

Interview with ARNOLD MILLHAUSER

Holocaust Oral History Project

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Q: MY NAME IS EVELYN FIELDEN. I'M AN INTERVIEWER WITH THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HOLOCAUST CENTER IN SAN FRANCISCO. TODAY'S THE 20TH OF JUNE, AND I'M HERE WITH ARNOLD MILLHAUSER IN THE TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL JUDEA. GOOD MORNING, ARNOLD, HOW ARE YOU?

A: Good morning.

Q: CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

A: I was born in Augsburg, Germany, the Southern part of Germany, not too far from Munich, on September 15, 1906.

Q: AND YOUR PARENTS HAVE LIVED THERE FOR A LONG TIME?

A: Oh, yes, yes, very long. Both of my parents came from little communities near my home town. My father came from Krumbach, and my mother from Ochsenhausen. Both had, especially Ochsenhausen, had large Jewish community before Hitler came into power, and for many years. I don't know how many, a couple of hundred years.

Q: SO THAT'S IN BAVARIA, RIGHT?

A: That's Bavaria, yes.

Q: DID YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A: I had a brother. He came out, too, even before me.

Q: IS HE AN OLDER BROTHER?

A: Pardon me?

Q: AN OLDER BROTHER?

A: An older brother, yes, one year older than I. But he died in '67.

Q: YOU WENT TO SCHOOL IN AUGSBURG?

A: I went to school in Augsburg. Elementary school, and, well, what you call high school. I was through with my formal schooling at the age of 16.

Q: WAS THAT HIGH SCHOOL YOU GRADUATED FROM?

A: Pardon?

Q: WAS IT HIGH SCHOOL YOU GRADUATED FROM?

A: Well, they call it, well, either middle school or high school, whatever, yeah. I found out the intensive training, or schooling, I had there compared very easily with not only high school but also probably college.

Q: I UNDERSTAND YOU ALSO HAD SCHOOL ON SATURDAY, DIDN'T YOU?

A: No, no, that was all the schooling I had.

Q: NO, I MEAN ON SATURDAY YOU WENT TO SCHOOL.

A: I'm a little hard of hearing.

Q: OH, OKAY, WELL, I CAN SPEAK UP A BIT.

A: And I have a hearing aid which I don't like to use very much because it's a nuisance.

Q: WELL, I CAN SPEAK UP A BIT IF THAT HELPS YOU.

A: That would help, yes, if you can.

Q: YES, I CAN.

A: So I don't need to use it.

Q: ALRIGHT, NO.

A: Alright, very good.

Q: OKAY. NOT TOO PLEASANT SOMETIMES, IS IT, TO USE IT?

A: I don't use it very much.

Q: WERE YOUR PARENTS VERY ORTHODOX, RELIGIOUS?

A: They were not. But both of my grandparents were. It's a fact my grandfather from father's side, I remember, he was too busy to pray all day and didn't have time for anything else. He went to temple early in the morning, came back at noontime, and evening, and so on. He was very Orthodox.

Q: BUT YOUR FATHER WAS NOT, OR YOUR MOTHER?

A: No, neither. They were, more or less, not quite as much, until World War I. Shortage of food, I remember, when they rationed us so that the only meat they could get was pork, which they never have eaten before. And they were rather surprised how good it tasted. So I remember that quite well.

Q: DID YOU GO TO AVERAGE GERMAN SCHOOL OR DID YOU GO TO A JEWISH SCHOOL?

A: German school.

Q: OH, GERMAN SCHOOL. DID YOU HAVE MANY JEWISH FRIENDS?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: WERE YOU ACTIVE IN JEWISH COMMUNITY AFFAIRS?

A: Yes, in later years. Later years (laughing). There was when Hitler came in power the Jews were segregated from the rest of the population, more or less, and they formed their own sports club. I was active there, and taking care of the younger ones and so on. That was only for a very short time.

Q: BUT YOU WERE IN AUGSBURG WHEN HITLER TOOK POWER IN '33, WERE YOU?

A: No.

Q: YOU'RE NOT?

