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OK?

This is the Holocaust Oral History Project interview of Anna White, taking place in San Francisco, California, on October 27, 1992. My name is Sylvia Prozan. Assisting in the interview is Shelli Oreck. Also present is Craig Salgado, field group.

Anna, when were you born?

I was born September 27, 1911.

Where?

In Nuremberg, Germany.

And your father's name?

My father's name was Gustav Rudiger.

And where was he from?

He was from a small place in the Black Forest. That's where he was born.

Is that near Nuremberg?

No. The Black Forest is close to Alsace-Lorraine.

And where was his family from?

That I can't tell you, but his father was also German. I have no idea how far they go back.

Did you know your grandfather?

No. No, I didn't.

Do you his name?

No. I know that his name was Rudiger, but I don't remember his first name, no.

Did your father have brothers or sisters?

Yes, he had a sister who was living in the Black Forest in a very small town. And she and her husband had a dry goods store there.

What was her name?

Her name was Mrs. Gumbach.

And what did your father do, as an occupation?

My father was a merchant. And he was part owner of a very beautiful store in Nuremberg. Which, it was a yardage store, but they also had notions of all kinds, and scarves and gloves and hosiery, and so on.

Do you remember going to that store?

Oh yes, very well. What do you remember?

Well, I remember that it was a beautiful store. And later on I even wanted to work there. But that's another story.

What happened?

Well, when I was 18 years old and I had come home from one year in the town of Lausanne, Switzerland, where I learned French to perfection, I came home and I wanted to work. And at that time my father had died already, and I did want to work in that store. But there was the other owner's wife, who didn't want to compete with me, and she didn't let me do it.

What was your mother's name?

My mother's name was Frieda Mosbacher.

And where was her family from?

Her family was from Furth, which is next door to Nuremberg, just like Oakland and Berkeley. And she was one of seven children, as far as I remember.

She had brothers and-- how many brothers and sisters?

She had three brothers and I think they were four sisters altogether, yes.

And can you name them?

The sisters? Yes. I think, Clara, Lina, Lienchen, and my mother, Frieda. Yes.

And the brothers?

That was Emile, Hugo, and Dan.

And were they all in the same area?

No. No, they were not.

Where were they?

Well, Lienchen, for instance, married to Amsterdam, Holland. And Lina married to Graz, Austria. And Clara-- I don't know if I mentioned her-- Clara married to Koln, in Germany. And my mother went to Nuremberg.

And your uncles?

My uncles, Dan also went to Holland. He died very young. And Emile and Hugo stayed in Nuremberg. Emile was a doctor, and Hugo was a merchant.

Did you know your mother's mother and father?

My memory is very faint about them because they died when I was very young. But I do remember them a little bit, yes. And my grandfather had been a teacher in the Jewish high school in Furth. But when I knew him, he was just an older gentleman, yes.

Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Yes, I did. They were half-brothers because my father was married before and he lost his wife. And their name was Ludwig and Fritz.

How had that wife died? What did she die of?

It's a very complicated story, the whole story about the two brothers, because the first Ludwig, who was nine years older than I, wasn't even related to me at all. Because-- see, I can tell you if you want me to.

Please.

OK, a Miss Bachmann married a Mr. Nordberger. And before the child-- I mean, she was pregnant, and before the child was born, Mr. Nordberger died. So Mrs. Bachmann-- Mrs. Nordberger-- was a widow and had a son. And that was Ludwig Nordberger.

And then this woman married my father. So then my father and this lady had a child. And that was Fritz. And she died in childbed.

So there was my father with two children. And after a year and a half, about, he married my mother. And my mother took on those two boys. And then I was born. Yeah.

What did your father look like?

I have a picture of him.

What do you remember of him?

Oh, I remember very well. He had dark hair. And he wore glasses. And he had a mustache. And he was a very nice-looking man.

And what's your earliest memory of your father?

My earliest memory? See, my father-- I was born in 1911. In 1914, the war started. And my father went to war for the German Reich and didn't come back until 1918. I remember when he came back.

Do you remember before he left?

I remember that we were, in 1914, on vacation. We had rented a house not too far from Nuremberg. But it was, you know, for vacation, was August. And the war broke out, as far as I remember, in September. And I just remember faintly that we had to go home very quickly. You know, interrupt, practically, our vacation because the war started. But I don't-- I really don't remember anything about him otherwise.

Do you remember when he came back?

Yes, I remember when he came back but nothing in particular. You know, that we were happy, of course, that he was back. But I can't really say anything special about it. I don't have such a good memory of those years.

Do you know where he fought?

He didn't fight. He was with the Navy, and he was sort of like a secretary. But he was away. He was in Wilhelmshaven, which was at the North Sea, you know. But he did not fight. But still he, you know, four years away from home.

About how far was that from Nuremberg?

Well, in Germany, it was about the farthest you can be apart. Here it wouldn't be so-- the distance would not be as great.

You said you were on vacation. Were there many family vacations that you remember?

