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1997, we're at the Holocaust Oral History Project of 400 Bernard Street in San Francisco, California. We're interviewing Gunter Ullman. My name is Peter Ryan, one of the interviewers. Elizabeth Ryan is another. And Maurice Harris is doing the cinematography. Could we begin by you telling us where and when you were born?

I was born in Mannheim, Germany, on September the 5th, 1922.

And how many were in your family, Gunter?

My parents and my brother. There were four of us.

Is your brother older or younger?

My brother is one year younger than I am.

And could you describe a little about the living conditions of the family?

Well, we were a well-to-do family. My grandfather founded a machine tool wholesale establishment. And he had two sons, my father and my father's brother. And they both opened branch offices of plants in-- two, one in Cologne and one in Mannheim.

And my father had the one in Mannheim. We had a big warehouse. We had our own rail connections. We were situated on the Rhine River and had our own dock for freighters to dock. And it was quite an operation covering the whole of Europe.

What was the product?

Machine tools.

Machine tools?

They are new and used. They bought up whole factories, dismantled them, or fitted them. So it was a fairly large corporation.

So your father got the factory in Mannheim and then his--

It wasn't a factory.

--brother, the one in Cologne?

Yeah. It was a warehouse. Yeah.

And what kind of housing did you have?

We lived in a-- at the time I was born, we lived in-- it was a two-flat house. We had the upper flat. We had, I think it was, two bedrooms, kitchen, two rooms for the servants, and a living room, dining room; what they had at that time, a salon, which is a-- I don't know what you call it here-- and another room which my father used as an office when he was at home.

We had an automobile, a car. There was a chauffeur. We had a maid. And we had a nurse for my brother and myself till we were about six years old.

And in terms of schooling, what did you do?

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I went to elementary school. I skipped the second grade. And after three years, I entered the Realgymnasium, which is a prep school for college.

And how did it come about that you skipped a grade?

I guess I-- at that time, I was smarter than I am now.

[LAUGHTER]

And yeah, I only stayed there for three years then. By that time, we were thrown out of school. So I only finished three years of the college prep school.

What year would that have been?

That would have been 1935, maybe 1936. Because after that, for two years, I went to a Jewish school. 1935, I would say.

So you went to an elementary school for?

Three years.

Three years. And then you went to this prep school. And you were in that school how long?

Three years.

Three years?

Mm-hmm.

And in the neighborhood that you lived in, was it an integrated neighborhood? Was it a Jewish neighborhood? What?

It was-- no, it was not a Jewish neighbourhood. Mannheim was a population of about 250,000 people. And I think the Jewish population was about 3,000.

Very small?

Very small.

Was the school you went to originally well-integrated with the Jewish kids and--

Oh, yeah, yeah.

--Gentile kids? In about the same proportion?

No, the Jews were always in the minority. Well, I think in my class, it was a class of about 30. And there were about four or five Jews in that class.

Did you have friends, both among Jews and Gentiles?

Not really. Most of our friends were Jewish.

Did you have a religious family?

Not really. We were proud of being Jews. But we were what they called in German, liberal. We went three times a year

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to synagogue.

Describe a little what it was like for you in your home life?

My home life is-- well, there are different stages of home life, you know? I mean, originally- well, as we grew up until-- up till 1934 or so. Well, as I said, we had a nurse until we were about six years old. My father was gone most of the day, and he traveled quite a bit.

Do you remember the nurse?

I don't remember her name. But we used to call her Detta.

Detta?

Detta, yeah. Detta. We called her Detta. That's all I know.

Do you remember liking her?

Oh, yeah. We really got along fine. Yeah, and she lived in our flat. But as I say, I don't have too many recollections, because I was fairly young at that time still. But I know she took us-- she even came along when my mother went on vacation. She came along to take care of us.

Now, when you were going on vacation, would the whole family go?

Well, mostly, usually, just my mother would go.

Your mother and you and your brother?

Well, there would be-- yeah, my brother and the nurse would go to a resort.

Did you get along with your brother?

Yeah, we always got along fine.

Liked each other?

Pardon?

Liked each other?

I think-- I like him. I hope he likes me. Well, we had our faults, like all siblings do, our jealousies. But basically, we got along fine.

Did the family eat together? Or did the children eat separately?

Oh, when we were young, we ate separately. But as we grew older, then we all ate together.

Do you remember when that started, how old you were?

I think, actually, we got closer after 1933, I think. My father lost his business, and he worked from out of the house. I know he used to make breakfast every morning for us then. We had no more-- we had a Jewish girl that lived-- well, for one thing, we had to give up the big flat that we had, and we had to move into a smaller one.

But it still had a room for a maid. So we had a Jewish girl that lived in the house and helped my mother with the laundry

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and cleaning the house and so forth. And we would become more together. As I say, my father made breakfast every morning.

Did you have to move to a smaller flat because there wasn't income coming in?

Yeah.

So it was an economic move?

Right, it was a economic move.

And because he had-- did he lose the factory?

The Nazis that took the-- well, it was not a factory. It was a big warehouse with an open lot. And the Nazis took it over, and they made a labor camp out of it for-- not for Jews. But they tried to get rid of all the unemployed. So they made a labor cause, like we had here conservation cause.

Right, the CCC?

Yeah, and they used it for that purpose.

Did your father get any compensation for the warehouse?

I don't think so, no.

Can you remember before Hitler came into power? Was there any kind of awareness in the family that there could be potential trouble?

Oh, yeah. Well, first of all, Mannheim was occupied by the French after World War I. And they did not pull out until the mid '20s. Then we had the huge inflation in Germany in 1925 or '26. And there was a lot of unrest. There was a lot of fighting going on between the Communist Party and the National Socialist Party. And there were shootings at night.

We were aware of this, but we never thought what happened would happen. I know the communists used to march through town with their slogans. And the Nazis marched through town with their slogans. And we heard their slogans about that they will kill all the Jews, and they make Germany [GERMAN] and Jews are our disaster. They are the cause of all our problems. And so we knew that they ignited the anti-Semitism more and more and more.

How old were you when you remember it, the first time that you were aware of that?

Oh, I was about 10, 11.

Till around 1933?

Yeah. Yeah, till 1933, we were more and more aware of it, yeah. But we were very German. I know at Hanukkah when we-- at Hanukkah, we always went to my uncle to light the Hanukkah candles. And after we sang "[NON-ENGLISH]." We all sang "Deutschland, Deutschland, uber alles." That's the kind of-- my father fought in World War I. He was decorated with the Iron Cross. And--

Where did he fight? Do you know?