A: No.

Q: WHERE WERE YOU?

A: I was in a little town in the Black Forest by the name of Pforzheim. And I worked for a concern which was like a five and dime. I was the assistant manager there. It was a big chain of five and dimes. They were practically all over Germany. Their name was E.H.P. I was there at the time Hitler came in power. Shortly after, several months after Hitler came in power, we Jewish employees were given the option. Either to quit and get a compensation from the company, or we remained

with the company until such time where they have to let us go. Obviously the big shots there knew more than we knew.

Well, I took the option of leaving right away at that time, which was in August, '33, I remember. And I came back to Augsburg.

Q: THE COMPANY YOU WORKED FOR WAS NOT OWNED BY JEWS?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: IT WAS.

A: Yes. The name of the outfit was a subsidiary of Leon Hart Tietz, in Kirm. That's a large company. And so, that's where it was.

Q: SO YOU WENT BACK TO AUGSBURG TO YOUR...

A: Yes, to my parents.

Q: TO YOUR PARENTS. WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO IN AUGSBURG?

A: My father actually was a banker. He was a partner in a banking firm with another Jewish partner, and when he was drafted in World War I into the German army, and his partner, too, they had to sell out to a larger bank in Germany, Dresner Bank. After that, he was the bank manager, after World War I, the bank manager of a chain of banks and for several years. Also that venture there he had to give up, this bank was taken over by a larger bank, the Deutscher Bank. The bank manager there was anti-

(Semitic, and he refused to work there alongside a Jewish banker. So that was that. My father did not want to stretch the point. He probably could have won, but it would have been a rather unpleasant way of working.

After that he started his own small business of having an agency for packing material, and so on. That was his business then, when I came back to Augsburg.

Q: THAT WAS IN 1934?

(A: That was in 1933. The same time I got in touch with an uncle of mine, a brother of my mother's, who had been in the United States for quite a number of years. He lived in Fresno, California, so I asked him to furnish an affidavit for me, which he did. An affidavit to enter the United States. And I came to Fresno in 1934 then.

Q: DID YOU DISCUSS WITH YOUR PARENTS YOUR IMMIGRATION, AND DID THEY INTEND TO IMMIGRATE ALSO?

A: They sure did want to come over here, and never succeeded.

Q: BUT THE UNCLE YOU HAD IN FRESNO...

A: Yeah.

Q: WAS HE NOT WILLING TO GIVE AN AFFIDAVIT TO YOUR PARENTS?

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(A: More than willing, he was more than willing. He and my mother were very close, they corresponded all these years, while he was here in this country and she is still in Germany. But, it's a long story. There were three times were very close, wanted to come...The first time, my uncle needed a person to back him up financially for the affidavit. He did find a wealthy man in Fresno for my parents. That was at a time where the, Cuba affair was, that means all the mail and everything was, airmail, was not possible to get across, and wrongly my uncle was advised by the Postmaster in Fresno to send the mail regular mail, surface mail. It took several months, three or four months, to get from the United States over there. By that time, the affidavit was outdated.

(So we started all over again. And the second time, I know he had to make several trips to San Francisco from Fresno. At that time I was in St. Helena. I came to take out time from work and we met here and we had a lawyer and we went to the Jewish Agency here to, and, what went wrong that time...Oh yes, we met Mr. Tregelborf. Maybe you never heard of him, he was very active in Jewish affairs here, in San Francisco. He was flabbergasted when my uncle said no he cannot furnish the affidavit anymore. Later on I found out was his wife who said no, no more. I could

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(not understand it at the time. I found out later through his son that was the case.

Then it was pretty late, the early 40s I believe, that we tried a third time. At that time a cousin of mine who came out of Germany with me, and he had a salesman's job. He backed me up, there always has to be somebody to back you up who has some finances. This was, we don't know what happened, whether my parents ever got it or not. But it was rather weak case, and subsequently my parents had to go to Theresienstadt, and from Theresienstadt on the last, what do you call it...

(Q: TRANSPORT?