No. There were not many family vacations because, after my father came back, two years later, he had an embolism and was in bed for six months. Nowadays you wouldn't do that, you know. But at that time, they did that.

And so from then on, my mother and he always went to, in summer, to a sanatorium so he would be under observation, you know, if anything would happen. But after he recovered, he was able to go back to his work, to his store, for six years more.

And after the six years?

He died.

Of?

It probably was a heart attack. But he died. It was in the afternoon. We had dinner at noon, at that time. And then he would rest for two hours. And then he would go back on the streetcar, back to his store in the middle of downtown. And he went, he left the house, at 3 o'clock probably, went to the streetcar, which wasn't far.

And when the conductor saw that my father didn't leave the streetcar at the particular station where he always left, he looked, and my father had died, sitting there with his glasses on and his cane in his hand.

How old was your dad?

56. So my mother was only married for 16 years, and four years were gone due to the war.

And how old was your mother when she was widowed?

She was in her 40s. Yeah, 43, something like that.

How were you able to-- how was the family able to be supported?

Well, because he still had an interest in that store. That didn't-- you know, that remained. So we were OK financially.

Did your mother ever remarry?

No.

What did your mother look like?

She was-- she looked nice. It's hard for me to tell. She had lots of dark hair and she smiled a lot, and held herself very erect, and dressed very nicely. So--

What do you remember about your home, about the house lived in?

We lived on the second floor, which would be here the third floor, I guess. We had an apartment. And it was very nicely furnished, very pretty, and comfortable I would say. I never moved. I just remember that's where I was born and that's where we stayed.

What did the street look like?

Street was nice. I think it had trees on the street, but I really don't remember. It's too long ago. It was near a park. I know that. But what they called Stadtpark. And it was a nice neighborhood, definitely. Not the real best neighborhood, but a good neighborhood.

What did the city of Nuremberg look like?

Oh, Nuremberg was a beautiful city. The old city, you know, with a Burg and beautiful museums. And it was really a lovely, lovely city, very old, very nice, with lovely churches, beautiful churches.

What about synagogues?

The synagogue I attended was a good, nice synagogue too. Yes.

What kind of a synagogue was it?

I would say conservative, between conservative and reform. There was an Orthodox synagogue too, in Nuremberg.

Have you any idea how large Nuremberg was, 1920?

1930-- I-- it's very hard. Maybe 400,000, something like that?

And how many of those people would be Jewish?

I really wouldn't know. There were quite a few Jews, more even in Furth. I mean, Furth was a small town, like 100,000. But Furth had a lot of Jews.

What do you remember about the Passover?

Passover--

Yes.

That was very nice because we were together. We celebrated together. Mostly, see, I remember more after my father had died because we were together with my mother's brothers and their families. We had big Seders.

Where were the Seders held?

In one of the brother's homes.

Were they ever held at your home?

I don't remember. But it could have been. But I don't remember. That I don't remember. But I think it was mostly in Hugo's house, in one of them.

Do you remember your father ever participating or conducting a Seder?

No, I don't.

What were the Seders like at Hugo's?

Oh, it was lovely. It was full of fun. And it was such a close family, you know. And then there were, sometimes, old aunts from-- all family were invited. And it was really nice. It was a huge table full of people.

How many do you think were there?

Oh, maybe 14, 16. And singing the songs, and it was very festive, very nice, and good food.

What about the food?

Very good.

What food do you remember? What did you eat?

What food do I remember?

Eating at the Seder, yes.

Well, I remember probably only what we called Charlotte.

And what was that?

Matzo Charlotte. Yeah, which was with matzos and raisins and eggs, et cetera. And also, what we called Grimseleh. And that was something that one served with stewed prunes. And they were baked in swimming fat.

I don't do that anymore. But it was out of-- I haven't done it for so long that I don't remember, quite. Anyway, it's done with matzo meal, and there's some wine in it too, and eggs, of course, and spices, something like that. Yes, that I remember. They were all good cooks.

Your mother too?

My mother was an excellent cook.

What did she make?

I remember, mostly, that Friday morning, early, she would be in the kitchen and prepare yeast dough and make the Challah, which we would call Berches, and also some coffee cakes every Friday, I think. I remember, yes. And she was a good cook. But, I mean, one didn't cook fancy like one does nowadays, you know, gourmet style. But she definitely was a good cook.

What would you have for a Sabbath meal or a Sunday meal, or a special?

I can't even remember what I eat in a restaurant two weeks ago. I don't pay that much attention to it. But I'm sure we had either a pot roast or chicken. Or she had-- also, she did, sometimes, duck. And, of course, around Hanukkah, there was goose.

Goose was special for Hanukkah?

Around that time, I would say. I don't think it was special for Hanukkah.

When you see your mother in the kitchen, what do you see her making, other than the--

Only that. I don't remember her-- I don't see her cooking. Well, I worked then. I either was in school, or I was away, or I worked.

How old were you when you began school?

I don't know if we had kindergarten or not. I don't remember that. But I know I was six years old when I started first

grade. That I remember.