On the French-- on the Western Front.

Western Front?

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Yeah. Yeah, he was wounded. He was shot through his foot, which he suffered from till the day he died. I think he was wounded 1917. So we were 100% German.

Did he think that that might aid--

Right, right, right.

--him in --weathering the storm?

Yeah, by the entrance door on the front hall, we had a table. And he had his picture as a soldier. He was a staff sergeant. And the Iron Cross was there and everything. So everybody who came through the door, saw that first, but it didn't help.

Did you have any direct instances of anti-Semitism that you can remember?

Direct? No-- that happened to me?

Mm-hmm.

Not really, no. Well, oh, yeah, well, we're coming towards 1938 at the Kristallnacht. That's when we really felt it. I was an apprentice in a-- organized a school to teach Jewish children trade. I went to a locksmith, with a locksmith and metal worker class.

On November-- well, maybe I'm jumping the gun. But that's when it really hit me. Well, even before, it hit me because my father was in a concentration camp. On June the 17th-- I think it was June the 17th, 1938. Yeah, when Max Schmeling was fighting Joe Louis, and Joe Louis knocked him out at the first round. And we were sitting all around the radio listening to it.

Joe Louis was all hyped up that-- not Joe Louis. Joe Schmeling that he is the example of the master race, and what a great hero he is and so on and so forth. Then he got knocked out by a Black person. And it was about 2 o'clock in the morning. We were sitting around the radio, and we couldn't believe what happened.

And my father said, some of us will have to suffer for that. At 6 o'clock in the morning, my father was just making breakfast, a knock at the door, and two guys came in, in civilian uniform. And they wanted to talk to my father. And my father went out to-- I opened the door. And when he came back, we knew what was going to happen.

That they were going take him away?

They took him away. They let him finish making the coffee, and they took him away. And we did not hear from him for a few days. And then my mother found out that he was in the local jail. But we didn't know why. And then the next thing we heard, we got one of those phone cards from Dachau. I'm here. I'm doing fine, so on and so forth.

Did you at that point know anything about the camps?

We have heard, but we didn't know much about it. But all we knew was that Dachau was a concentration camp. But we didn't know the extent of what was going on there.

What did you think it was, a labor camp?

Something like that, yeah.

How far away was Mannheim from Munich?

It's about 300 miles.

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Is Mannheim North?

North, yeah.

Is it a labor town? Was it considered a labor town, a union town?

Yeah, we had a lot of factories.

So it had a strong Communist Party?

Yeah, very strong Communist Party.

Do you remember witnessing any of those struggles between the Nazis and the communists on the street?

Oh, yeah, we saw-- I mean, I wasn't there when it happened, but we saw the communists had a newspaper building, and it was shot up and had all the bullet marks in it the next morning. And there were brawls in the streets where we moved in. That smaller place, the manager, he was a communist, and he got into a lot of fights. And yeah, we witnessed a lot of that going on.

Did that have an effect on you?

I don't know. It happened all so gradually. It never came as a shock. It's like a screw that is turned a little and a little, and you don't notice it till it's too late.

Until Kristallnacht?

Yeah. Well, actually, until my father was in the concentration camp.

How long was he there?

He was there-- he came out in-- let's see-- in June. From June, he came out in September-- middle of September. He had a lot of business connections with-- and one of his business connection, who also was a personal friend, after the Nazis took over, he became a big-- a very high person in the Nazi party. And he visited us even after [INAUDIBLE]. And he always came with his armband with a swastika.

When he came through the door, he took it off. And my mother contacted him, and he helped pull some strings. And my mother was called to the Gestapo headquarters in our town. I went along with her. And they told her that he may be coming home. But we didn't know when and didn't know how. And one of the conditions was that he has to leave the country, which was good for us, I guess.

And I remember we got a call that he'll be coming home this evening. We were waiting. We didn't know at what time, so we were waiting. We were in my parents' bedroom. And my mother was sitting on the bed. And my brother and I were sitting next to her. And we heard the door going, and my father came in. I'll never forget the way he looked.

How did he look?

Well, for one thing he had a suit that was just hanging on him. He must have lost that much weight. And his eyes were shut swollen. And he was bald headed, and his head was all burned from the sun. And his hands were all swollen up. And I remember he just stood there, and the tears were running down his eyes. But he never told us much what happened there.

He didn't?

Never.

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Did you ask?

We asked, but he never did. The only thing I knew is that they had to stand for hours at attention in the sun, in the summer, and that they had those wheel barrows that they had to push around. As I said, he never told us any details.

Did they arrest him because he was prominent and conspicuous because he owned the warehouse?

It's possible that was one of the reasons.

Looking back, did you find that about other people that were arrested at the same time, and what I was wondering whether they were all kind of conspicuously successful Jews.

Well, I never tried to figure out why.

Probably impossible.

Yeah.

Was it not one of the conditions of the concentration camps that when they released you, they made you sign a statement that you would not tell anyone what happened in there.

I don't know if he had to do that or not, but as I say, he never talked about it. So maybe if he had told us that he had to do that, then it would have told a different story already.

Now, he was released when, in October?

It was the end of September, beginning of October. He was there for about three months.

That must have been hard on the family and your mother.

Oh, yeah, my mother, she was a really strong woman.

Could you say a little about her? What she was like?

She was-- well, she raised the family. As I say, my father was busy with his business. I think she took care of the finances later on, and when my father was in the concentration camp, she did all the fighting and talking and trying. And as I say, she was a very strong woman, and she was very strict with us but gentle.

Very strict?

Yeah.

In what way?

Well, just keep us on the straight and narrow, and she brought us up well.

When you were small, and you had servants, did they cook, or did she do the cooking?

No, they cooked.

They cooked, and so then how did it affect her when you had only one servant? She had to take over a lot of work.

Yeah.

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How did she handle that?

Well, she never questioned it. She just went right to work. And as we go a little on and we went to Shanghai, the conditions got even worse. And she always was there, and she did the best she could.

Was she a good cook?

Yeah, she was a good cook.

Were there special things that she made that were Jewish things?

No, in Germany, not really. The only thing I remember was a jellied carp, and she made that very well. We had the goose for Christmas. We had-- you know.

So you were really like a German family?

We were a German family, with Jewish religion.

But you did sort of celebrate Christmas a little bit also?

Yeah, we did have a Christmas tree, and we got our presents on Christmas.

Was that at all confusing for a little Jewish boy?

No, it was part of our life.

