE YOU WITH HIM WHEN HE DIED?

21 A. Yes. Yeah.

22 Q. WHO WAS IT -- WHO BURIED THE BODIES?

23 A. We did, in the train, the survivors. We dug the
24 grave. People were unceremoniously dumped. They gave you
25 five minutes before the train left. We would gladly have
26 missed the train, but the S.S. was guarding the train, so

1 they didn't want the bodies lying in the countryside, so
2 -- every day.

3 Q. YOU ALSO DESCRIBED IN THE LAST TAPE THAT PEOPLE
4 SORT OF STAYED IN GROUPS I THINK, THAT YOU DIDN'T REALLY
5 HELP EACH OTHER, BUT YOU SAID -- I THINK YOU SAID THERE
6 WERE GERMAN JEWS AND (INAUDIBLE) JEWS AND OTHERS, OTHER
7 GROUPS THAT EITHER COOPERATED WITH THE GERMAN'S OR HELPED
8 EACH OTHER OUT; IS THAT A CORRECT DESCRIPTION?

9 A. Yes. It is a very difficult situation. It comes
10 down to the basic instinct of survival. There wasn't much
11 help for anybody, whether it has to do with nationality or
12 otherwise. It -- you try to save yourself.

13 My father tried to help me, shared some of
14 his rations with me, the instinct of fatherhood and
15 motherhood did not go down the drain, but just because you
16 were Jews did not make it any different.

17 There was always -- interesting, I was born
18 in Germany, raised in Holland, there was always a division
19 among Jews in Europe of one group thinking themselves
20 better than others. The English looked down on the French
21 and the French looked down on the Dutch and the Dutch
22 looked down on the Germans, and so it goes down, the
23 Balkan and so on.

24 Even today when I've been in Israel, I come
25 back, there is a great dislike for the German Jew among
26 the (Sabras) and the ones that came from eastern Europe

1 for the simple reason that the German Jew thought himself
2 better than anybody else. He had emancipated himself he
3 thought, and he tried to be part of Germany rather than
4 being part of the Jewish community, and it didn't work.

5 Q. DID YOU FIND THIS SAME KIND OF SORT OF
6 STRATIFICATION IN THE CAMP?

7 A. No. No. People stuck together because of language
8 and perhaps culture, you know, the overlying Greek culture
9 over the Jewish culture. So the Greeks spoke Greek, the
10 Dutch spoke Dutch, so you had groups forming because of
11 that, but not otherwise.

12 Q. ONE OF YOUR JOBS WHILE YOU WERE IN A CAMP YOU SAID
13 WAS TAKING CARE OF THE FIRE --

14 A. (Nods head.)

15 Q. -- FOR A GUARD. WAS THIS A CAPO OR A GUARD?

16 A. A guard.

17 Q. YOU -- I DON'T KNOW IF YOU KNOW -- YOU BEGAN A
18 STATEMENT THAT SAID THAT THE CAPO; WAS THERE SOME
19 CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CAPO AND WHAT YOU WERE DOING FOR
20 THE GUARD?

21 A. No. The guard had a little house, it was winter
22 and it was cold, and there was a little stove in there,
23 and the guard kept warm with the stove guarding outside of
24 the fence, guarding the camp that nobody would get out.
25 He was not S.S., I think I mentioned this in my last
26 story, he was (Heimayer), which was German defense forces,

1 and he was probably already in those days in his 60's or
2 late 50's, and he was threatened if he didn't do a good
3 job they would send him to the front, so this was a
4 privilege for him.

5 And yet, as I mentioned in my story, he
6 gave me potatoes out of his, quote, pocket. So there were
7 human beings among them. He didn't have to do it. If
8 they would have caught him they probably would have sent
9 him to the front, so, you know, it did happen.

10 Q. OKAY. AFTER THE WAR ENDED YOU MAKE A STATEMENT, I
11 WANT TO CHECK AND MAKE SURE IF IT'S CORRECT, YOU STAYED
12 WITH THE RUSSIANS I THINK --

13 A. M-hm.

14 Q. -- SOON AFTER. HOW LONG DID THAT LAST?

15 A. Probably about three months. They liberated us,
16 and we were in a Russian zone and we were liberated by
17 them, by the Cossacks on horseback and wagons pulled by
18 horses and little old trucks. And I worked in the field
19 kitchen, and until somehow the Allied, the Americans and
20 English found out that the train had been stuck there and
21 the survivors liberated and were living in that village.
22 And we were about two hours drive I think from (Lipesick),
23 which was at that time an American zone and later became
24 Russian zone.

25 So the Americans came with trucks and
26 picked us up and brought us to (Lipesick) to return us.

8 1 We spent maybe four days in (Lipesick), then they returned
2 us to the countries of our origin, for me that was Holland
3 because that was where I was picked up.

4 What was ironic I think is that while I
5 was in the American army I was guarding a DP camp with
6 many Jews in there who had fled from eastern Europe and
7 were looking for a home, and they wanted to go to Germany,
8 to America, wherever.

9 And I was part of a unit, we had to pull
10 guard duty, and I had to guard these people, which was
11 very, very unfortunate. Not all the time, I had it only
12 once or twice, but still it was very distasteful
13 remembrance because these people fled, you know, they --
14 when they were liberated they tried to get out of the
15 eastern sector of Europe.

