

OK. So you were saying about your mother's work.

Yeah. My father-- and I don't know exactly when that started, but he got a job in Brooklyn at a hospital for the aged. I mean, an old age home, we would say nowadays, where he worked as a male nurse. I mean, they didn't have the medical license so they-- he could work there. And I don't know exactly when he started and when he ended, but I guess he worked there until he passed his exam and could establish his office here.

Do you know when it was more or less of when he did pass the exam?

Now that's documentation I have-- I mean, I didn't bring it along, but this is available. I would say--

Just roughly.

I would estimate about a year and a half. So that would be somewhere in '42, I would say. Because in the meantime, I had come back from upstate New York after the summer. And I was going to, of course, look for a job as a waiter in New York City when coincidentally on my wife's birthday-- so I remember that day-- on September 25th, there was a dance of the Jewish Refugee Club, which was called the New World Club.

And we went to that dance. And there, my father encountered an ex-patient of his who unbeknownst to him had-- who had immigrated into America and established a factory for surgical instruments. And-- well, it was-- let's say it was a factory for scissors. It was taken over by the alien custodian. It was a German-- a branch of a German factory from Solingen, which is a German cutlery center. That was taken over by when alien property was taken over. And then they were available to Americans, and to manage, and then eventually to own.

And when the war started, they were switched over from cutlery to surgical instruments, which uses the same type of technology. So that-- the plant, it was running in New Jersey. And he apparently owed my father a lot of gratitude because his son had appendicitis and peritonitis back in Germany, and my father saved his life, and all that.

So that was great friendship. And he said, well, what's your son doing? And he said, well, my son is a waiter. He's going to look-- he's looking for a job as a waiter. And he said, well, is that what he really wants? And he says, no, he wants to be a mechanic or something. So he said, well, why doesn't he come to my factory and I'll give him a job as a toolmaker apprentice.

And so I became a toolmaker apprentice at this fellow's factory in New Jersey. And for a year, I commuted to New Jersey from New York on the Hudson tubes.

Yeah.

And then I finally-- it was again a matter of the family being together. So finally, I moved over to New Jersey for the other three years, four years altogether, because '44, I got married and I went to the Navy. So for one year I commuted and the other three years I lived in New Jersey. And learned my trade as a tool and die maker for three years. And then became a journeyman tool and die maker.

And so, now I remember this because this fellow also offered my-- to lend money to my father to open his medical practice. So I know that that must have happened around 1942, and maybe late '41, or early '42. And then I got engaged, which was in 1942. No, so it was late '41, because I remember when I told my father we got engaged to get married. So he was already-- so, anyway, it doesn't make that much difference.

And then we had a union election at the plant where I worked. And I voted for the union, so the boss said that he had threatened to call in my father's loan. And so that why I remember the time there.

How do he know you had voted for the union? Was it--

Oh, he had a spy in the union meeting.

Oh.

And--

Do you remember his name, this fellow?

I wasn't going to tell you that.

No?

Let's not talk about it. No, I mean-- Yes, I do.

Well, if you don't want to say, that's fine. So, obviously, all this time, you-- do you have any news in general from Germany? You can't communicate with anybody left there, I guess, by letter?

No. No. No, those doors were closed. And you know that, of course, there was lots of rumor. And now I know that my mother's mother died in the Theresienstadt before the war started. Because I remember that when we were in England-- just before we left England, I think-- she got news that my grandmother had died.

Now, there was no more mail from Germany because England and Germany were at war, but America was not at war. So Germany could correspond with America, and America with England. So since my uncle was in America, he heard about it. So she must have died in 1940.

So were you still able to write to anybody else by this method or not up to '41?

I don't recall that, no. I don't recall that. I think you mean until America got into the war?

Mm-hmm.

Well, I don't recall that.

Do you remember or do you know if your parents knew of the existence of the camps-- those early camps like Dachau. Right in '33, I think Dachau--

Well, we know, sure, because we know that the people who were arrested at Kristallnacht, you know, that were sent-- I think most of those went to Buchenwald. But yeah, sure, we knew of those camps. And at first, one thought, of course, they were only people who also had the political past that were taken to the camps. And then, of course, well, things became different and they were proven wrong.