And you knew you were Jewish and--

We knew we were Jewish.

--just another ritual.

Yeah.

Could you describe your father before the concentration camp and then after?

Yeah, well, of course, he had to-- from the owner of a business, he had to downgrade himself. Later on, he just was kind of a broker. He tried to make deals back and forth. Again, he adapted very, very well. From a car with a chauffeur, he went down to a bicycle.

He rode the bicycle to his appointments, and he tried the best he could to keep the family supplied with the wherewithal, and he never failed. We always had enough to eat. But I know he had to work really hard, and I'm sure he must have felt very depressed at times.

Was there much talk about the Nazi party or Hitler in the house?

Well, we were more and more cut off from what was going on around us, because little by little, we were confined to our own family. Of course, all the contacts we had with the rest of the world around us was kind of-- of course, we talked about whether we should leave, or how if we can leave or where we can go.

Do you remember those conversations?

Oh, yeah.

What were they like for you?

Well, for me, it was kind of exciting, because I thought are we going to travel. We're going to see new countries, new places. It's going to be interesting, and maybe I was immature, what, but at that time, I only thought about the adventure more of what is going to happen to us. We studied all kinds of countries where we could go.

Do you remember what they were? Which countries?

Mostly South America. We talked about literature and all this different-- like Bolivia and Peru and Ecuador and Paraguay. And at that time, those were the countries where you put-- we thought we could go. We did apply to go to the United States, but America had the quota system, and our quota was way in the future. So we couldn't--

Didn't look like that was gonna be a--

No, no.

--good choice.

Not a good choice. So we tried one country after the other, but by the time we got there to the consulates, all the immigration was closed off to Jews.

In all the South American countries?

All the South American countries. I remember we went to-- all the consulates were in Frankfurt. Mannheim is about 20 miles South of Frankfurt. So we went to-- my parents and us, we went to Frankfurt and went from one consulate to the other trying to find a place that would take us.

Were they all jammed with people trying to do that?

Yeah, they just closed everything off.

This was just before Kristallnacht?

That was after Kristallnacht. Before Kristallnacht, my father, in those few weeks before Kristallnacht, he tried to make arrangements. Well, first, he applied for the United States, and that didn't work. And I think he tried for other places, but after Kristallnacht, we became desperate.

Now, you were told that he would have to leave the country?

That's they were-- that's what he was told.

Did that mean that they would help expedite getting you out of the country?

They didn't put any restrictions in, but it was up to us to find a place to go to.

So they said you have to leave, but they weren't helping you to leave?

Right, right.

Was there a time limit of any kind?

Not that I remember, no. But anyway, those consulates we went to, that was before Crystal Night. When we came to Crystal Night, and we came to Crystal Night, we knew that a guy in Paris was shot by Greenspan or whatever his name

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was. And again, we said, something's gonna--

Somebody's gonna pay for this.

Somebody's gonna pay for this, yeah.

Do you remember Kristallnacht?

Oh, yeah.

Did you know what was happening?

We knew what was happening, yeah.

Could you describe what you remember?

Sure. The phone rang about, it was about 5 o'clock in the morning. And my father answered the phone. And somebody, we don't know who it was, said get out of the house.

And he got dressed as quick as he could. And he went down. We had an elevator in the building. And he went down on the elevator. And as he went down on the elevator, the SA came up the stairs.

Not all of you were going down?

No, we were still home.

Did they just tell him to get out or everyone?

No, they told him especially to get out, because apparently, he was under arrest.

He didn't question whether he should listen to this voice or not?

No.

He just believed it.

He believed it.

Did you ever find out who it was afterwards?

No, we never found out, maybe the same person that helped him to get out of there if possible. So anyway, we arranged a place to meet later on. As I say, I worked at that [? Ott ?] school. And those people never came into the house.

Later, we found out they went to the manager of the house, who was a communist, and asked her, were there Jews in this building? And they said no, there are no Jews in this building. There was one, which couldn't miss, because he was a dentist.

He was on the main floor. And he was taken and his place was ransacked. But luckily, we escaped that, thanks to our manager who had the apartment next to ours.

How did you discover that she had covered for you?

He.

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He.

Because he told us.

Afterwards?

Afterwards, yeah.

So did you stay in that--

Well, I went to that school. And as I came in there, the two foremen-- one was a carpenter's school and one was a bench metal worker school. And the two foremen, they called us in and that see that you get out of here as quick as you can.

And I walked out. I always looked younger than I was. I think I was, at that time, 13-- no, 14, 14 or 15 years. And as I walked out the door, a truck came, twelve outfits, guys in Nazi uniforms. They asked me, is that the Juden schule?

Is that the Jewish school?

That's a Jewish school. So I just walked on. They didn't-- I looked-- I never looked Jewish. I don't know how I look now, but I never looked Jewish.

As a matter of fact, when I went to the school, to the prep school, I went to the prep school while it was already under Nazi rule. And we had a course in race to tell people how to look for Jews, and so on and so forth. The guy didn't know me. And he put me out in front of the class, and that this is a typical face of an Aryan.

And you kept a straight face?

But a few weeks later, I was out. But anyway, so I just walked out and they walked in.

They asked you if this was a Jewish school? And you didn't answer them?

I didn't answer. I just walked out. And then, they took everybody away who was in there, like no matter how old they were. Then, they trashed the whole place.

And I was on my bicycle. I went home on the bicycle and I told my mother. So my mother and my brother and I, we took off.

Heading where?

Nowhere, just out into the streets.

Did you think it was safer to be out than to be in your apartment, waiting for them to come?

And we wandered around. And then, you saw all the piles of furniture and mattresses and books in the streets, all aflame, all the Jewish homes.

Was there a synagogue?

The synagogue was dynamited, both. There were two synagogues. They were both dynamited.

What happened to the warehouse? Did they just--

Which warehouse?

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Your father's.

Oh, that didn't belong to him anymore.

So they didn't--

No. But you see all those piles of stuff burning. And then, they ran loudspeakers through the whole town.

Saying what?

This is a spontaneous action by the people, and so on and so forth. There was all this. And then, at 6 o'clock, it was dark already, because it was beginning of winter.

And the [? Kerbal's ?] voice came on the loudspeakers. And he said, the police action has been called off. And then, we met up with my father where we said we would meet.

Where had you arranged to meet?

A landmark in Mannheim was the water tower. It was a very ornate building. It's called the Mother Tomb. It was in a park. And we said we'd meet by that. And then, we went home together. And the first thing my father did when he left the house-- I mean, as soon as the banks opened, he went to the bank and withdrew all the money that he had in the account.