16 Q. DID YOU HAVE A GUN?

17 A. I had a gun and I had orders to shoot, but all
18 kinds of rules.

19 Q. HOW DID THE RUSSIANS TREAT YOU?

20 A. Very well, extremely well. They couldn't have been
21 nicer. They even offered to take us to the Soviet Union
22 back with them and feed us and educate us and so on. They
23 couldn't have been better and nicer. Extremely pleasant.

24 Q. WERE THE AMERICANS?

25 A. Generous, to a fault. Their purpose was to bring
26 us back to the countries from which we came, which they

1 did, in a short period of time.

2 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY PARTICULAR --

3 A. Yes, I think I mentioned in my previous story we
4 were sent back to Holland on the train, I think I
5 mentioned, did I mention the train incident, what happened
6 on the train, no?

7 Q. I DON'T REMEMBER.

8 A. On the train I met an American Jewish soldier with
9 his future bride who he had met after the war in Europe,
10 and they were going to the United States. They found out
11 I was Jewish and had come from a camp, and immediately,
12 after a short time talking to them, they offered to take
13 me with them to the United States. Things like this you
14 don't forget.

15 My story always was the same to the
16 Russians as well as to this couple, I want to see if
17 anybody is left alive in Holland, if anybody returned. So
18 that's where I ended up.

19 Q. WHEN YOU GOT BACK TO HOLLAND HOW DID THE DUTCH
20 RESPOND TO YOU WHEN YOU RETURNED?

21 A. There was -- well, first of all, I don't know if I
22 mentioned this before, but I was interred by the Dutch for
23 about a week and a half because they had to differentiate
24 between those who actually were arrested and those German
25 S.S. who were trying to escape from Germany, so they had
26 to determine whether my story was true. Okay.

1 But the Dutch were extremely nice to us,
2 except that they were -- I remember that when the Jews
3 were arrested by the S.S. in Holland that it happened
4 frequently that the neighbors or other people came in and
5 took the furniture and every belonging before two hours
6 are up. If they wouldn't have done it somebody else, I
7 mean -- so it happened in some cases that some Jews
8 returned and wanted their furniture back from the
9 neighbors. That was not so easy. But it practically --
10 these were the exceptions rather than the rule.

11 Q. DID YOU AND YOUR --

12 A. My mother already had given to the the
13 (Diemenfromhoff), some pieces, which immediately were
14 returned to us, you know, no question about it.

15 Mother had -- a lot of stuff that she
16 brought to the United States were things that were hidden
17 during the war, she had in her trousseau when she was
18 married and had all her life, and they were hidden during
19 the war with friends, and she brought them. Not maybe all
20 of her belongings, maybe 25 percent, but still better than
21 nothing.

22 Q. SO GENERALLY PEOPLE RESPONDED TO YOU WELL?

23 A. Yes, very well, very well.

24 Q. ANOTHER -- TRY TO RECOVER ANOTHER SENTENCE HERE. I
25 ASKED YOU WHERE YOU FIRST ARRIVED BACK IN HOLLAND, AND I
26 THINK YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A CASTLE?

1 A. Yes. That's where we were interred.

2 Q. IT WAS A CASTLE?

3 A. It was a castle, a nunnery -- not a nunnery, a
4 Christian order, a monastery, something like this, which
5 was a castle at one time. I tried to find it two or three
6 years ago, I couldn't find it. But that's where we were
7 kept.

8 Q. FOR HOW LONG?

9 A. Maybe at the most ten days, until it was
10 established that we were -- the only identification I had
11 with me was Dutch Red Cross tag which the Dutch had given
12 me during the war and identifying me, that's the only
13 thing I had.

14 Q. SO WERE THEY NOT LETTING PEOPLE INTO HOLLAND THAT
15 WERE NOT DUTCH?

16 A. Definitely -- well, whoever claimed to be Dutch or
17 a person -- they were trying to separate the Nazis from
18 the refugees, and they had to find some kind of history on
19 that person before they let them in.

20 Once they identified you as a true refugee
21 there was no problem.

22 Q. SO THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT NAZIS WERE TRYING TO
23 ESCAPE GERMANY?

24 A. Absolutely. Every country in Europe was.

25 Q. ON A DIFFERENT TOPIC, YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR
26 BROTHER WAS ON HIS OWN, OR WAS ABLE TO GET A VISA?

1 A. My brother went to school in England, my parents
2 sent him to school in England. Somehow he was able to get
3 a visa which -- to come to the United States, immigration
4 visa, which we were not able to get.

5 Q. BUT HE GOT THAT IN ENGLAND?

6 A. He got that in England. He came and visited us in
7 Holland and took a ship from Holland, the last ship that
8 made it to the United States, so he was very lucky.

9 Q. AND HE INITIATED THIS PROCESS ON HIS OWN, GETTING
10 the visa?

11 A. My parents did somehow. I never found out why it
12 was different from the rest of us, I don't know.

13 Q. WAS HE OLDER?

14 A. He was seven years older.

15 Q. SO HE WAS IN AMERICA?

16 A. He was in America.

17 Q. DID HE HAVE TO SERVE IN THE ARMY?

18 A. Yes. He served in the Pacific during World War II,
19 and he came out of the war not knowing whether anybody was
20 alive until we contacted him.