A: Transport, yes. They left Theresienstadt for Auschwitz, where they perished of course.

Q: WHEN DID YOU FIND THAT OUT?

A: After the war.

Q: AND WHERE?

A: Where I was at the time?

Q: NO, WHERE DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?

(A: See, there were, maybe you heard of a German-Jewish paper by the name of Aufbau? There they reported all the people who survived the

camp. My parents were not there listed. I did inquiring there, and well, let's see now, it was confirmed that they left on that particular transport by people who left with this transport. Also, I kept in touch with a Rabbi who came also to the United States, but he was Rabbi in, wait a moment, I can't figure the name, in the Middle West, somewhere in Missouri, and, anyway, kept in touch with him, and he found out too what happened to Jews in Germany.

Q: YOUR PARENTS STAYED IN AUGSBURG ALL THAT TIME TILL THEY WERE PICKED UP?

A: Yeah.

Q: DID YOU LIVE IN AN APARTMENT IN AUGSBURG?

A: Yes.

Q: AND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BROTHER? WHEN DID HE LEAVE?

A: Well, he left in '29, long before Hitler. Yes. For Canada. He came also to, my uncle was successful to get him into the United States from Canada. He was in Fresno for awhile, and then he in San Francisco also. He wasn't very well. He had asthma. So, anyhow, that was my brother. And he could not be instrumental at all because he, the Depression, he had no money, nothing.

Q: WHAT MADE HIM LEAVE SO EARLY?

A: He worked in, he was a Zionist, and he worked on farms. At one time, I was told he drove a team of horses all across Berlin, from one end to the other.

Q: FORGIVE ME LAUGHING, BUT IT SOUNDS VERY STRANGE.

A: He was a little bit of the black sheep of the family, let's call it that way.

Q: BUT HE DID NOT LEAVE BECAUSE HE FORSAW...?

A: No he did not. No.

Q: DID YOU EVER DISCUSS WITH YOUR PARENTS YOUR IMMIGRATION, AND DID THEY PUT ANY OBSTACLES IN YOUR WAY OR DID THEY ENCOURAGE YOU?

A: Yes, of course they encouraged me. Yes, very much so. As a fact, they financed my trip, I didn't have enough money. That's quite expensive. You can't just leave and, in addition, you were limited to what you could take along.

Q: WHAT COULD YOU TAKE ALONG?

A: You mean in dollars and cents? I forgot, it was very little.

Q: WAS IT ABOUT TEN MARKS?

A: Yes, something like it.

Q: DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN 1933 AND 1934 IN GERMANY?

A: Yes, of course, it got tighter and tighter.

Q: WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THAT A BIT?

A: Well, I can't say too much there. At that time, really, it was not too bad. We were, at least I was optimistic. I thought it would blow over. And took quite some persuasion by my parents, especially my father, who saw the handwriting on the wall, to make me leave Germany. Of course the idea was that I leave and lay the groundwork here for them to follow me. Unfortunately, it did not pan out.

Q: HOW BIG AN EXTENDED FAMILY DID YOU HAVE IN AUGSBURG?

A: What do you mean by extended?

Q: UNCLES AND AUNTS AND COUSINS...

A: Yeah. Well, there was in Augsburg directly there was an uncle of mine, brother of my father's, who also went to Theresienstadt. He lived through all this, came out back to Augsburg after the war, and through his son came to New York after the war. The uncle was pretty nearly blind. I don't know if he got preferential treatment there because he was an

(officer in the German Army, something rather unusual. He, I understand in World War I, commanded an outfit which was surrounded by the French at that time, and because he spoke French fluently, he was able to keep that outfit from getting each and every one killed. He was taken prisoner, he was in French prison for a couple of years, I believe, and while he was an exchange officer in Switzerland towards the end of World War I, he taught at the University of Basel where a experiment. He was specialist in chemics, and he taught chemistry there, an experiment blew in his face and he lost eyesight of one eye, and subsequently the other eye was affected too. So he was pretty nearly blind when he went to the camp.

Q: TO THERESIENSTADT?

A: To Theresienstadt, yeah.