So he was carrying it on him every day?

Well, it wasn't much anymore. A little later on then, there was the announcement made that all Jewish accounts have been frozen. So he took that money and he went to a travel agency that he has been working with, and said, is there any place in the world where we can go that we don't need any papers?

And that's what he told us. And he told him there's one place. That's Shanghai, China. And he had a cabin with four beds. And my father took that cabin with four beds. We didn't know where China was, where Shanghai was, no idea.

Fortunately, he had enough money to cover the expenses of the trip.

Yeah, that's what they took. Yeah, he paid also.

Was there anything left over for once you got there?

When we got? No.

So you landed pretty much penniless--

Yeah.

--in Shanghai?

Well, yeah. Well, when we got there, we had somebody in the United States who gave us an affidavit. It was a relative we never had knew. I don't know how we contact, my father contacted him.

We had an affidavit. We could go to the United States. And when we came to Shanghai, I think it was about $200 he put in our name. So that's how we got started there. But till we got there, we had nothing.

Could you describe the trip?

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Sure. Well, let's see. My father got the tickets. And the ship was leaving Genoa, in Italy. It was supposed to leave it on, I think it was January the 1st or January the 2nd, I think.

So Kristallnacht was in November. So we had six weeks to get ready. So we did get a mover. My father, I mean, we wasn't that bad off yet.

So we got what they call a lift van, like they have now the containers. It was a container. And they pulled it up in front of the building. And then, they loaded it up with furniture.

And while we were doing it, there were two guys from the customs in the house. And they are watching everything, and said either yes or said no.

They were making sure you didn't take anything out of there?

Right, there was one scary moment. And my mother has hidden some money in some books. You forgot already about it. And we had a big, fairly large library. And they went through the books and they found the money.

So they were pretty thorough.

They were pretty thorough. They confiscated the money that was in there.

Where they looking for valuables, mostly?

Yeah, right, because you're not supposed to take any money out.

But you were allowed to take the furniture?

The furniture we took out and some paintings and some carpet we were able to sell later on in Shanghai, which helped us.

And they didn't know about your father having withdrawn the money from the bank?

No. No. So we loaded that up. And then, we went to our relatives, my uncles and aunts, they lived in Berlin. And so, we took the train to Berlin. And we stayed in with them.

On the main floor, there was a police station, which didn't matter one way or the other. But one morning, they came up and [INTERPOSING VOICES] old man, we want you to come down to the police station. And we already thought, that's the end of it, you know.

But all they were concerned about, they claimed my father didn't pay the last utility bill. But luckily, he was very thorough and he had the receipts. He showed them receipts, so they released him. And so, we stayed there over Christmas. And then, we took the train to Italy.

Did you have any trouble crossing the border?

We had no trouble, but the train stopped at the Brenner Pass. And again, my father-- they had to go to one of the train cars, you know. And we waited and waited.

And so, finally he came and said is everything all right. To get the passports, we had to bribe the guy who made out the passports, you know. And then, we got back on the train.

And my father purchased the tickets ahead of time. We could only take 10 marks a person. So that's 40 marks at that time. That was what, about 10 marks was a $1. It was about $2.50.

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And then, the Italian train conductor came by, checked our tickets and said you have the wrong tickets. You have third class ticket. And this is a second class train.

So everything we had went into purchasing the difference between the tickets. So we came to Genoa with absolutely nothing. And we came to Genoa and we found out that the ship is two days late. So luckily, I mean, my father brought directions to the Jewish Community Center, whatever they have there. And they put us up in a hotel in the back alley someplace.

This is in Genoa?

That was in Genoa. I think for two days we lived on espresso. And I think we had a donut each, or something like this.

Were you all relieved to have left Germany?

Well, it's again, for me, it was kind of an adventure, you know. But my parents, I mean, they--

It was their life.

That's their life that was over. They didn't know what the future would bring.

Were they sad? Were they depressed, you think?

They were depressed, but they tried to keep it to themselves. But we felt it, how they felt.

Did both your parents have relatives that were being left behind?

Oh yeah, while we were in Berlin, we argued and cajoled to get out, get out, get out. But in Berlin, things didn't seem to be as bad as in the countryside, you know. I don't know for what reason, but probably because it was an international city.

So they all had big plans of what they've tried to do. They wanted to go to Chile. And they said they have chances of getting to Chile. And they want to wait there.

And they don't want to go to Shanghai. What are you going to do in Shanghai? And they never left. They all ended up in the concentration camps, the whole family, except my parents and myself and my brother.

So who were they?

Hmm?

Who were they? Tell us a little bit about your relatives that were left.

Oh, it was my grandmother, my father's mother, two of his sisters, and my uncle, and their children. And we had an uncle who lived in a suburb of Berlin with his wife and they had a daughter. And they all perished.

Were you able to maintain communication with them for a while?

For a while, yeah.

By letter?

By letter, yeah. Well, when we came to Shanghai, they finally saw the light of day. And now, they wanted to come to Shanghai too.

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But at that time, the British-- God bless them-- closed off Shanghai to the Jews too, because they felt that the Jews that came to Shanghai-- the British in Shanghai, they were the elite. They were the white master race there. They didn't want any white people do any menial work.

And the Jews there, about 20,000 Jews came to Shanghai. And they took on-- like, I became an auto mechanic. And my brother became a machinist. And we took on any work that we could get. And they felt that their level of was threatened.

The status of white people?

Their status, right. So they closed off. I mean, they closed off and they voted to Jews let in only by permit. And my father was running for-- constantly trying to get permits for my family but couldn't, no.

Did your father bring his Iron Cross and when he left Germany?

Yeah. Yeah, he did. I think my brother has it even, at the moment.

So you were in Genoa how long?

In Genoa, we were two nights, two nights. And then, once we went on the ship and we were in paradise, because we had booked-- my father has booked second class, or tourist class, whatever it's called. And that's the servants, the waiters and the stewardesses.

And food.

And food, lots of food and entertainment.

You remember the name of the ship?

The Conte Biancamano, the White Count.

And who else was on the ship? Was it full of refugees?

It was. It was, the majority was, especially in our class. Then, they had first class and second class that were mostly non-Jews. But in our class and then third class, it was mostly Jews.

Were they mostly from Germany, or were they from other places?

Mostly from Germany, yeah.

Were there any people you knew?

No, the people we met but not people we knew, no.

How long was that trip?

About six weeks.

You got a long time to get to know people.