21 Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT YEAR IT WAS THAT HE LEFT ON THIS
22 ship?

23 A. 1940.

24 Q. LAST TIME YOU MENTIONED THAT THE SHIP LEFT AND THEN
25 RETURNED.

26 A. Yes. This ship returned to Holland, and was a

1 battle on it. The Dutch Marines defended the ship. When
2 the Germans invaded Holland, the war in Holland was over
3 in four days, but, you know, the Dutch put up a token
4 defense. How could they, a small country like this,
5 defend itself against a massive attack by German forces?
6 So it didn't last very long.

7 Q. SO I'M NOT CLEAR, WAS YOUR BROTHER ON THE SHIP?

8 A. No. No. The ship itself, it came back probably
9 empty, was a Dutch ship, was in the harbor of Rotterdam
10 and survived the bombing of Rotterdam. It was just famous
11 in Dutch history of having been practically the last
12 battle the Dutch put up against the Germans.

13 Q. HOW AND WHEN WERE YOU ABLE TO CONTACT YOUR BROTHER
14 WHEN YOU GOT TO THE U.S., HOW DID YOU LOCATE HIM?

15 A. Through my uncle, my mother's brother. My brother
16 had lived with them for a year when he came and lived in a
17 boarding house, so we contacted the rest of the family and
18 that's how.

19 Q. NOW, THIS SENTENCE I'M TRYING TO RECOVER HERE, YOU
20 MENTIONED THAT, I THINK THIS WAS IN HOLLAND, I'M NOT SURE,
21 OR ISRAEL, BUT YOU SAID THAT IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY THERE
22 WERE JEWS WHO THOUGHT THEMSELVES MORE GERMAN THAN JEW. IS
23 THAT --

24 A. This goes back to the statement I made a few
25 minutes ago, that the German -- many German Jews tried to
26 become German, tried to be part of the German community.

1 That was before the Nazis.

2 You know, until probably 1920's or so the
3 Jews in Germany could not enter any professions. They had
4 a very difficult time. And many of them then tried to go
5 to university, try to become doctors or lawyers and so on
6 and be part of the German community.

7 Where I was raised in (Vitsborg), there was
8 a German -- Jewish school I went to. I even recall that I
9 went with my father to soccer matches on Sunday, which
10 were Jewish teams, and there was a separate community. It
11 was -- it was not part of the German community, but they
12 tried to be German.

13 They looked like Germans, they wore their
14 business suits, they wore their ties, they wore their
15 hats, they looked just like any other Germans. They did
16 not wear the clothes of eastern Europe ghettos. They
17 wanted to look German, they didn't want to be
18 discriminated against, and by looking different you bring
19 out discrimination, so they tried for that reason to.

20 Q. ALSO YOU TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT GOING TO
21 SYNAGOGUE WITH YOUR FATHER, JUST MENTIONING IT.

22 A. (Nods head.)

23 Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT --

24 A. The Synagogue.

25 Q. -- GOING TO SUNAGOGUE WITH YOUR FATHER?

26 A. Yes. Yes. As a kid we were not as (inaudible), we

1 were not religious, we could not stand on our feet for
2 hours and pray. We looked around, we try to make faces at
3 other boys our age, it was very typical of young people,
4 especially in the high holidays where you had to be in
5 temple the whole day.

6 So -- but our parents were religious, and
7 especially my father, much more so than my mother. And so
8 I went with him and I stood next to him, and if I fooled
9 around too much he used to give me the elbow, shape up, so
10 -- but it's interesting when I recall now is that the
11 Hebrew pronunciation is different than it was in Dutch,
12 it's different from Israel, it's different from Poland.

13 So, for example, we just had our Rosh
14 Hashanah, our knew year, well, it's pronounced different
15 in every country, I wasn't aware of that, naturally, so --

16 But it was a close community, and my father
17 was proud to be able to help it financially. It was the
18 duty as I found out later, I was so young, but later I
19 found out it was the duty of a Jew in a Jewish community,
20 whether it was Germany or anywhere else, to help support
21 the Jewish community, those who were less able than he
22 was, and, therefore, like it was everywhere else I'm sure,
23 when he was called in front of the Torah to read he always
24 whispered amount of donation in the ear of
25 the (Kashin) and everybody in temple always had to hear
26 how much did he give, how much did he give.

1 It was -- they tried to outdo each other,
2 okay. And it was fascinating for me to see this, to be
3 raised, it was natural for me. But later on, looking back
4 on it, the customs and traditions of different countries
5 in the Jewish community are different. But it was a pride
6 I think of those who were able to give to the community to
7 help -- no sound -- that was a given. I remember that
8 very distinctly.

9 Q. ANOTHER SENTENCE WE'RE TRYING TO RECOVER, IT'S
10 CONCERNING KRISTALLNACHT. I THINK YOU SAY THAT YOUR
11 FATHER HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON OR BEFORE KRISTALLNACHT?