And, of course, during the Kristallnacht, of course, thousands went there. And many of those came back, because many of them were released if their wives could procure immigration to somewhere. In fact, after I got out-- you see, I was only home for a couple of days, but there were people coming all the time. Did you see my husband? I mean, this is-- and, of course, some people I didn't know and some people, yes, I did see.

Was there any inkling or knowledge-- your father was in the medical profession-- of the medical moves towards euthanasia of like retarded people?

No, I think all this-- all this came out really after the war. I mean, mostly from German documentation. really. I mean, they had this huge exhibit that we saw in Berlin on this whole medical experimentation and forced sterilization, which, of course, not only concerned Jews to a large degree, but all criminals. I mean, many criminals were forcibly sterilized. I mean, a lot more people were-- had to undergo this sterilization situation, and individuals.

No, but I mean, I never talked to him about it, but I think that all that information really came out after the war, those things that wasn't available. I mean, nobody came out of there alive. So, no, I don't know.

Well, it certainly must have been a wonderful reunion for you to be with Suzanne again when you came.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

They were living in New York also?

Well, yes. In the meantime, of course, they also went through this process of getting their licenses. And of course, my father-in-law, he was working-- I mean, I don't have to tell you what she probably told you-- for another dermatologist, kind of ghostwriting, and ghostreading, and so on.

Yeah, but we were, of course, in close contact. But I remember certain things, like we were invited for dinner. I mean, they lived in Brooklyn and we lived in Manhattan. And it cost two nickels to go there. So it cost \$0.20 roundtrip. And for the family, that was \$0.80 roundtrip. And when we were invited for dinner, I remember that one time when my father said, it's cheaper for us to eat at home than to go to, and he said there's no money to go to Brooklyn.

I mean, that's the kind of- we couldn't afford the \$0.80 roundtrip for a family to go to Brooklyn. And \$0.80 less than what it would cost us to eat at home. So he said, you go.

Did you?

I don't know. I mean, I was-- in the beginning, I was making \$12 a week. And it cost me-- I assessed myself \$1 a day for food and it cost me \$4 a week for my room. And that's \$10. Then I had to go buy the transportation. I mean, there just wasn't anything left over. Then, we started working overtime, of course, during the war. And I got a nickel increase every three months.

Well, how did you and Suzanne get together?

Oh, we knew-- she knew that I was in transit. And she read the reports in the newspaper. They always tell you what ships arrived when. She said that you couldn't come to the boat. Hard to believe. That's why I told you anyway. But I don't recall exactly, but she probably does, how many days transpired, maybe telephone, but, I mean, whether it was the next day or the day after, or whatever.

But we were certainly both anxiously looking forward to being together. But, I mean, we didn't get married till-- we didn't get engaged till two years later. After all, when I came over here I was 18. And so I don't-- at that time, certainly didn't think of anything as permanent as all that.

Did you have much opportunity to get together after you got settled in New York?

Oh. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, maybe not the very first year. But it-- I would say that in-- certainly in the second year of our American sojourn here, our romance gained momentum and we spent weekends. I know that when I lived in Newark, I spent every weekend in New York because my parents lived here. So either we would-- I think I always took turns. Either I would Saturday nights spend with Suzanne and Sunday with my parents or vice versa.

And then she'd come up to my parents. And until a little bit later when we needed-- you know, we were aliens. So we needed travel permit to travel out of the city as aliens. And New York considered Newark, New Jersey to be part of the greater metropolitan area. But Newark did not consider New York to be part of Newark. So that meant that I needed a travel permit to go to New York, but she didn't need to travel permit to come to Newark.

So, first of all, it was big headache. I always had to travel-- get a travel permit from Trenton. Then, I finally prevailed on them to give me to have a permit that would last a month, or three months, whatever extended period. But then once it didn't come. So she came over to visit me for the weekend. Because we were still terribly, terribly concerned about the

letter of the law. Probably nobody would have ever caught us or bothered, but no.

The only time I broke the law was on our honeymoon. Because the travel permit never arrived on time for our wedding day. So I never told her till afterwards that we traveled on our honeymoon to Ellenville, New York without a travel permit. And nobody caught us.