We had a long time to get to know people, and a lot of time to recuperate. And my father, what they called port money-- he made a deposit on the ship so we could buy things on the ship. So we lived the life of Riley for about six weeks, not knowing what's going to happen when we get there.

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And the thing is, we stopped in Alexandria, Port Said, Bombay and Ceylon, and Singapore, Manila, Hong Kong. And wherever we stopped, the Jewish community at the time came to the ship with clothing and with things.

At each place that you stopped?

At each place that we stopped, yeah.

Who organized all of that? Do you know?

I don't know.

That's fantastic.

Yeah.

When you stopped at these ports, did you have any opportunity to get off the ship and see what the towns, the cities were like?

Some of them, some of them they won't let us off the ship.

Where did they let you off?

They let us off, let's see, Port Said, in Manila, in Hong Kong, and in Singapore. I don't think they let us off in Bombay or Ceylon.

So did you all go off and look around?

No, no. We were afraid.

Did anyone get seasick? Did you get seasick on the trip?

The first night, yeah.

After that, no?

After that no, not anymore. I remember we had a cabin for four. There was no bath, so we had to use a common bathroom. And there were two bunks in the bottom, two bunks on top. And I was on top, and I puked all the way down.

[LAUGHTER]

[INAUDIBLE].

It was a stewardess, not a steward, and she was so mad that she had to clean that up. Odd little things that you remember.

Did this trip fit into the picture that you had that you were going to have adventure now in your life?

Yeah, oh absolutely.

So how did you and your brother experience those six weeks? I was thinking how different it must be to be a child without a lot of responsibility.

It was very exciting. We had, I think, the run of the ship, and the sea. And there was dancing. And they showed movies in the evening. They didn't have full floor shows at that time, but every night, they showed movies.

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And it was very nice and we had-- there were, I think, eight people at our table. And one was a Catholic priest. And the rest were all Jews.

Everyone was headed for China?

Everyone was headed for Shanghai.

Did you learn where the Catholic priest was heading?

He was going to a mission. And there was a Jesuit mission in Shanghai.

What did you know about where you were going?

Nothing.

Nothing.

Absolutely nothing, no.

And none of the people on the ship that you knew knew anything about where you were going or what it would be like?

No, we had no idea.

Do you think your parents experienced any respite in those six weeks?

Yes. They relaxed, but like to think only of one day at a time. So no, no that was twofold. It was a relief that you're free--

You were safe.

--and safe. And so we don't worry about the future yet, till we got closer.

Did the ship actually land in Shanghai?

Yeah.

And so, pick up the story when you first landed.

Well, as you know, Shanghai is on the Huangpu River. And it's about 20 miles inside, away from the ocean. So you drive up, drive up the Huangpu River.

And the first thing you see, that you saw when you came in, were ruins on both sides. There was a Chinese, Japanese War. And the Japanese had occupied part of Shanghai. And it was all ruins.

Did you know that you were going to an occupied city?

Shanghai was divided into four sections. One was occupied by the Japanese. One was occupied, was part of England. One was part of France. And the third one was Chinese.

So only the Japanese part of it was the occupied section. So the rest was free. The only restriction was for Chinese, not for anybody else before the war.

So anyway, we thought, we came up, when we saw all those ruins-- and then, we docked at a commercial dock. And

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they put us on a tender. And it took us to the Bund.

I don't know if you heard of the Bund in Shanghai. It's a Embarcadero, the waterfront. But it's where all the high-rises, a beautiful sight as the tender goes in there. And you can stop at the jetty.

And then, we piled out and piled in the street. And there were trucks lined up, dozens of trucks. And they again, organized by the Jewish community in Shanghai. There was a Russian Jewish community, a British, but they all work together and they load. So we loaded-- they loaded us on those trucks.

As far as you know, did you have any choice about where you went?

No.

No.

No.

And they took us to a camp.

These Jews who were already there, were they refugees who had preceded you?

No.

Or were some of them business people who they--

They were there, the Sassoons and the Kadoories and the very rich Russian Jews that they came in, you know, during the Russian Revolution, and so.

For the same reason that you came, do you think?

At that time then, yeah. They had set up camps. And our camp was a warehouse loft, was called the embankment building. And there were huge open spaces. And there were these carts, you know. And the women and the men were separated.

So your poor mother couldn't be with her family?

No. There were about what, in our section, of maybe about 200 men and boys. And we had one bathroom. And then, they gave us two meals a day.

Now which section was this in, the Chinese section?

That was in the Japanese section.

The Japanese section.

Yeah.

Were others, where they spread out in all different areas?

Most of all, they were all in the Japanese section, which was pretty much in ruins.

What was that, that they were all in the Japanese sector, do you know?

I guess it was cheap.

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I wondered if there were any regulation requiring it.

No, I don't think so. And again, I think the British wanted-- they didn't want us to be seen. So we lived there for about a month. But they took us, the kids, they took us to movies and they gave us ice cream. And they gave us medical attention and things like that.

You were now 17.

I was about 16. Well, let's see. '22 to '38, I was 16. Yeah, about 16, 17.

Where was the furniture and all the stuff brought with you?

That came on a separate freighter. That wasn't there yet.

And when it arrived, did you already have a place to put it?

Definitely. When it arrived, we had a place to put it. Yeah, as I said, my father got a few hundred dollars from America. And so, we rented a one room, again in the Japanese section. So it was a house that was owned by a Japanese doctor who had an abortion clinic up there. And we had one room, shared the bath.

And in the meantime, Kadoorie set up of employment, kind of an employment agency. And so, we went up there. I mean, we got appointments to go and see him. And so, I went up there.

He started to talk to me. I didn't speak any English at that time. I mean, I had some English in school, but it was altogether different. I didn't understand a word they said.

And so, probably because of that, his secretary gave me a slip and say, be there at 7:30 Monday morning. I didn't know where I was going. And I went, there was an automobile dealership. That's how I became a mechanic.

I am curious. Was your brother with you? And did he do the same thing? Or was he sent somewhere else?

He was sent to machine shop. He became a machinist.

Was Kadoorie the actual employer?

No.

But he had made arrangements.

He made arrangements. He did quite a bit. He organized the school. I don't know if you ever heard the name Kadoorie. He's an Indian Jew. I mean, he's a British subject, but he is an Indian Jew. And he did tremendously.

He really took his responsibilities seriously.

Yeah.

Had you, at that point, formulated any idea of what you planned to become?

No.

You were college bound.

I was supposed to become a doctor. My father was supposed to become a lawyer.