Q: DID HE HAVE FAMILY WITH HIM THERE?

A: His wife, yes, who died in Theresienstadt. His son came over here with, he is now living down Los Angeles, and he's active as a fundraiser and director of City of Hope. You know that?

Q: OH YES.

A: He's a fine fellow.

Q: DID YOU, AFTER HE CAME OUT OF THERESIENSTADT, AND WHEN

YOU MET HIM AGAIN, DID HE TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES THERE IN THE CAMP?

A: Who?

Q: YOUR UNCLE.

A: Uncle...he came to New York, I lived here in California. He died shortly after he came to New York.

Q: SO YOU NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN?

A: I never saw him.

Q: SO HOW MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR WHOLE FAMILY WOULD YOU ESTIMATE HAVE DIED IN THE HOLOCAUST?

A: Many, that's all I can say offhand. I should have brought it along. A man by the name of Gernot Roemer, that sounds like a pretty much like a Nazi name, this man was very sympathetic to the Jews. He wrote a book. He did extensive research on the families in Augsburg, specially in the whole area of Shwabin, which Augsburg is...

Q: SWABIA, HUH?

A: Yeah. And he even brought a, I have a picture at home, of the whole family which was assembled at the grandparents' golden wedding anniversary, back in 1923. And I furnished that Mr. Roemer that published

(the book, with that picture, which he subsequently showed in his book, and indicated who survived and who did not and what the relationship was. So offhand I cannot tell you how many.

Q: I WISH YOU HAD BROUGHT THE BOOK ALONG.

A: I wish I had too. I intended to. There are several books which either he or somebody else wrote about the Jewish families. But of course the trouble is they're all in German, I don't know if you speak German.

Q: YES.

(A: So, that's...well, that's all I can tell you. Now, I don't have it on me, there's one thing I took along. A picture which I took with a, foolishly, with a small, very miniature camera which I held in my hand, and while still in Pforzheim, with a P, there was a Nazi standing in front of the store passing out literature not to come into the store, and another one taking pictures of people who, in spite of this, went into the store. I took this picture, I found it for the longest time I didn't know where I had it. Somehow this morning I ran across it.

Q: HOW SHOULD HE HOLD IT, JOHN? LIKE IN HIS HAND? CAN YOU FOCUS?

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Q: (By camera operator) WHY DON'T YOU HOLD IT EVELYN, AND THEN WHY DON'T YOU HOLD IT A LITTLE CLOSER, RIGHT THERE, AND I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.

Q: IT'S A VERY SMALL PICTURE.

Q: (By camera operator) WHAT IS THAT A PICTURE OF AGAIN?

A: This is a Nazi Storm Trooper passing out literature, urging people not to enter the store. And another one is facing me with a camera, taking pictures of people who went into the store in spite of it.

Q: (By camera operator) GREAT, OKAY WE'VE GOT THE PICTURE, VERY NICE.

Q: I'D LIKE TO LOOK AT IT. THAT WAS VERY CLEVER OF YOU, TO TAKE THE PICTURE.

A: No, I took too much of a chance.

Q: YOU DID, YES.

A: I didn't know it at the time.

Q: AND YOU KEPT IT WITH YOU ALL THOSE YEARS.

A: Yes, and I didn't know where I kept it, so this morning I went through my picture album there and maybe it's there, and sure enough, there it was.

Q: GOOD FOR YOU. HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO YOUR HOME TOWN?

A: Three years ago, for the first time after 53 years of absence. Augsburg got heavily bombed out, I believe between 40 and 50 percent of the city was destroyed or damaged. And they did a terrific job of restoring all the things. For instance, the Rathaus, which was quite an edifice, was bombed out. There was one, Goldener Saal, oh God, that was the pride of the whole community then because it was built during the Renaissance years, three, four hundred years ago. They are still restoring it, most of it has been restored already. Fantastic.

Now we got invited, rather I, and my wife came along, by the city, the Burgermeister, and we went there, three years ago. It was a very, very peculiar feeling I had. For instance, well, there's too much I can say, but the most remarkable thing was the synagogue was restored at considerable...