Where was the school?

Very close to my house.

And how did you get there?

I walked.

Alone?

Yes, I'm sure I walked alone. Or I made some friends who came with me, you know. But there was no danger, not to walk alone.

This was elementary school?

Yes.

Yes, and how long did you attend that school?

Four years. And then I went to what they called lyceum. And that was for girls. And I was there for six years. And I had six years of French and three years of English at that time.

This was starting when you were 10 years old?

Mm-hmm, right.

You learned French and English?

Three years of English, yeah, and math and the rest of it.

What else? Religion?

Yes, we had religion. The rabbi of my temple came to the school. And the Jewish kids went to a separate room, and we had religious studies. Yes.

What did you learn in religious studies?

Jewish history.

Did you learn Hebrew?

Well, to read it, yes, definitely.

With the rabbi in the lyceum?

Yes.

You learned Hebrew.

Yes. Yes, I did, which I have not forgotten yet.

For how many years did you have Hebrew?

Probably three years.

So there were three foreign languages you were learning.

Right, yeah. I wouldn't know where else I would have learned it. I became confirmed, but I don't think we went to a separate class for confirmation. Maybe we did. But I did learn Hebrew then.

What do you remember about the rabbi?

The rabbi was a lovely man. He married us too. So I remember him. His name was Dr. Freudenthal. And he just was-- I liked him. He was nice. He was intelligent, and gave good sermons in temple, and was a good teacher, definitely.

How many children were there in your class?

In my class? Quite a few.

What percentage were Jewish?

Well, we were-- it's hard for me to tell, but maybe 25%?

And you remember how many children there were with you? A few children?

I remember several girls who were with me in my class.

Do you remember their names?

Some, yeah.

Tell us.

One was Ruth Wexler. One was Alice Lederman. One was, I think, another Alice, Redensburger. There was Hilda Fried and Margarethe Tuchman. And I think that's all.

How would you describe these girls? Studious, happy?

Not too happy. You know, we were called by our last name. I mean, when I look now, when I see how schools are conducted now, we were-- it was OK, but not terribly happy, I don't think.

School was not--

No, no, mm-mm.

What else was uncomfortable, aside from being called by your last name?

Well, I think the first four years were OK, were all right. But then when I went to the lyceum, I don't think I was extremely happy. Of course, I had good friends, and so I was happy anyway.

Who were your friends?

Margarethe, mostly, and Ruth also.

Were they with you in the first school?



Yeah.

Is there anything you can remember about the elementary school, the first school, where you were for four years?

Nothing particular, no. No. I know other people came because I just was together with a friend who was one class behind me. And she lives in San Francisco. And she remembers the name of the teacher and things like that. I have no idea.

I was not a very ambitious student, either, I must admit. I became much more ambitious after I left school. I was a medium student, but I could have done better, I'm sure.

Do you have any thoughts about what you wanted to do when you grew up?

Well, I thought I was going to be in my father's store because I just loved that store so much, you know. And I thought it would be a lot of fun to be there. There were a lot of dressmakers who came there with their customers to choose the yardage for their clothes.

And my mother and I, of course, had to also go to those dressmakers to have our clothes made. And we were very well-dressed, always. Some went to Paris for every season and so on. And so we had to make the rounds at those dressmakers because they were the customers at the store.

Was there a special time when you had dresses made for the holidays or--

Yeah, I'm sure I was dressed well. Yes.

Can you remember anything about what the dresses looked like, the fabrics?

Oh, beautiful woolens and beautiful-- just very, very pretty clothes, mostly French material, French yardage.

Most of the fabrics were from France?

Mm-hmm, yes. Very pretty.

Did your father have a clientele that was mixed, Jewish and Gentile?

Oh yes, yes, very, very mixed, definitely. Yeah.

When you played with your friends, what kind of games did you play? Or how did you play?

I have no idea. I really don't know. I know that later on, we played tennis when we were older, you know, like 14 years old or so. And I don't know.

Where did you learn tennis?

Well, there was a-- I didn't belong to a club, but I think we just taught ourselves. I don't remember that I had a teacher. But we were a group of youngsters who went together and played.

Were there any organizations you belonged to or any things you liked to do, like sports or music?

No, I had piano lessons. I mean, private piano lessons, but I didn't belong to any organizations, no.

When did you start the piano lessons?

When I was about nine, I think.

Who taught you?

Fraulein Frei.

What was she like?

She was tiny. She was tiny. And she was too easy on me, you know. I was fibbing all the time. When she gave me lessons, I just-- maybe it was even a lie. I don't know. I took advantage of her, let's say. Definitely. And I could have done much better because, in a way, I liked to play the piano. But I didn't practice enough so I just made excuses of one kind or another.

What kind?

Well, that I don't remember. But I just said-- probably, I just didn't tell her which lesson she had given me. And maybe I said she had given me the lesson the week before or something like that.