12 A. Don't know exactly, probably thereabouts. Okay.
13 He was released within two days, like most Jews were,
14 but --

15 Q. WHERE WAS HE ARRESTED, FROM YOUR HOME?

16 A. I don't remember exactly, except that he was taken
17 away for -- without -- my father's business was behind
18 where we lived, so his business and the house we lived in
19 were very close together. I don't exactly know, but it
20 was the dividing line.

21 If anybody believes still that the Germans
22 weren't going to do anything, that had changed by
23 Kristallnacht. I think they made it very clear that we
24 were unwanted in Germany.

25 Most of them were released, some of them
26 were even taken to concentration camp at that time but

1 released later, very few were held. I think this was
2 1938, '37 I think. So the handwriting was on the wall,
3 and a lot of Jews tried to emigrate after Kristallnacht.

4 Q. DID THEY EVER EXPLAIN WHY THEY ARRESTED THEM?

5 A. No, there was no reason.

6 Q. WAS HE MISTREATED?

7 A. He was hit a few times I remember, but he was not
8 injured. The Germans always called you nasty names, but
9 that was part of it.

10 Q. SO THERE'S NO REASON GIVEN WHY?

11 A. No.

12 Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT SOMEHOW THE DUTCH PROBABLY SAVED
13 HIS LIFE AT A CERTAIN POINT, MAYBE THAT WAS REFERRING TO
14 THE DELAY IN TRANSPORTATION.

15 A. M-hm. Yes. That was it.

16 Q. I THINK YOU WERE DESCRIBING IN HOLLAND BEFORE WORLD
17 WAR II HOW THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OPERATED, FUNCTIONED.
18 LET'S SEE IF I'M RIGHT INTERPRETING WHAT YOU HAD SAID.
19 YOU SAID THAT YOU WERE PART OF A GENERAL POPULATION, THAT
20 YOU --

21 A. (Nods head.)

22 Q. -- THAT WAS DIFFERENT THAN GERMANY WHERE YOU JUST
23 STAYED WITHIN YOUR OWN GROUP?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. IS THAT TRUE?

26 A. Yes.

1 Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

2 A. Yes. As I just explained, Germany we were the
3 Jewish community, we were very close together. In Holland
4 I don't know why, but we belonged to the Synagogue, and we
5 went there, but we were -- the Dutch Jews didn't care too
6 much for us. Okay. We were refugees, and they were
7 afraid they were going to be penalized for our misbehaving
8 or whatever, and the Dutch Jews did not accept us easily.
9 We did not participate in the Dutch Jewish community. We
10 were left out. Whether we tried very hard, I can't tell
11 you.

12 There were only two years, between 1938 and
13 1940, when the Germans -- once the Germans invaded that
14 made no difference then. All Jews were treated the same.

15 But I didn't -- in Holland before the war I
16 didn't go to a Jewish school, I went to a normal community
17 school.

18 Q. IN HOLLAND?

19 A. In Holland.

20 Q. SO THEN YOU STARTED TO HAVE SOME NON-JEWISH
21 FRIENDS?

22 A. I had non-Jewish friends, right.

23 Q. HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU? WAS YOUR JEWISHNESS AN
24 ISSUE?

25 A. Not at all. Not at all.

26 Q. AND CLEARLY YOUR PARENTS HAD NON-JEWISH FRIENDS?

1 A. Not too many, few. The ones that helped us come to
2 Holland and so on, they were.

3 Q. I THINK THIS OCCURRED IN HOLLAND AS WELL, TRY TO
4 RECOVER ANOTHER SENTENCE. YOU SAID AFTER A SHORT PERIOD
5 OF TIME YOUR PARENTS I THINK TOOK YOU OUT OF SCHOOL, AND
6 THEN HAD TO PUT YOU IN A JEWISH SCHOOL, A SMALLER SCHOOL.

7 A. Well, this was 1942 where Jews were not allowed,
8 this was in (Limbost), a provincial town, where Jews were
9 not allowed to attend public school.

10 So a Jewish school was formed and kids came
11 on the train. This was like a high school, and kids came
12 on the train from 30 miles away to attend that school of
13 other Jewish people from southern Holland with you.

14 Q. SO YOUR PARENTS, THEY -- DID THEY PULL YOU OUT OF
15 SCHOOL, OR WERE YOU DENIED ACCESS?

16 A. I was denied access.

17 Q. AND THEY FOUND A JEWISH SCHOOL TO SEND YOU TO?

18 A. The Jewish community then opened a school to help
19 those people get an education.

20 Q. IN TERMS OF THE GHETTO THAT YOU WERE IN IN
21 AMSTERDAM --

22 A. M-hm.

23 Q. WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED IN AMSTERDAM WERE YOU MOVED
24 DIRECTLY TO THAT GHETTO?

25 A. Directly into the ghetto.

26 Q. OKAY. AND IT WAS ALL JEWISH?

1 A. No.

2 Q. OH.

3 A. It was mixed. I think we were the only Jews in our
4 apartment, and there were probably eight flats, eight
5 apartments, and we were the only Jews in the building.

6 However, the area around us we, were
7 allowed to live in certain areas of that section of the
8 city wherever we wanted, but it was limited. Maybe, I
9 don't know exactly how long, but maybe 20 blocks by 20
10 blocks or something like that, or even less.