Q: EXPENSE?

A: Expense, to the city. Millions of dollars, or marks. And so we proudly were shown through the synagogue, and most of it is now a museum of Jewish artifacts. They used the temple now for having concerts there, lectures on the Holocaust, and so on. It's really something.

Well, while we were there, we were shown a large room, maybe twice or three times the size of this here, a social room, adjacent or part of the temple complex. And they said a Christian man furnished all the furniture. That man is in the furniture business in Augsburg. So I inquired, who is he? Robert Hummel. Lived in the house not only where I grew up, I grew up with Robert. So, it was really touching.

Q: SOUNDS AMAZING.

A: We called up, and we had to go over there to see him and his wife, who grew up in the same neighborhood. We had to go there twice, even though we had only ten days for the whole trip. We spent some few days in Munich.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY BITTERNESS IN YOU WHEN YOU WENT OVER THERE?

A: Yes and no. I was quite ambivalent, the feeling I had, especially the older generation. But you cannot lump them all together, like for instance, Robert Hummel. He was in the German Army, he told us if he was told he has to guard one of the top Nazis as a soldier, he refused, and as such he was sent to the Russian front, where he contracted some ailment which he has not recovered yet when we saw him. So, anyhow, you

can't imagine a person who does these things was not a Nazi, but he was in the German Army, so you cannot say they are all alike. So that's what happened.

Q: DID YOU FIND SOME OTHER PEOPLE IN AUGSBURG, SOME OLD SCHOOL FRIENDS, OR MATES?

A: No. We were dined and wined by the Oberburgermeister, and there was a big reception at the Rathaus, and there were only half a dozen people there who were invited together with us. Incidentally, a cousin of mine who lives in Jerusalem, Israel, came there too.

Q: SAME TIME AS YOU?

A: Same time, was invited also. He was born in Augsburg, however, he didn't remember a thing because his parents moved away when he was but an infant. But still, he and his wife were there too. The other few people there came from outlying districts. As a fact, I was the only one who came from Augsburg direct, and remembered everything from years past. The others were younger, too. And...I got off my subject...Oh yes, at the reception, something very peculiar happened to me. I did not feel comfortable to speak in German after these many years, and to express myself properly. So when I had to give the speech to the

Oberburgermeister and the others that were there, I gave it in English, and I had a lady translate. Can you picture that? So, this is what happened there.

Q: IT IS, I'M SURE, NOT THAT YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN GERMAN.

A: No, I have not forgotten it.

Q: YOU WERE JUST NOT COMFORTABLE IN IT.

A: I was not comfortable speaking. I had no problem understanding, there's no problem there.

Q: IT'S BEEN SO MANY YEARS FOR YOU.

A: Yes, over 50 years. And while my wife came from Germany, too, she was born in Salzburg. But, France, she came in on a French visa. But she spent most of her adult life, or rather her teenage life, in Berlin. And we don't speak German at all, no.

Q: DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

A: Had. One boy. Died three years ago.

Q: I'M SORRY.

A: At the age of 37, just about this time. He died on June 2. His birthday would have been the 26th.

Q: I'M VERY SORRY TO HEAR THAT. WHEN YOU WERE IN GERMANY,

DID YOU GO TO ANY OF THE FORMER CAMPS?

A: To what camps?

Q: TO THE FORMER CAMPSITES.

A: We had ten days, of which we spent eight days in Augsburg, two days in Munich. We saw signs reading Dachau, but we didn't get to it.

Q: THAT WAS THE ONLY TIME YOU'D BEEN BACK TO GERMANY?

A: Yes.

Q: DID YOU TRAVEL IN EUROPE BEFORE THAT?

A: No.

Q: NEVER.

A: Never.

Q: YOU SPENT YOUR VACATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: Yes. Once we went to Mexico, and Canada. My brother-in-law and wife live in Victoria, British Columbia, so we went there repeatedly. And once we went down to Mexico. But otherwise, just life here in the United States, and otherwise we didn't leave the continent here.