And she didn't remember. So it was very easy to do that. She was older. She was a very nice person. Her husband was Dr. Frei-- not her husband, her brother was Dr. Frei. And he was our pediatrician for a long time.

How long did you continue the lessons?

Too long. I think eight years. My mother spent a lot of money for nothing. Well, I did play some, but still, it was, I would say, wasted on me. My brother, Fritz, had also lessons from her and he did much better.

Did you participate in recital?

No, definitely not. I don't think she gave recitals. I really don't think so.

Did you ever play for members of your family?

Not that I remember, but I probably did. It could be.

Do you remember any of the music that you played?

Oh, I played some Beethoven sonatas, I know. Oh, yes, "The Mondscheinsonate." And, I mean, I didn't do that bad, you know. But I could have done much better. Definitely.

Any popular music?

No, I don't think so.

So, other than Beethoven, what other--?

Well, Mozart and classical music, not popular. No, no songs. I mean, except maybe children's songs.

What about religious education other than in the school? Was there anything at the synagogue? Any kind of education?

No.

Did Fritz get bar mitzvahed?

I'm sure he did get bar mitzvahed. But this is something I really don't remember at all, not at all. And, of course, Ludwig too. I know they did. You know, my mother was very religious. Her parents were Orthodox. And we had a kosher

household. And my father was not that religious. But, of course, he respected my mother's wishes. So we had a strictly kosher household.

Did you ever help your mother cook?

No, never. We had a maid.

I see.

But the maid really-- my mother did the cooking. The maid did the housework.

Did you help go to the market?

No. No. The thing is that, see, my mother cooked. And when I-- for instance, I really never went into the kitchen. But when I got married, I remembered so much-- like my mother made the yeast dough, for instance-- that I wasn't afraid at all.

And then it was very nice because I married to Furth so I could call her any old time and find out how to make this and that. But I took to cooking very quickly.

You said that you were confirmed.

Yes.

Do you remember anything about that?

I can, in my mind, I can see us standing there, I mean the girls in white dresses, on the bimah. And we all had to recite something. That's all I remember.

Who got confirmed with you?

The friends who were with me in school. Not all of them. I'm sure Margarethe didn't because her parents were not religious.

Do you remember anything about the white dress you wore?

No.

Did a dressmaker--

I'm sure. We never bought anything. See, at that time, readymade clothes were not very popular yet, and men's clothing neither. Everything was made to measure.

When you made the rounds of the dressmakers, did they have photographs for you to choose, or did you describe--

Later on, yeah. But when I was confirmed, that was a little before that time. It was a very simple dress, I'm sure, that I wore.

Do you know how your mother and father met?

No, I don't. I never knew. I have no idea. When she married, she was 27. And, at that time, 27 was pretty old to get married, not like nowadays. And maybe somebody got them together. I mean, he needed a wife so badly, with those two children. Of course, he had a governess, someone in the house to take care of the children, but still.

But I do not know how they met. Who knows? Maybe one of my mother's brothers knew of him and got them together. I have no idea. I never was curious, really, to ask.

Now, what do you remember about growing up with Ludwig and Fritz?

Well, Fritz was a very odd young man. See, I mean, his mother died in childbed. And for a year and a half there was only a children's nurse or a governess to take care of him, and my father. But, after all, my father worked.

And then my mother took over. And she tried really everything to-- she loved him and she took such good care of him. But I think that in that child something had been missing. The first mother love wasn't there. And I think he always felt that he was neglected.

I must say that Ludwig, who was six years older, was a charming boy and became a charming man, and became really a friend of my mother's. And I always bragged to my girlfriends because he was really as good-looking as a film star. And I said, I can marry Ludwig. We are not blood-related at all. And he and I liked each other very much.

What did he look like?

I didn't bring a picture of him. He was very good-looking. He was tall and very handsome. That's all I can say.

And what did Fritz look like?

He was also nice-looking, especially as a child. He was blond and he was a nice-looking boy.

And what did you look like, if you look back and see yourself walking to school?

I had two braids, braids of some length. And I looked OK.

Looking back, how would you describe that girl walking off to school?

That's hard for me to tell about myself. I think I was all right. I was liked by my friends. And I was quite happy, I must say.

I loved my father. It was very sad for me when he died, when I was 14 years old, because I was very close to him, very close. Of course, he had had two boys and then a girl. But then I became very close to my mother.

What year did you graduate from the lyceum?

Well, when I was 16, which was-- 1911-- 1927. Yeah.

The year after your father died?

My father died in-- no, no, when I was 14, he died, '25.

And what do you remember about graduation?

Nothing.

Was there anything to remember, a ceremony?

No, no. No, nothing at all, uh-uh. And sometimes, the school years we're not very happy because at that time already they would call us dirty Jew and so on. That happened, especially one girl.

What--?

During the lyceum, yeah.

Who was that girl?

I can't remember her name.

What do you remember about her?

I remember that she, outside, on the way home, she would call us dirty Jews. For no good reason, just to be mean.

Do you know what religion she was, what her background was?

No. She just was a student in my class.