11 Q. COULD YOU MOVE IN AND OUTSIDE OF THAT AREA?

12 A. No.

13 Q. YOU HAD TO STAY IN THAT --

14 A. That was it.

15 Q. SHOPPING OR --

16 A. No. No. I went to school outside of the ghetto,
17 a Jewish school again.

18 Q. AND YOUR PARENTS, WERE THEY ABLE TO WORK OR --

19 A. No. No, they were not able to work, so we were
20 lucky we had some money saved to tie us over, but they
21 were not able to work. No work.

22 Q. WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE DUTCH WITHIN THIS AREA
23 THAT SUDDENLY HAD ALL THESE PEOPLE MOVE IN THERE?

24 A. I really don't know. I think some -- some were
25 extremely unhappy with what was happening, and others were
26 sympathizers with the Germans and couldn't wait until we

1 were sent out, but most of them were very unhappy, but
2 couldn't do anything about it.

3 We didn't have any contact with any of the
4 knew neighbors, and Europeans are different from
5 Americans, they don't open up too easily, it takes awhile
6 to get to know them. In the United States you live in an
7 apartment most likely you know the whole house in a short
8 period of time. So we didn't try to make friends, we
9 didn't know anybody.

10 Q. AND THE -- HOW WAS THE PERIMETER OF THIS AREA, WAS
11 IT GUARDED?

12 A. No, it wasn't guarded. You could walk out, but you
13 had to find a hiding place because you were wearing a
14 star. You were allowed to go to other parts of the city,
15 but by the time the sun set you had to be back in that
16 section, and some people were able to find hiding places
17 during that time.

18 Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT SECTION OF AMSTERDAM THIS WAS?

19 A. Yes, east. Amsterdam east, it was known as the
20 Indonesian section of Amsterdam. The names were after
21 islands and places in Indonesia, and there were Indonesian
22 people living there too, and there were Dutch, retired
23 Dutch government officials that worked in Indonesia living
24 in that area too.

25 Q. DID YOU RETURN TO THIS AREA WHEN YOU VISITED?

26 A. Yes. In fact, the Dutch theater is just on the

1 edge of it. The Jewish theater. My bar mitzvah was in
2 Amsterdam in that sector, which I looked for the
3 Synagogue, it doesn't exist anymore.

4 Q. WERE YOU ABLE TO FIND WHERE YOU LIVED?

5 A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, it's still there.

6 Q. DID YOU --

7 A. Run down, but --

8 Q. DID YOU TRY TO GO INSIDE?

9 A. No. No.

10 Q. IN DESCRIBING YOUR BAR MITZVAH LAST TIME YOU SAID
11 THAT IT WAS A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY AND THAT THERE WASN'T ANY
12 -- YOU SAID CELEBRATION OR PARTY OR SOMETHING?

13 A. Yeah. To think back, you know, for example, here
14 in America we have not only bar mitzvah, but bas mitzvah
15 where young women celebrate coming of age, that does not
16 exist.

17 You see Judaism in Europe is either
18 orthodox or conservative, it's not liberal interpretation,
19 okay.

20 The celebration was very formal. It was
21 war time, a party was not given, maybe it was common, but
22 gifts were given, books usually, and it was war time and
23 every Sabbath there were less people in the Synagogue, you
24 knew they were being transported, so it was not a time for
25 celebration. And so it was difficult, so I -- I don't
26 know what the norm would have been under normal

1 circumstances.

2 Q. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO YOU, YOUR BAR MITZVAH?

3 A. It was very mixed. It wasn't a celebration. I
4 mean we were too insecure of our survival. We did it
5 because we were Jews. My father didn't ask me, "Do you
6 want to be bar mitzvahed?" He said, "You're going to be
7 bar mitzvahed, you're a Jew." So, you know, so I did it,
8 but it wasn't a great celebration to me, my parents
9 either, anybody else. Was a ritual, and I understand.

10 Q. WHEN YOU RETURNED TO GERMANY WITH YOUR FRIENDS, I'M
11 TRYING TO RECOVER ANOTHER STATEMENT, YOU SAID IT WAS THEN
12 THAT YOU -- I THINK YOU SAID YOU VISITED THE VILLAGE OF
13 YOUR FATHER?

14 A. M-hm.

15 Q. YOUR FATHER'S VILLAGE; IS THAT RIGHT?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. AND THAT WAS (VITSBORG), IS THAT RIGHT?

18 A. No. It was a small community, I don't know if I
19 mentioned this before, it was fascinating for me. My
20 father's village and my mother's village were close
21 together, that's how they met. There wasn't enough --
22 there weren't enough people in her village for minyan and
23 for services, so they walked over to my father's village
24 which is called Schwanfeld.

25 I came back after the war and went there
26 and I saw a sign in the middle of the village, Israel --

1 (speaking foreign language) -- Israeli, actually not
2 Israeli, but Jewish community cemetery.

3 I followed the sign and outside the
4 village, like was the custom in 18, 1900's, Jews were not
5 allowed to be buried within the community, there was a
6 separate place for them outside.