I didn't realize you needed a travel permit from city to city.

Yeah. So those are some of the funny incidences of that period.

How did your parents adjust, say, from an emotional point of view?

My father and my mother were very different in their emotional constitution. First of all, they were different characters, different people. Secondly, my father had the profession. So his concerns were directed towards all different areas. I mean, whether it was studying for the exam, and all that, or whether later on was his professional concerns, it takes up a lot of your psychic energy.

If somebody sits home day in, day out, albeit stitching away on an embroidery, the only thing you think about is politics, the hardships, your own and everybody else's. So completely different.

My mother was absolutely paranoid when it came to listening to the radio. She will-- she would never listen to a news broadcast. She was absolutely hysterical about news. As soon as somebody turned the news on, she would run out of the room. She just could not confront reality when it came to politics and the war. I mean, that was completely impossible for her to--

So, she was very-- I mean, she was very, very volatile. She never had a breakdown or so, but she was very sensitive. She was very easy crying spells and so on. Now, of course, she went through a lot.

But my father's profession, I think, gave him-- first of all, as a surgeon you see a lot of suffering already in your line of work. So I think maybe that steels you a bit. I don't know. I mean, I can't psychoanalyze my father. I can just go by the symptoms. I mean, he-- as I said, he was completely unemotional.

He never-- I told you the time I came home from the police station was the one time I ever saw him cry. And he never showed any affection. I never saw him kiss my mother except for once. I mean, this was all done-- I'm sure it was done, but it wasn't done in public. I mean, he was a very, very reserved fellow. He never talked about his business fortunes, or whether he had a good week, or a bad week, or a good month, or a bad month.

My father-in-law was all different that way. But my father was terribly reserved. He would not mix family with business. He'd never talk business with family. And he probably never talked family with his patients. I mean, if somebody would have said to him in the office, "how is your wife?" he probably would have fainted.

But my mother was very much-- first of all, she was very much involved with singing, and art, and painting, and embroidery. I mean, after she didn't have to do it for a living anymore, she still did a lot of painting, and made some beautiful dolls, and things like that. So she loved to do it, sewing for her grandchildren and so on. So she loved to do manual things. But she was not a very-- I mean, intellectual, I wouldn't say that. She read a lot, but she was not terribly sophisticated.

But they had a very good relationship. It's just it was completely different. I mean, my father, certainly when I was a child, my father was the unquestioned boss of the family. There was no sharing of authority. Only once I remember that my mother couldn't prevail and she had to call my father to adjudicate the situation. That was a higher authority. I mean, there was no question about who was-- and he wasn't bossy, but it's more that she was submissive than it was he was bossy. I never heard him be bossy.

It's just his word was respected, unquestioned and respected. And he never raised his voice once. As far as I can

remember, all my life I never heard him raise his voice. He just said something very quietly. I know that-- and Sue could always tell you-- when he had a collision in New York with a taxi driver. I don't even know whose fault it was.

The taxi driver came out of the taxi, he waved, and then he ranted. And my father said, "Could you please give me your card?" And he said, here's my card. If you don't have yours, it's all right. When you quiet down, give me a call. And then he walked away. And the guy called him up in the afternoon and apologized all over himself.

But that's the way he was. He would never yell. He would never stoop down to the level of somebody else. He was very formal, very reserved. If Sue came calling or anybody came calling, he said, well, don't open the door yet, I have to put my jacket on. I want to-- and that was his future daughter-in-law.

So he was very much different from my father. But that wasn't your question, was it?

That was a good answer.

I just got--

The question--

--on rambling.

--how was their adjustment?

Yeah. Of course, it was-- they had-- they finally were able to work-- or my father was finally able to work himself back into his profession. And he had an income that sustained them comfortably, not luxuriously, but comfortably.

Unfortunately, they never lived long enough to enjoy some of the-- some of the fruit that they were-- they traveled a little bit on vacations, here to the Catskills or whatever, but never overseas or some of these. My mother died very early. But they survived the war and they had a, as I said, comfortable life.

Did they make social connections in New York?