Was there antisemitism in Nuremberg when you were growing up?

Well, it became-- Nuremberg was the worst city to be in, practically, later on, because of Julius Streicher, who wrote this-- he wrote the newspaper. He was responsible for the paper, Der Sturmer, which was about the worst Nazi paper in existence. And that that was in Nuremberg.

Before that happened, when you were-- in the early 1920s--

No, there was nothing, not that concerned me, no.

Anything concerning your father's--

No, I don't think so. No, I don't think-- my father died, really, in '26. But at that time, he had not suffered under antisemitism. It developed around '29 for sure. It started. Hitler started already making noise.

But by then you were out of school, so--

Right.

--there were some stirrings in the early 1920s.

Not in the early-- I mean, we said I got out of school in '27 so, yeah, there were always antisemites in Germany, even without Hitler making noises.

What do you remember?

I don't remember much at all because I didn't suffer at that time. I only remember that girl calling us dirty Jews.

And how did you feel?

I didn't like it, of course not.

Were you afraid?

No. No, we were not afraid. We just didn't like it. We didn't have any fights either. We were smart enough not to bother.

What about any of your teachers? Anything?

No, I don't remember anything.

When the rabbi came in to teach you in school, what other religious groups were taught?

I'm sure Protestants and Catholics, the same way. We just parted into different rooms.

Did you have any friends who were Catholic and Protestant?

I had one Gentile friend, but I don't know how much of-- we were friends in school. But now, for instance, I can't remember if I ever was at her house or not. But she was a very nice girl, Elizabeth Guntz. I remember even her name.

When Christmas was celebrated, were there any Jews who celebrated Christmas, who had a Christmas tree?

Yes, I'm sure Margarethe's parents had a Christmas tree. I don't remember well, but I would assume that they-- I mean, I was in the house often. I don't remember, but I'm sure they did have a Christmas tree.

What we did for Christmases, we were very attentive to our maid, to our-- she was called "cook," but she really didn't cook much.

And when we were children we had also-- what do you call Kinderfraulein? Hm?

Nanny?

Sort of, yeah, a nanny.

Governess.

Yeah, governess. And we were very, very nice to them and made a big table with presents, loads of presents they got. And also from the family, they sent presents too for them. And I would play the Christmas songs on the piano. Made it very, very nice with them.

Yeah, we did that every year. We had our maids for many years. They belonged to the family. They were Catholic, always. I think they always were Catholic.

What were their names?

Johanna. I remember Johanna mostly. I even went once on vacation with her to a small place not too far from Nuremberg. Because it must have been when my father was at war, I'm sure. So my mother let me go with her to her parents. And we had a wonderful time there.

What did you do?

Oh, probably, I don't know, I really don't remember details. But I know the food was good. And they probably had some chickens and maybe some cows. I don't remember. But it was fun for a couple of weeks.

And I also was sent to-- see, I was sent to someplace because they just couldn't do it any other way, because they had to go to the sanatorium. And so my father had a brother, and he lived in Deggendorf, which is closer to Czechoslovakia, but it's in Germany. And they had a store, also a yardage store.

And I had a cousin there with whom I'm not in contact at all. I have no idea. Ever since we came over here, I have not-- I don't know where she is. But anyway, I spent usually a couple of weeks there. And that was nice.

She was younger than I am, but we had a good time together. But I don't know what we did. Just what girls do, I don't know. It's too long ago.

What's her name?

Lotte Rudiger it was. I know she came over here and then went to England, I think. But I have no idea.

What about cousins in Nuremberg?

Well, Hugo has one daughter, whose name is Rosie. And she lives in New York, and I talk to her once a week. We are very close.

And Emile?

Emile had a son. And, first of all, he was married to a lovely woman. And she died when the son was a year and a half old, something like that. Very sad.

And then he was, for a few years, alone. And then he married again but didn't have-- yes, had then another child. And she is Marianne. And she lives in New York. And I see her always when I'm in New York. So I have some cousins.

And I have a cousin on my father's side. I told you that my father had a sister. And the sister had two daughters. One didn't get out of Germany. But Anna got out, and she lives also in New York. And I talk to her every few months on the phone. She's a few years older than I am.

What about from the aunt who went to Amsterdam?

The aunt who went to Amsterdam? Yes, Lienchen. She has one daughter. And she had one son. The son has died. He lived in London. And the daughter, her name is Else. And she lives in Geneva, Switzerland. And I'm in correspondence with her, and I saw her maybe six years ago. I stayed with her for a few days.

And Leah? And Claire?

Lienchen--

The one who was in Graz.

Clara had-- well, it was Lienchen-- oh, Lina. Lina, she had children of her own. She married a widower with many children. But she had two daughters. And one died, and one succumbed in concentration camp. And the daughter of one daughter lives in Denver, and I am in contact with her.

And Clara?

She had a daughter and two sons. The two sons are gone, and the daughter also is dead now. But I visited with her in New York whenever I was in New York.

All right, it's now 1927. You've graduated from school. And what are you--

What did I do?