7 So I followed, and the place was -- the
8 cemetery was closed, so I climbed over the fence and I
9 looked around. I do not understand Hebrew, I do not read
10 Hebrew, and all the graves I found out later were marked
11 there before the year 1900 were in Hebrew, but after 1900
12 or 1914, after the first world war were in German, I could
13 read it, and I read the names of some of my relatives on
14 there.

15 When I went back a second time it was open,
16 and I immediately stopped the German worker and I said,
17 "What are you doing here?" And he said, "We are under the
18 employ of the Bavarian state government who has an
19 agreement with the state of Israel to maintain the
20 cemetery," which had not been touched in World War II. It
21 was 700 years old, and that was amazing to me.

22 Some of the graves had sagged and the
23 stones were falling over, but it hasn't been touched. And
24 in the Jewish cemetery there is a building that is solely
25 for the preparation of the body, letting of blood and so
26 on. That building was standing without a roof, the slab

1 of stone where the body was put on was there after 700
2 years.

3 And so I took my nephew and my niece there
4 after the war, maybe eight or ten years ago, to show them
5 the community. And people from the whole area were buried
6 there for hundreds and hundreds of years.

7 Q. (INAUDIBLE.)

8 A. I found the name on the graves. The ones in German
9 I could read, in Hebrew I can't read, so that was lost.

10 But that was my father's village. And town
11 of (Vitsburg) also has a cemetery that was untouched. In
12 fact until maybe a few years ago there was a Jewish
13 community in (Vitsburg) where I was born and there is in
14 the cemetery undestroyed, untouched, a memorial to the
15 Holocaust victims by the German government in the Jewish
16 cemetery.

17 So again it has been untouched. The Jews
18 were all deported to the camps and killed, but the
19 cemetery is intact.

20 Q. (INAUDIBLE.)

21 A. Yeah. Walking through the cemetery trying to find
22 my grandparents who were buried there I came across one or
23 two graves of people that emigrated to the United States
24 the beginning of the century and had come back to Germany,
25 didn't like it for whatever reason, got caught in the
26 Holocaust probably, but -- but names that I remember are

1 buried in (Vitsburg), Rabbis that were there that my
2 father had told me about, names that brought up a memory.

3 And the Jews that settled in (Vitsburg),
4 very few, elderly people who had come from eastern Europe
5 after the war, out of the camps, displaced persons and
6 settled in (Vitsburg), they were not the Jews of
7 (Vitsburg) that had lived there for hundreds of years.
8 They had either been sent to the camps or emigrated to
9 another place.

10 Q. ANOTHER SENTENCE, WE WERE DISCUSSING I THINK THE
11 BLACK MARKET, AND I'M NOT SURE IF THAT WAS IN HOLLAND
12 BEFORE YOU WERE DEPORTED. YOU SAID THAT YOU AND YOUR
13 FAMILY WERE MOSTLY MIDDLE CLASS AND YOU HAD SOME MONEY,
14 MAYBE IT WAS IN REFERENCE TO THE GHETTOS; WAS THERE A
15 BLACK MARKET THERE?

16 A. No. There was a black market in food in Holland
17 during the war.

18 Q. IT'S HARD TO TELL BECAUSE THAT PART'S LEFT OUT.

19 A. Yeah, I don't remember exactly what.

20 Q. DID YOUR PARENTS PARTICIPATE?

21 A. No. Not at all. Not at all.

22 Q. SO THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE POINT, THAT YOU HAD
23 SOME MONEY AND YOU DIDN'T NEED TO?

24 A. Right.

25 Q. YOUR FAMILY DIDN'T NEED TO PARTICIPATE?

26 A. Well, we were lucky that, with the food, that our

1 friend from southern Holland came to Amsterdam to bring us
2 food. Whether he bought it on the black market, most
3 likely yes, for us.

4 Q. OH, ANOTHER SMALL POINT I WANT TO GET CLEAR, YOU
5 MIGHT HAVE SAID THIS EARLIER, WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT
6 GERMAN JEWS TEND TO BE MORE GERMAN LIKE, I THINK YOU SAID
7 IT WAS YOUR MOTHER WHO WOULD OFTEN SAY TO YOU TO BE
8 CAREFUL NOT TO STAND OUT OR TALK TOO LOUD, IS THAT TRUE,
9 IN TERMS OF BEHAVIOR?

10 A. Yes. As Jews in Europe during World War II
11 wherever it was you did not try to draw attention to
12 yourself.

13 Q. AND YOUR MOTHER ADVISED YOU?

14 A. Yes, and my father. In Germany as well as in
15 Holland you did not try to draw attention to yourself
16 because there was so much dislike of Jews.

17 Q. ALTHOUGH I KNOW YOU DID SAY LAST TIME THAT YOU
18 REALLY DIDN'T FEEL ANY ANTISEMITISM COMING FROM THE
19 COMMUNITIES YOU LIVED IN?

20 A. No, personally not, except for one incident where a
21 kid had a concussion, you know.

22 Q. I'M NOT SURE --

23 A. It was in a Jewish summer camp, and kid from the
24 community started throwing stones at us, and one of the
25 kids got hit in the head and had a concussion.