Q: LET US GET BACK A LITTLE BIT TO 1934, WHEN YOU LEFT GERMANY. YOU WENT TO THE UNITED STATES, RIGHT, TO CALIFORNIA, RIGHT AWAY?

A: Yeah.

Q: YOU DID NOT GO STOP IN NEW YORK?

A: Yes, for a few days. By train, I want you to know, at that time.

Q: SO, WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE LIKE THEN WHEN YOU CAME TO CALIFORNIA?

A: Well, it was not the way it is now. In many ways it was different. First of all, I have to do manual labor in Fresno. I worked in a lumber yard, handling, well, lumber, and roofing paper and such. And after that, well, something very peculiar which I wasn't used to. I see some insincerity there. I worked there one year, and comes Christmas, I got a very nice form letter which I didn't realize it was a form letter, from the owners of that lumber yard and hardware store that they were very satisfied with me and so on so forth, and praising me and what have you. And a few days later I got laid off. It didn't make sense. But that's the way it was handled at the time, and I found out it was nothing but a form letter.

So I had to look around for a job, I took on odd jobs in Fresno. I remember at one time I worked in Montgomery Ward, believe it or not, for a few days. They had a special sale in shoe sale, I knew nothing about the

shoes...But anyhow, I got the job because I knew somebody there.

Then I got a job with a five-and-dime, W.T. Grant, it was a big chain in this country too. They had a teenage fellow do the windows, trimming the windows, I knew nothing about window trimmings at that time, because that was done in Germany, well I worked in a five-and-dime there, it was done by some specialists in window trimming. Alright, I pretended I knew window trimming. Well, found out that the man who did the window trimming before me was a man in his thirties who worked there for about two, three months. After that he lost about ten or twenty pounds, he couldn't do it any more because he worked too many hours. Mind you, that was before unions and what have you.

And I worked that many hours, too. That means about 12, 14, 16 hours a day. You have no idea. And \$15.00 a day. \$15.00 a week, beg your pardon, \$15.00 a week. I remember the first Sunday I wanted to, I was looking forward to resting up. I got a call from the company, I should come down, they had a fire in the basement where my workplace was. So I worked that very Sunday, too. And without extra pay, I want you to know.

Anyhow. One day I got a free ride with one of my uncle's suppliers from Fresno to San Francisco, and I figured I go and get the ride, take

(advantage of the situation just for one day, to see if I could land a job in San Francisco. And I made calls all along Market Street. And of course I didn't land a job. Among other things I...was also J.J. Newberry's, which is also a five-and-dime, I called on. I got ahold of the manager there, and he told me, well, we can't, we have a window trimmer already, we don't need any now. But I write your book in my little book, notebook. He wrote my address in his notebook.

Two months later I get a registered mail from San Francisco, stating that they had, a job is open now. I can get a job if I can start right away. I was out of a job in Fresno. Pay's \$22, I got \$15, it was, boy. Needless to tell you, I took on that job. And I lasted for quite awhile there, for about year and half, two. When I found out through that manager that he was forced to let me go because the man above him told him, we don't want to employ any Jews. So I lost the job. And what happened was, at the boarding house where I lived at the time, up on Buena Vista Park, was a lady who was the secretary to the man in charge of, she worked for Butler Brothers. Ever heard of Butler Brothers?

A: PAPER?

Q: Not paper, no. Butler Brothers was much bigger than the paper

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house. They had, main place was in Chicago, immense building, take up several blocks. One in Texas, another one in, well, anyway. Was one in California, was here in San Francisco. She worked for the man in charge of opening five and dimes. Butler Brothers was behind, a wholesale house, big wholesale house. So I called on him, and he found out they are opening a store in St. Helena. That's how I got there. And first question was, where is St. Helena? It was not known. To get up there, I had to take a ferry from the Ferry Building to Vallejo, and a train, an electric train, went from Vallejo up to Calistoga, through the main street of St. Helena. Shortly thereafter it was discontinued.