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Was that really a reality to either of you in your thinking? At the time, as you were approaching it, were you thinking oh, I'm going to take this course and that course to get ready for medicine?

Yeah.

And then suddenly, you found yourself learning how to do mechanics.

Right, yeah.

How did you like it?

I adapted, I guess. I had a Chinese mechanic who didn't speak any English. I didn't speak any Chinese.

How are you at sign language?

Like this, yeah, but we got along fine together. I made six Chinese dollars a month as an apprentice.

What would that buy?

That was about, at that time, was about $2 American money. It bought me coveralls. And it bought me the bus fare. And it bought me one meal a day.

And then it was gone?

It was gone, yeah.

And so, you were there full time.

I was there full time.

And were they actually teaching you the trade, as well as getting worked out of you?

Labor was cheap, so each mechanic had a helper. So I was one of the helpers.

So you kind of had on the job training?

On the job training, yeah.

Did you like it?

I didn't even think about whether I like it. It had to be done, period, at that time, you know.

And what was your father doing?

My father, he got himself a bicycle. He was 51 years old at that time. He also didn't speak any English. And he started to peddle stuff.

What kind of stuff?

He got into medical supplies. I don't know how he did it, or where he got his sources, or he just went and looked up doctors. He was amazing. He was amazing.

So he had on the job training too, by himself.

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Yeah.

Did he complain or what? How was this--

I never heard him complain, no. We complained to him, I remember.

About having to do what you were doing?

Having to do and living in the conditions that we had to live.

Were the three of you living together?

The four of us, yeah.

The four of you.

By now, you're in this little flat, but your mother is there too.

Yeah.

How would she spend her time, your mother?

Cooking, killing bedbugs, and that's actually what she did, trying to keep the place as clean as possible under circumstances. We used to go to bed and then wake up at night, and the bed bugs was running all over the room. And we were lucky we had a bathroom, but it was on the other side of the hall. Most people even didn't have it.

And then, after about-- well, after since my father had a job and I had a job. And my father made a little bit of money. And we sold some of the stuff that came on the lift, in a lift. We went to a nicer neighborhood in the British section. We had a separate kitchen and a room with a bathroom. Then, we stayed there till 1941, till Pearl Harbor Day.

Till Pearl Harbor Day?

Mm-hmm.

Before we go ahead, I would just like to know. You said you and your brother complained to your father sometimes about those conditions. How did he respond to that?

He took it. Today, I feel bad that I ever did that, because we should have known that can't be helped. And everybody tried the best he could.

Did he try to give you hope that things would be better later, or did he get angry with just--

Well, he sometimes got disgusted, yeah. But we all had our times, you know, where we felt bad I'm sure.

Did you make friends? Did your family make friends with other refugees from Germany?

Oh, yeah.

Would you spend time with them?

Yes, we spent time. Well, there were two synagogues, which were founded by refugees. Then, there was a school. Then, there was a scout group, scout organization was created by a Zionist organization which I joined, my brother joined.

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Not so much before, but after the Japanese, or after Pearl Harbor Day, because we again, we were isolated. We are out in the nicer neighborhoods. And we had a pretty good life for about two or three years there.

What years?

That was from '39 to '41.

They were pretty good.

Yeah. Well, not the beginning of '39.

Now, right after you got there, that same year, the war started.

In Europe, yeah.

And were you able to follow that?

Yes. Oh yeah, we had the Russian radio station. We had the German radio station. We had the British German radio station that we got news from.

And how did people feel about the way the war was going in 1940, 1939, '40, '41? It looked pretty good for the Germans.

It looked pretty good for the Germans, yeah. And we felt pretty bad, but we were always hoping that it'll change. On December the 7th or 8th, what was it?

10th.

Yeah, we lived in the British section. And I worked in the French section. In the French, they were Vichy government. So on Pearl Harbor Day, the Japanese occupied the British, but they didn't touch the French.

So when I went from home to work, I crossed into the French sector. And now, then there were Japanese patrols guarding. Then, we knew something had happened.

So you didn't what yet?

We didn't know yet what.

How did you find out?

When I came to work, it was a British run dealership. So they knew what happened. And a few days later, the Japanese took over the dealership.

And what did they do with the British? They interned them?

They interned the British. And then, they put us in a ghetto. We all had to leave the British sector, the French sector, all the Jewish refugees.

And we all had to move into the Japanese-- there was one boundary of what was about a mile square. And we all had to move in there. I mean, the Chinese were living there, so we had to find space among the Chinese.

And when was that done?

That was in March of '42. They set a deadline you had to be in there by.

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And why was that done, do you know?

The Japanese were the Allies of the Germans. And apparently, the Germans either told them or the Japanese went along with it or whatever. And we had to move in there.

And we couldn't get out except with a special path during daytime hours. If you worked-- see when the Japanese took over the dealership, they took me over too. So I worked on Japanese army trucks.

You were now working for the Japanese?

I was working for the Japanese.

And you had no choice?

I had no choice, no.

Were they actually paying you?

We got, I don't remember how much, but we got about I think 10 or 15 pounds of rice a month and one pound of brown sugar.

And that's it?

That's it.

What was it like working for them?

On an individual basis, I had no problems.

You didn't have any problems with them?

No.

Did you know people who did?

Yes.

What were those circumstances?

Well, the problem was trying to deal with the authorities. That was a problem. They were very rough.

Why would people need to deal with them? What [CROSS TALK]

Because you needed a special pass to get out of the ghetto.

So if your work was in a different district, you already had a big problem.

Right.

Why did they give him a rough time for trying to go to work?

I don't know. It was one guy. His name was Goya. And he was the emperor of the Jews. And he let everybody feel his power. And everybody was afraid of him.

How did people subsist if all they had-- if all you were earning for working for a month was some rice and sugar? Did other people get other supplies? Or did you literally live on rice and sugar?

Well, my father still could make some money. And I think my brother earned money. And well, it was very precarious situation.

Were there goods to be bought, enough food to go around?

There was food to be bought. Yeah, you could buy bread. And you could buy-- well, our diet consisted of rice. It wasn't the nice, polished rice. It was the rice with the-- it had the, what is it?

A hull.

Husks.

Yeah, husks.

That's what we had, this with a few peas in it. Once in a while, we were lucky, had an egg and put an egg in it.

So your mother inadvertently learned Asian cooking in a hurry?

Yes, right, well we had no gas or electricity or anything like that. I mean, our stove was a tin can. And you had to fan it. And my mother's eyes were all spoiled by it.