26 But personally, my father had quite a few

1 incidents, but I personally did not, I was very lucky.

2 And once we were in Holland, except by the Dutch Nazis and
3 the German Nazis, but the Dutch population was generally
4 delightful, very helpful.

5 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY INCIDENTS OF A DUTCH NAZI OR
6 ANYONE --

7 A. We didn't know any. Only when we were arrested.
8 They were very cynical and very typical Nazis, called you
9 all kinds of names, you know, and laughed at your
10 weaknesses or whatever, very demeaning experience.
11 Treated you like animals. But they were Nazis.

12 Q. LAST TIME YOU MENTIONED THAT IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR
13 YOU WERE GOING TO A COMMEMORATION CEREMONY OR SOMETHING
14 THAT I THOUGHT YOU MENTIONED WAS AT THE LAST TRANSPORT.

15 A. I was invited. I didn't go.

16 Q. YOU DIDN'T GO?

17 A. They had -- after the war I found out that the
18 train I was on was referred to, I only found this out the
19 last few years, as the lost train because it was going
20 from one concentration camp to the other and never arrived
21 at the other one, so they referred to it as the lost
22 train.

23 And there was an article in the Jewish
24 bulletin somewhere that they were going to have a reunion
25 of the survivors, and they were going to a place where
26 they were liberated and set up a memorial to those who had

1 died on the train.

2 And I thought about it for a while, and I
3 don't remember anybody on the train except the two boys I
4 was friendly with. I've been trying to get in touch with
5 either one of them, so far no luck.

6 But so I didn't go. I wouldn't know
7 anybody there, so I didn't.

8 Q. (INAUDIBLE.)

9 A. No. No. I think it started in Israel and was
10 round trip for -- well, anybody could join it who wanted
11 to.

12 I went with my wife to east Germany two
13 years ago and went through the community. I couldn't
14 place anything, I didn't remember anything, it didn't make
15 any -- had no meaning to me at all.

16 We saw the Russian cemetery there of those
17 Russians who had died liberating the village or the town,
18 and that was it.

19 And I said to my wife, "There's nothing
20 here I remember. I can't find the house I lived in for
21 three months," or whatever it was until the Russians
22 liberated us, and -- I mean until the Americans came and
23 got us, so we went on.

24 It was in southern Germany, in the eastern
25 part of southern Germany. So it had no meaning, I thought
26 it would have some meaning, but I didn't recognize

1 anything.

2 Q. WHEN YOU WERE LIBERATED CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE
3 THOUGHTS OR THE FEELINGS OR THE EXPERIENCE, WHAT IT WAS
4 LIKE?

5 A. It was fantastic. I mean we didn't understand what
6 freedom meant. The S.S. had disappeared two days earlier.
7 I think I mentioned the train was guarded by the
8 (Heimver), elderly men with guns, who discarded their
9 uniform and disappeared into the woods. And then the
10 Russians appeared and they told us go.

11 Q. AFTER THESE OLDER GUARDS, AFTER THEY LEFT YOU JUST
12 STAYED THERE?

13 A. We didn't know, we were in these cars, we had no
14 idea they had left until we realized they left. We heard
15 shooting, and then we ventured out and we noticed no
16 guards. And the word spread, and we all left the train to
17 the nearest town, we were not far from a town, and the
18 first thought was food.

19 And I was by myself and I was walking, and
20 I -- there were large German farms, they had walls around
21 them and a courtyard inside. And I saw the gate open and
22 I walked in, and just as I walked in two Russians had put
23 the owner of the farm against the wall and shot him. They
24 told me that he had resisted their entrance. And the dog
25 was howling, his dog was howling, and he was lying there.

26 And then the Russians went through the

1 house and they found, I saw it with them, stacks of --
2 tons of stolen material from occupied countries; for
3 example, half a room full of tennis balls from France, and
4 goods that were stolen and hidden underneath in a cellar,
5 carpet was over it, and he had tried to protect it and
6 lost his life.

7 The Russians gave me food, and whatever
8 food I could find in the house I took.

9 And then we got together with about 60 or a
10 hundred people from the transport and moved to the nearest
11 village. And the Russians gave us --

12 Q. DID THEY TELL YOU TO MOVE TO A NEW VILLAGE?

13 A. I think so. I think so, because they gave us
14 ration cards in Russian where we could use the field
15 kitchens and get food at their -- the Russians moved very
16 fast, it was a very small contingent. The war wasn't over
17 yet, so they kept on moving in order to finish the war.

18 There was a small contingent left in the
19 little village not far from the town where we were
20 liberated, and that's where I stayed until the American
21 trucks came.

22 Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF HOW LONG IT WAS BETWEEN
23 GETTING OFF THE TRAIN, BETWEEN JUST HEARING THAT, WERE YOU
24 THERE ALL DAY?

25 A. No.

26 Q. A MONTH?

1 A. I think within an hour or so. I think because of
2 the shooting we all were curious what would happen. We
3 were afraid to leave because the guards would shoot you if
4 you -- so, you know, one ventures out and tries, and when
5 he finds the coast clear he tells the others, and so it
6 spreads very quickly. So then Russians treated us very
7 well.