What lies ahead of you? What do you think you're going to do?

I didn't think much. I just went to a woman who gave a course in sewing, mostly underwear sewing. You know, at that time, slips and panties, and stuff like that. And I learned to do this.

So I went there, and I think that went on for a year. And I had fun with my girlfriends. And then, at that time, I also went with my mother on vacations after my father had died. We went to Austria in summer. And once we went to Czechoslovakia to Marienbad. And it was always very nice.

Where were you in Austria?

In Aussee, in the Salzkammergut, near Salzburg. Yes.

And can you describe that?

Well, it was in the middle of the mountains, a very, very beautiful place, very lovely. And there was Aussee and Altaussee. And Altaussee had a lake. And so we enjoyed that very much. And I played a lot of table tennis, ping pong and got to know some people who were also vacationing there. It was nice.

And they were sometimes also relatives, I mean, the ones that, unfortunately, died in concentration camps. That one daughter of Lina's, with her children, was there also. So we had fun together.

And how would you describe where you were in Czechoslovakia?

Well, that was a very nice, what we used to call [GERMAN], where people would drink certain waters, you know, and just a nice place to be.

Did you have a favorite, these places you went to?

Oh, I liked the mountains the best, definitely.

Did you like to hike or camp?

Yeah, we hiked. We did.

What years were these vacations taken?

Probably, '27. And then, of course, in '28 I went to Switzerland for a whole year, and then again '30 and '31.

How did you decide to go to Switzerland?

I wanted to learn French. And my mother thought it was good. It was a good education because it was what you would call a finishing school. It was a Jewish-- Madame Loewenthal was the owner and the head of it.

And I was there a whole year and did nothing but speak French, learned French. I mean, I had six years before that in school. So I was prepared well for it, but not for conversation. And that's what I learned mostly. And we learned all kinds of things. And we also had an English teacher, but that was really minor.

And we did some artwork too, like painting China, you know. And I remember that I made a very pretty plate. And we had excursions, and we put up on plays also. And it was a wonderful time. I mean, like being in another world for me for a whole year, with 30 other girls from all over, some from the United States too. And I made friendships, and it was a very good year.

Who were some of your friends?

Well, there was one woman-- one girl, at that time-- who was from Stuttgart. And her name was Gette Tiefenthal. And we became very good friends. But later on, we didn't hear from each other anymore.

I mean, after I was married. And I remember, I visited her once in New York, and it just was different. That happens sometimes.

Are there any other friends you remember?



Not by name, but, I mean, I remember that I had a very good time.

What would a typical day be like?

Oh, we had classes. And we probably had to make our beds and clean up. And we definitely had classes in the morning. And then in the afternoon, I don't think we played tennis or anything like that. But we would go to town and to the bookstore a lot. I have so many books from that bookstore in Lausanne, so we must have gone quite a bit. And I don't remember that much.

Where did you live?

Oh, that was a beautiful house outside of Lausanne, a little bit outside of Lausanne. Beautiful building and with a huge yard or garden, very nice.

Who else lived there with you?

Well, all the 30 girls, and all the teachers, and Madame Lilienthal, and her son Peter.

Did you have your own room?

That's a good question. I don't think so. I think-- I'm sure I had to share the room with somebody, I would think. But I don't remember.

It must have been a very large house.

Oh yes, it was. But I'm sure we shared rooms. We must have.

And is that where the school took?

Yes, everything.

Everything.

Everything, yes.

And all your meals?

Oh yes.

What kind of meals? What did you have?

Good. I couldn't tell you what we had, but it was good food. We probably got fat.

How far were you from Lausanne? How did you get into Lausanne?

Oh that was just by streetcar. It was not that far.

And how do you remember the city looking?

The city was beautiful. It's beautiful. I went there with my husband later on. But not to the place, but I went to Lausanne with him. And it's a lovely city, also very close to the mountains, and clean and nice. And it's close, it's right at the Lake, you know, Geneva. Very pretty.

And what were your thoughts about the future while you were in school?

I don't think I gave it much thought. I lived for the moment, I'm sure, at that time. I didn't worry.

You had no thoughts of using your French for anything?

No, not at the time. No, I didn't. I don't think so.

Where were you when you first learned about-- when you first heard about Hitler?

Mm. That's hard to tell.

Did you feel any antisemitism in Lausanne?

Oh, no. None. Of course, there were only Jewish kids there in that [NON-ENGLISH]. There was nobody else.

And what happened with the holidays there?

Oh, we celebrated the Jewish holidays, yes. Definitely. Madame Lilienthal was very observant.

Where with Madame Lilienthal from?

I have no idea. She was there. That's all I know. No idea.

You had a seder there?

I'm sure we had a Seder, which I don't remember. But I know we had everything. I mean, I was there from the 1st of May to the next 1st of May. And then my mother picked me up.

During that time, did you travel anywhere else? From May 1 to May 1.

No, we made some excursions, but only day excursions with the school, right. Into the mountains, into the snow, I remember once. That's the first and last time when I was standing on skis for a few minutes.