What did she use, charcoal?

Charcoal, yeah.

In your rooms?

In the rooms, yeah.

Now, did you still work in the British-- the formerly British-- sector?

No, in the French sector.

In the French sector, so you had to leave the ghetto.

Right.

And you didn't have any trouble leaving the ghetto?

I had no, because I got a letter from the Japanese commander saying that. And so, I guess I was a special person. I don't know.

They also made us watch the boundaries. It was not a voluntary, it was an auxiliary police force. We had to stand at the exit. And we were responsible that nobody leaves without a pass.

So you had to take a tour of duty there, even though you were also working full time?

Right, I had to get up three hours.

And everyone had to do that? All the men?

Up to a certain age, yeah.

And were you following the course of the war?

Of course, we did not get any British broadcasts. We just had the German and the Russian. The Russians had a German program, and they told us what's going on the Eastern Front. And the Germans, they told us how they were occupying one country after the other, and so on and so forth. What we heard was, what was going on in the Western Front, was only by rumors that we heard.

When the Germans were doing well, I'm sure they reported each invasion.

Oh, yeah.

When things started to go badly, what did they do? What did they broadcast?

They said strategic adjustments of our lines and things like that. That gave us an idea what was happening.

So you read between the lines?

Right, yeah.

Could you get any sense from the way the Japanese behaved, how the course of the war was going for them?

Well, we could tell by, again, by the official reaction to us. The worse it got, the meaner those people got.

Would you see instances of that?

Not really, I didn't. I heard. But I was a little isolated, because I worked out of the ghetto. But they treated the Chinese just as-- I witnessed how they treated the Chinese. And they were treated pretty badly, too.

In what sense?

They were-- well, from one on one side of town to the next, they had barbed wire. And they had to pass through. And the Chinese had to bow down before the guards.

And if they didn't like something, they hit them with a part of their guns, beat them. But I also saw Japanese officers beat the Japanese enlisted men. So I guess it's their culture, you know.

They would be physical.

They are very physical.

You said you didn't-- you were able to get a letter from the commander of the section you lived in.

Not the commander, from the commander of the motor pool.

Because he needed a mechanic, now I understand. So it wasn't hard for you to get that pass, because you were doing something they really needed.

No, it wasn't, right.

How about your brother?

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Well, he worked for a Korean outfit. And so, he didn't have any problems either.

Was that outside the ghetto, also?

It was outside the ghetto.

Did that mean that your father, since he was an entrepreneur and working for himself, did he have to stay inside the ghetto to conduct all his business?

He got a pass. They had pink passes and blue passes. Blue passes were good for three months. Pink passes were good for, I think, one month. So every month, he had to go and renew his pass.

And if he didn't, they could say no if they wanted to.

They could say no.

Did that ever happen?

No. I think once, they held him. They held him for quite a few hours, but then they released him. As a matter of fact, they apologized to him because they mistook him for somebody else. So I must say, the Japanese were very rough, but they were correct.

They didn't make arbitrary rulings.

No, they were fairly correct.

Were there shortages there, food shortages, medical shortages?

Well, there were a lot of doctors in the ghetto, Jewish doctors, and so medical shortages, medication maybe, yeah. They even made house calls. I came down with typhoid fever while I was working for the Japanese.

And we had a Jewish doctor treat me in the house. The Japanese send somebody over, every day, to see how I was doing. The moment I was able to go to work, I had to go back to work.

How long were you out of work?

Only about six days, I think.

Tell us a little bit about the working conditions. Like obviously, they didn't pay you very well. What was your day like?

The day was 12 hours. And sometimes, they got in-- if they had a rush, then we had to work around the clock.

How many of you were there in that department together?

Well, I was the only white person. All the others were Chinese.

So there wasn't really one single person you could have a conversation with?

No, but by that time, I spoke Chinese fairly well. I forgot most of it, but I did. When they made us work day and night, then they gave us a snack at night.

Would they treat the Japanese the same way-- I mean, the Chinese-- the same way they were treating you or worse?

No, they treated us about alike, the ones that are working, because they needed us.

They just almost worked you to death?

Well, yeah, I survived.

Ah, youth.

Your father kept selling, all during the war?

Yeah, and they had the black market. But I think that helped him.

How about the course of the war between the Chinese and the Japanese? Did you get much news of that during this time?

No, we didn't get any.

So while you were there, I assume your father was also working on where you would end up. Was he trying to find a place for you to live after Shanghai? Or did you, at any point, think you were going to stay there?

No, we knew we would get out afterwards.

But you didn't know where you would be after?

Well we, as I said, we did have the affidavit for the United States. And we had our quota number. So we knew, sooner or later, we would get there.

Did you know, by that number, how long it would be?

Well, we didn't know exactly. After the war, we knew.

And how long did it turn out to be?

Well, we could have gone a lot sooner. But as I told you, my mother with her stove, you know, ruined her eyes. And the American consulate in Shanghai made her see eye specialist, because they thought she had a contagious eye disease.

So that dragged out for about two years. We could have been here in 1946, if it hadn't been for that. So that was another frustration we had to go through.

Did she retain her sight?

Oh, yeah.

But she just had inflammation from the--

Yeah. But in the meantime, after the war, it's first of all, the American army came in. So I worked the same place, first for the British, then for the Japanese, and then, I worked for the Americans the same place.

I hope they paid you a little better.

They paid a little better.

Did they feed you a little better.

Yeah. I did OK then.

Was there any bombing that went on when you were in Shanghai?

Oh, yeah.

Could you describe that, or tell us how often that happened?

Well, we heard the sirens practically every night. But one night, the American bombers missed, one day. And they hit one of the Jewish refugee camps and killed quite a few people.

What were they trying to bomb? Do you know?

I don't know what they were trying to bomb. But that was the only time when it really hit home. But we heard the bombs and we heard the sirens. We heard the planes going overhead.

You were at work?

On that day? No, I was not at work on that day. I was invited-- that was after the war. No, that was during the war. I was invited by one of my Chinese mechanics for dinner or lunch. And I just came home when I heard that the bomb had hit.

No one in your family was hurt?

Nobody, no, and no one that I know was hurt.

Do you know how many people were hurt?

I don't remember, but I think it was less than a dozen. But outside of that, we didn't have any physical effects of the war.

And still, all during this time, your relations with the Japanese were OK? They were good?

My personal relationship?

Yes.

Yeah.

And at work, if they wanted to hurry you up, or would they think sometimes that people were working too slowly?

No. The only thing they made us--

Work longer.