8 Q. DID IT TAKE YOU AWHILE, TAKE YOUR BODY AWHILE TO
9 PHYSICALLY READJUST TO FOOD AND --

10 A. I don't remember that part. I remember I was weak,
11 and so was everybody else, extremely weak, we couldn't do
12 much physical work.

13 When I came back to Holland before they
14 allowed me in they gave me a physical, and I had TB, so I
15 was in bed for a few months and -- to recuperate. I have
16 a few holes in my lung, and -- but even then I -- took me
17 quite a long time to become -- get my physical strength
18 back I think. But with freedom and good food it helped.

19 Q. AFTER OUR LAST INTERVIEW DO YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS
20 OR FEELINGS ABOUT HOW IT AFFECTED YOU HAVING DONE THE
21 INTERVIEW, BECAUSE I KNOW YOU MENTIONED DURING THE
22 INTERVIEW THAT YOU REALLY HADN'T TALKED ABOUT IT FOR A
23 LONG TIME.

24 A. I had not. I hadn't even talked about being Jewish
25 for something like 40 years. Maybe as one is retired and
26 thinks over the past, his life, things become more

1 important that were important then.

2 I'm glad I did the interview because a year
3 from now it might be too late. My memory is going, my
4 health is going, who knows what happens. But I'm glad I
5 did it, to have it on record so that future generations
6 cannot say it didn't exist.

7 It did exist, and I think the testimony of
8 the survivors should be recorded, and I'm glad that I did
9 the interview.

10 Q. DID YOU SHARE IT WITH ANYONE, FRIENDS OR FAMILY?

11 A. I have shared it with a lot of people recently who
12 wanted to share it because somehow the newspaper in Marin
13 County got a hold of it and published my picture, and
14 people saw my picture, saw my short story, and they
15 stopped me, people on my street, John, I didn't know your
16 background, et cetera, et cetera. The butcher where I buy
17 my meat, the grocery people, people like that stopped me
18 and said, gee, I didn't know your background, John. But
19 encouraging and not curiosity as sympathy.

20 Q. SO DOES IT FEEL OKAY?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. FOR IT TO BE PUBLIC NOW?

23 A. Yes. I -- I feel good about it, and I -- naturally
24 those of us, many of us think about it frequently, but we
25 don't discuss it. Like you can't discuss hunger unless
26 you know what it is like and share it with somebody who

1 has the same feeling, it doesn't -- it has no
2 commonality.

3 So I belong to a group, I think I mentioned
4 it to you, where we discussed things that came out of it.

5 Are we different from other people? I
6 still haven't been able to answer that, but I -- the
7 group, maybe I mentioned this before, the group that I was
8 in most of us were making our living in the social
9 sciences, not in business, and that to me I think is not
10 an accident. I think that was chosen on purpose.

11 I think most of us came out of this
12 experience with a tremendous respect for other human
13 people, other human lives and people around us. I think
14 there are some who interpret it differently. But it is
15 what determined my way of making a living, of how I chose
16 to live my life, and it affected me differently.

17 Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THAT?

18 A. In a positive way. I think I became a liberal
19 thinker first of all, socially I'm conservative, human
20 relationships perhaps, but in politics I am very much of a
21 liberal and social, helping others who are not as
22 fortunate.

23 I am a liberal, and I think I am that way
24 because of my experiences, not because of my background.
25 My background is middle class conservative, neither my
26 mother or father ever expressed any feelings like this.

1 I also went to Berkeley, so maybe UC
2 Berkeley had some influence on me. I was 18, it's very
3 possible it added to it, but I -- I can only say that the
4 experiences I had made me into the person I am today.

5 I'm unhappy that the sufferings caused to
6 my people, but I am positive about my reaction to it.
7 That I am the person I am today may be mainly due to the
8 experiences and the way I interpret them.

9 And when I see Bosnia today I feel
10 terrible. I feel terrible that we are doing things to
11 each other today that we did 40, 50 years ago, that we
12 have not learned from them.

13 Whether we're discriminating against Jews,
14 Moslems, against Christians, it makes no difference, it's
15 still discrimination for something that people believe
16 in.

17 So I was a teacher, and I was happy that I
18 chose the teaching profession. I was not happy in the
19 business world.

20 And I never talked about this in the
21 classroom. While I was teaching neither my colleagues nor
22 my students ever knew about my background or about my
23 religion. I try to keep my personal life away from my
24 professional life.

25 Q. YOU MUST HAVE TALKED ABOUT WORLD WAR II AS A SOCIAL
26 STUDIES TEACHER?

1 A. I was a social studies teacher, but mostly politics
2 and economics, I didn't teach history but for one year
3 maybe at the most.

4 But I'm glad I did the interview. Thank
5 for giving me the opportunity.

6 Q. WE WERE VERY HAPPY THAT YOU DID THIS FOR US AND
7 THAT YOU CAME BACK A SECOND TIME AS WELL.

8 THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO ASK AT THIS TIME.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. ANYTHING ELSE YOU --

11 A. Nothing. Nothing to add.

12 Q. OKAY. GREAT. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR DOING THIS FOR
13 US.

14 A. You're welcome. And thank you, Sean.

15 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: You're welcome.

16 End of tape.

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