Do you remember the day your mother came to get you?

Yes. I remember most that we were at the train station to go home to Nuremberg. And I talked to another passengers while we were waiting for the train. And she couldn't believe that I wasn't a French person because I spoke French so fluently, which made me very happy. You know, she made me a big compliment.

Now it's June, 1929.

Right.

And you're back in Nuremberg.

Yes.

Now what has happened?

Now what happened was that I wanted to be in the store. The name was Gebruder Bachmann, of the store. And this person, Ida Bachmann, didn't let me in. She was a nasty person.

And I think she was-- you know, I was a young girl of 18. And she didn't think she wanted that competition. I mean, she

was the mother of three children. And her husband, I guess, didn't have much to say. So she just fought it, you know. And so I was disappointed. I was very disappointed.

But then I-- I think-- how was it? I think I then took a class to learn shorthand because that we didn't learn in school. I think I learned typing in school but not shorthand. And I wanted to know shorthand. And after I knew that, I looked for a job.

And I ended up with two Jewish young lawyers who needed me. And I was there from, well, 1930, '31. I think I started with them in '29, probably in the fall of '29, and stayed with them until the 1st of April, 1933, when we had to close the practice.

And their name was Dr. Muntz and Dr. Klein. And Dr. Klein was the son of the Orthodox rabbi in Nuremberg. And he was not married. Dr. Muntz was married. And I was a Girl Friday and did everything. Because they were beginners, young. And a most enjoyable time, I really had a wonderful time with them.

And, unfortunately, on the 1st of April, '33, unless a doctor or a lawyer had participated in World War I, they had to close their practice. Now, my Uncle Emile, who was an obstetrician, he had fought in World War I, so he didn't have to close his practice.

But those two lawyers, of course, it was the end of their existence. Muntz went to Israel and Klein succumbed somehow. I mean he was killed.

Now, during this period of time--

Yes.

--from 1929 to April 1933, what do you remember hearing about Hitler after you returned?

Yeah. Yeah, it started then. One heard about it. And at first, it wasn't that much, you know. I mean, we were not bothered yet, not in '29.

But I'm just trying to remember. See, I must say that in 1930 I met my husband. And we were friends for three years. We married in September, 1933.

And during that time, I was working, and he was working. And I know, at first, we were a group of friends. I mean, not only he and I, but we had several friends. And we would go on Sundays on our outings with a train, with a little milk train, and with our backpack, and hike.

And at first it was fine. But then, by '33, when Hitler came to power-- or already probably '32, I can't tell you that exactly-- then they had those big signs at the entrance of those villages where we used to go, "Jews Forbidden." There were huge signs. And you couldn't go in to get a drink or to do anything.

We had to go walk around the towns, the little towns. I mean, that's when it became difficult. Already between-- yes, it definitely became difficult. It got worse and worse.

How would one know you were Jewish?

I knew it. I mean, some people-- I mean, in Germany, people knew that I was Jewish. Here, they probably could think I'm Mexican. I don't know what. But there, they knew.

My husband didn't look Jewish. His mother was Catholic and converted, so he was blond and blue-eyed. But still, I mean, after all, we knew we were Jewish and we wouldn't go. We wouldn't take risks.

What about in your job with the lawyers? What would come up there?

I don't remember things coming up there because they probably had mostly Jewish clients, I would think. I can't remember anything, no.

Were there discussions there, with the two lawyers? Did you ever talk about things there?

Well, I'm sure towards the end we talked about it. You know, how bad things are going. But otherwise, I wouldn't know. I mean, sure, one talked about it. One talked about it, how bad things are going, and what is going to happen.

And some people thought it's going-- for instance, my uncle who was the physician, he thought it would blow over. There were people who didn't believe it, couldn't believe it. He only left in 1939, at the last moment. Because he thought that it would go away. There were many who thought that way. We knew better.

How did you know better? Why?

Because we realized that the way-- see, there was-- people were without jobs in Germany, just like-- a little bit like here. And they became very restless. And then Hitler comes and promises them that things will get better. And they believed it. And they were going to fight for it.

And, of course, I think most Germans were always sort of antisemitic anyway, so it didn't need much to encourage them. And all those young people who really had nothing else to do were happy to be put in uniforms and to be Nazis, to become Nazis.

Were any of your school acquaintances, did any of them become Nazis, any friends or acquaintances?

I wouldn't know. I had no contact with them. Mm-mm, no.

What about business at your father's store? Did you know anything about that?

No. I don't.

Did you ever hear Hitler speak?

Mm, I'm sure I heard him. No, you mean, to see him?

Or hear him on the radio.

Oh, I'm sure I heard him on the radio. Yeah. It was horrible. I mean, the time was so terrible, especially after I got married. You wouldn't talk about anything else but that. Because then, for instance, a month or two after Hitler came to power, one of my husband's best friends was sent to Dachau just because he belonged to the B'nai B'rith.