--they made us stay till-- sometimes, they worked there two days and two nights through, you know.

Did the Americans do that also? Or were you back to normal hours?

The Americans, no. They were very laissez faire. It was just a ball there.

I'm curious. You said you had lunch at one of the Chinese workers' houses. As you learn to speak Chinese, did they tell you about how they, the Chinese, had been treated by the Japanese?

Oh, they hated the Japanese.

So you knew some of the stories that they--

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But they hated the white people, too.

They would tell you that?

Oh, yeah. Their song went [SINGING IN CHINESE]. It says, fight the Japanese and kill the whites.

Because they were both colonizing them?

Right.

How did they feel about you?

I don't know. I never had any problem getting along with people on a one to one basis. And I tried to understand their point of view. And I tried to make understood my point of view.

Were they aware-- where the Chinese aware-- of how the Jews had had to flee Germany?

No.

Did you tell them that?

They didn't understand it. I mean, not the ones that I worked with. They were all workmen, you know.

So they didn't wonder why you were there, particularly?

No.

So you were just one more worker who happened to arrive, from where they stood?

Right. Well, and then we came here and lived happily ever after.

When you get out, how much notice did you get that you would be able to leave finally?

What?

I mean, how did you learn that the Americans decided that your mother could come in?

Oh, it took about a month. Again, it was the Jewish community who brought us here. You know, we had no money for fare or anything like that.

Even with everyone working, there wasn't enough to--

No, so the Jewish community, the American Jewish community, they chartered army transports. And we came here on an army transport.

With lots of other refugees?

With lots of-- whole ship full, yeah.

How long did that trip take?

That took four weeks.

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And was it also an adventure?

It was, yeah. It was. Well, now we looked forward to getting where we are going.

How did you feel about ending up in America? Was that a goal or was it just a complete change?

Yeah, no, that was what we were hoping for.

It was. It was the best of all possible.

Right, yeah.

Did you have any idea where you would go after you landed?

We were landing in San Francisco.

And so, you just planned to stay here?

Well again, we came to San Francisco. And the Jewish welfare organization, they put us up in a very nice hotel. They gave us, I think the four of us, they gave us $28 a week for living expenses, which was, in 1930-- 1940-- it was a lot of money.

They send us to Mount Zion Hospital to get complete physical checkups. They said, stay as long as you want till we tell you to go where we want you to go. And they asked us to go to Stockton-- no, Fresno But we liked it here so much, we said, we don't want to go to Fresno. And they said, well, then you are on your own.

They would have helped you if you went to Fresno?

They would have continued helping us if we went to Fresno.

So they wanted to disperse people?

Right. So I went to Les Vogel Chevrolet. I don't know if you remember that. And I say, I'm an auto mechanic. They says, well, you have to go into the union. I went to the Union. They says well, you have to get a job first. So I started at Les Vogel Chevrolet as a janitor. And my father started at American Can Company as a machinist.

My father was 60, what, 61 years old. And he had no profession. So he went around. He was delivering newspapers for a while.

And then, he went from one-- we went to a bay shore, went from one lumber company to the next, once for a job as a salesman. And he finally went to one of them and he said, I work for free and show you what I can do. And they took him. And he worked there till he was about 75 or 76 years old.

What did he do there?

Selling, selling lumber and nails and stuff like that.

Had he learned English?

Hmm?

Had he learned English?

He spoke very broken, but he made himself understood. People liked him. He was on the phone. He talked, sold over

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the phone.

Very gutsy guy.

Yeah.

That's amazing. How long did he work there before they decided they would pay him?

I don't remember, but not very long.

I wanted to go back to Shanghai. Were there differences between Jewish groups there, in terms of people who had come from Ashkenazi and Sephardic?

Oh, yeah. Well, even amongst the refugees, the ones that came from Austria and the ones that came from Germany didn't get along together.

Who didn't like whom?

Neither liked neither. But I married a Viennese girl, sooner or later.

So you bridged the gap between Germany and Austria?

I bridged the gap, yeah.

So when did you-- I was going to ask you that next. When did you meet her?

I met her in Shanghai.

So you were quite young when you met her?

I was, yeah. She was 16 and I was, I think, 19. No, I was 21 when we met. And we met in the ghetto. And we met in a Zionist organization.

Did they have some sort of a social place to get together?

Yeah, we had a-- there was a group of about 12 people. And we got together. And we talked about Israel and stuff like that. And we got to know each other. And slowly, we paired off, you know.

Did your brother meet someone there, too?

No, he didn't. We waited till he came here. Well, we didn't get married. We got married here.

That was my next question.

Yeah.

How long after you got here?

A year. Well, the Austrian quota was even worse than the German quota, so her parents couldn't come here. So when I left Shanghai, we didn't expect to see each other anymore. OK?

Were you heartbroken?

I was heartbroken. She was heartbroken.

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In other words, you thought that they would not be able to get in?

No, they were going to Bolivia. And in order to get to Bolivia, they had to get a Catholic-- what do you call it-- certificate that they are Catholic. Otherwise, they couldn't have gotten to Bolivia, either.

So they had to go to Bolivia, and we went to America. We started to write to each other. And we thought we couldn't do without each other, so I went to see a lawyer here.

And in order to go to Bolivia, they had to transit through the United States, you see. So when she came here, I married her. And the lawyer got us a stay of deportation, because I was already a resident.

Not a citizen, but a resident.

Yeah. And so, he got all the paperwork done. And he got her legal entry. So she had to leave the country. She had to go to Canada and come back.

Did you go with her?

I went. That was our honeymoon.

I was just going-- so you were what, all of 20?

What?

20 years old?

When we got married?

No, I was-- no, when we met, I was 20. When we got married, I was 26, I think.

And she was then about 20?

Yeah, 22. We are five years apart.

So you really did have an adventure?

Yeah.

Did the differences between the Jewish communities in Shanghai high affect the quality of life for the people? Did one group get more help than another?

No.

Did it lead to any kind of bad situations for any of the people, that they couldn't get along?

Not really. It's just gossip. And that's nothing serious, I would say.

Bickering.

Bickering, yeah.

What kind of feelings did you have about China?

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The country? I like the country. I think more highly of the Japanese than I do of the Chinese, despite what they, you know. But I had lots of Chinese friends.

You no longer remember the language?

I don't. Nobody speaks the language here. There's so many dialects in China.

So there's no opportunity?

No opportunity to speak it here, no.

I think we need to take a break now. And we'll resume in a few minutes.

OK.

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