I got the job with a Mr. Goodman, Goodman's Department Store. They were in, there were two brothers who had that department store, and one of the brothers decided to open a five and dime right next to it. And it was my good fortune that the man who was supposed to open that five and dime was an alcoholic and unreliable, and he didn't show up. So they needed a man very quickly. That was me. So it was I stayed there for four years.

Q: WERE THE GOODMANS JEWS?

A: Yes, fortunately.

Q: I HAVE ONE QUESTION. COMING BACK TO YOUR JOB IN SAN FRANCISCO, WHEN YOU WERE, THEY LET YOU GO BECAUSE YOU WERE JEWISH. HOW DID THEY KNOW YOU WERE JEWISH?

A: That's a very good question. I don't know. They, I don't know. I do remember there was a janitor at that place with whom I was quite friendly to start out with. Somehow in the conversation I must have mentioned to him that I was Jewish. From there on he was the opposite. Same happened to me in the army, too. I spent about close to three years in the army. I had my basic training down at Camp Roberts, and there became good friends, I thought, with a fellow. And somehow I must have mentioned too I was Jewish. He was one of the worst anti-Semites. But I didn't know it. Of course, he didn't know that I was Jewish to start off with. But these are the things one runs into.

Q: WHAT YEAR DID YOU GO IN THE ARMY?

A: In 42, '42. And I got out in '45.

Q: YOU WERE NOT SENT OVERSEAS?

A: No, the time I was scheduled to go overseas, the war ended. I was stationed for two and a half years at Camp Richie in the State of Maryland. It was the only military intelligence training center. You might

(have heard of it.

Q: THERE WERE ALOT OF PEOPLE WHO WERE FOREIGN BORN, RIGHT?

A: Yes, that's right. I think Kissinger went through Richie, too. A good many others.

Q: SO HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN ST. HELENA?

A: Four years.

Q: WHAT AT THAT TIME, THEY DID NOT HAVE A SYNAGOGUE, OF COURSE, OR A JEWISH COMMUNITY?

A: No, no, nothing at all. There were two Jewish families there. One was the Goodman, well, two brothers. One had a family, an adopted daughter. He was married to a Christian. The other was married to a Jewish woman who died many years before I got there. Then the postmaster by the name of Joe Golusky was Jewish. Yeah. And I remember he usually jokingly, when people came in, he had a stationery store and the post office was in his building there, that's the way it was at the time. And I remember overhearing say he was very well liked, always, when they came in his store, and say "Goodbye, see you in church!" Always said that. He was a very good, well-liked man.

Q: YOU DID NOT ENCOUNTER ANY ANTI-SEMITISM THERE IN ST.

HELENA?

A: No, no, not at all.

Q: WERE YOU AT THE TIME A PRACTICING JEW, DID YOU HAVE A
DESIRE TO GO TO TEMPLE, TO SHUL?

A: To tell you the truth, to me always was a drag.

Q: WHERE DID YOU HAVE YOUR BAR MITZVAH?

A: In Augsburg.

Q: SO YOU WERE FOUR YEARS IN ST. HELENA?

A: Yes.

Q: WHY DID YOU LEAVE?

A: The war broke out in '41. Pearl Harbor Day. I made considerably more money here in San Francisco than up in St. Helena. They were looking for people to work in shipyards. Well, I was making \$25.00 a week there, as managing a small five and dime, as a first warehouseman at Butler Brothers. They were down on Howard and Fremont Streets, the building still stands. I was making easily twice as much money, with overtime, three times as much money. And from there I worked in a shipyard. That's why I moved away from St. Helena.

Q: DID YOU GO TO HUNTER'S POINT?

A: No. I worked three shifts at Marin Ship, Sausalito.

Q: WERE YOU AT THAT TIME, EVEN BEFORE THAT TIME, REALLY, IN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR PARENTS?

A: At what time?

Q: LET'S SAY BEFORE THE WAR STARTED?

A: Of course. Weekly. Even though the letters took, I don't know, two weeks to get from here to there. Communications were not what they are now, one forgets. For instance, to come over here, took about two weeks or longer. Travel from Augsburg to Fresno, two or three weeks travel time. From New York to, we landed in, I came with a cousin of mine, we landed in Los Angeles, took eight days or ten days. Now it takes about eight hours. See, one forgets about these things.

Q: CAN YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU STOPPED HEARING FROM YOUR PARENTS, WHEN THERE WERE NO MORE LETTERS?

A: Yes, must have been in '41, of course, when we entered the war.

Q: SO THEN YOU WENT INTO THE ARMY WHEN THE WAR BROKE OUT. YOU GOT DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY?

A: Oh yeah, I got drafted, oh yes.

Q: HOW LONG DID YOU SPEND, THE ARMY, YOU SAID '45?

A: Yeah, 33 months. I got discharged in September, '45, and I went in the army in November, '42. So about 33 months. I got discharged because of my age. They let the older ones go first. At that time I was 39 years old. Which is pretty old now, looks like a young kid, you know, 39 years.

Q: WERE YOU MARRIED THEN?

A: No, got married the year after. To be exact on my 40th birthday. Still married.

Q: GOOD FOR YOU. WHERE DID YOU GO WHEN YOU LEFT THE ARMY?

A: San Francisco. I came back to San Francisco and have been living here ever since.

Q: WHAT DID YOU DO THEN, WHEN YOU CAME BACK?

A: Well, first I got a job with with Foster and Kleiser, you know, outdoor advertising firm. Those big billboards?

Q: RIGHT, RIGHT.

A: And what I did there was silkscreen printing. We made big signs in large quantities. Well, there's a certain way, a process, I learned silkscreen printing there. After that I worked for an outfit, a display

(outfit, we were building displays. And then I thought, what the heck, I could try window displays, since I did some freelancing on the side, oh wait a minute. I'm ahead of my story. I got a job with Hare Brothers on Market Street in the display department. And I worked on a printing machine and did some hand lettering and so on, I picked that up along the way. And then did some window trimming on the side, freelance, on weekends for primarily drug stores. Did that for awhile, my wife was helping me then. We figured well, we can start out on our own, full-time, let's see what happens. So we did some window trimming here and there and everywhere. And relation who was in the real estate business approached me, you make me some signs, the ones they put on houses, for sale signs, for rent, and what have you. And I said I'm not equipped to do that, I'm not handling that are needing quantity. Well, make me 25. I said, my God, so I figured all right, that was my first customer. I bought a screen and the frame and the paint, and I did a poor job for him, very poor, but he was satisfied.

And that was the beginning of our own business, which we had for over, for some 20 odd years, making signs for real estate people in quantity. Not only 25, but 50, 100. At one time we got an order for 500,

(we made it. We started out in our basement where we lived. And then we bought a place on 9th Avenue between Irving and Lincoln Way, where we had it for over 20 years. And we not only made real estate signs, we did some reproduction of fine art work, and point of purchase advertising, and so on. So, then we sold our business and I'm retired now.

Q: THAT'S A WONDERFUL SUCCESS STORY. IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE ESSENTIALLY SELF-TAUGHT, YOU AND YOUR WIFE, RIGHT? YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M...?

(A: Oh yeah. Well, she did mostly taking care of the office work, also she did some printing too, some screen printing. At one time I remember I was out, went up to Calistoga, she got a rush order for some signs, real estate signs. She knew enough to do that on her own. And I think I still see some of those signs around. Well, anyway.

Q: I HAVE ANOTHER QUESTION, GOING BACK A LITTLE BIT. WHEN DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT ABOUT CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY?

(A: Oh, while in the army. Through the Aufbau. I'm pretty sure, I couldn't tell a hundred percent, but I think that's how I found out. But we never knew of what actually took place there until long after the war, and you know that too, I'm pretty sure.

Q: YOU FIND THAT STRANGE?

A: Very.

Q: DO YOU GO TO TEMPLE NOW?

A: Yes, occasionally.

Q: DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: IN SPITE OF ALL WHAT HAPPENED.

A: Yeah.

Q: LET'S TAKE A LITTLE BREAK.