And then his mother was informed that he-- what did they say? Well, the thing was that they told him to run, and they shot him in the back and killed him. But they probably said he disobeyed some order. So things like that started to come to the surface. And that was terrible.

And there were horrible things starting. I mean, for instance, the 1st of April, 1933, when I was not married, but we knew we would get married that year, there was the day when they-- the Nazis-- put signs on all the businesses, where it said, this is a Jewish store.

And my husband, he had to take over his father's business, which was made-to-measure men's clothing. And I knew he was there in his store. And I was already out of my job the 1st of April. And he lived in Furth, and I lived in Nuremberg.

And so I decided that I was going to go to Furth to see if he's all right. And I was in the streetcar. And when we got to the middle of the town of Nuremberg, I saw many Jewish men being led through the town by Nazis.

And in the street car were several women, and they all became hysterical and got up and screamed Heil Hitler. And luckily, they didn't notice me because I was sitting in back. And if they had noticed me-- because I didn't raise my arm, I never raised my arm, neither did my husband-- I don't know what would have happened to me.

So I did get safely to Furth and he was all right. But, of course, he had to close his store that day. And then soon afterwards, I know that my Uncle Hugo was also taken from his home for no good reason. And he was led with others through the town, and then led to a field where they had to pull grass with their teeth. That I know for sure.

And when Philip and I, when we were still courting, I mean, being together, and we sometimes would have to-- when he would bring me home, and we would walk up and down the street, and then Nazis would come. You could hear them with their big-- what do you call, shoes--

Boots?

Boots, yeah. So we would hide sometimes and go to the entrance of a house just because we were not going to lift our arm. So it wasn't very comfortable. And you were afraid to talk much on the telephone because one didn't know if the phone was taped or not. And you couldn't go to a movie anymore or to the theater. Just was too dangerous.

So all we did was talk about it and where are we going to go. And we decided, my husband had an uncle in Oakland who wanted us to come. But that was a brother of his father who came here as a young boy, like a good-for-nothing. Sometimes kids were sent to America when they didn't do well.

And he was 15 years old, I think, when he came to this country. And he became a real American. He fought in the Spanish-American War, Uncle Sigmund. And he became a cook in Texas for cowboys. [LAUGHS] And then when we came, he was an insurance man.

But before that, when my husband and I got married on September 5, 1933, and we went to Palestine for four weeks on our honeymoon to look around if we should emigrate to Palestine at that time. It wasn't a honeymoon-honeymoon, you know. It was something much more intense and serious.

And we spent there four weeks, and we looked all around. And in the end, my husband didn't feel strong enough to become a farmer. And besides, the British wanted the money on the table, which we had in Germany but not there. I mean, it was too complicated. And Philip, really, he didn't feel he could become a farmer. And that's what we would have had to be.

So we went home, naturally, after four weeks. And then we became more serious about United States and Uncle's offer. And three years later, to the day, we came here.

Where did you and your husband meet?

We met at a dance. And we met at a dance which was the culmination of a dancing school, when the dancing school was over. I had participated in that school. But friends of ours, they invited us, but separately. And we met there by chance.

And the next morning, I had French conversation lesson with my French teacher, whom I had French conversation until my child was born, every week. And I said to Mademoiselle [NON-ENGLISH], I have met the man I'm going to marry. He didn't think so that day, but a few months later, we became friends. So that was very nice.

At that time, what was he doing?

He was already taking care of that store. It was very, in a way, sad for him. Because he had one brother who was four years older than he. And they were wonderful brothers together, to the very end. But that brother went to university to become a chemist. He then became a research chemist.

And my husband went to Gymnasium, which means he learned Latin and Greek and, of course, also wanted to become either a journalist or an attorney. And then the inflation came, and everybody lost so much money.

And poor Philip had to-- he skipped grades. But anyway, he had to leave the Gymnasium and become an apprentice in a toy export company. Furth was famous for toy factories and toy export.

And then, a year or two later, his father died very suddenly. And so he left there and, with his mother, together, kept up the store. And it was very interesting to me that after my husband died, when I went through his things. He loved to write. And he loved to write rhymes also, a lot of them, and rather good ones.

But anyway, I saw that he had written sort of a story, a novel, about two brothers, and of course different names. But he wrote it all out, how disappointed he was that he couldn't go to college.

But I think writing that-- it was written in German, so he must have written it very early. Writing that probably helped him to get over it because he always said to me he's satisfied and he's all right.

So when we came here, his first job was just from October to December at Montgomery Wards putting toys together. And then somebody introduced him to the manager at Hastings Men's Clothing Store. And he started working there in the basement, in the receiving department, and worked himself up to salesman. And worked there-- I mean, after all, he knew men's clothing very, very well.

And then the war started, and he worked at the naval supply depot for the war effort, where he was utterly misplaced. He got pleurisy. And so they finally realized that this wasn't the place for him. He worked at night. And then they put him into a Army-Navy store, where they sold uniforms and things like that, I guess on 1st Street, in San Francisco.

And then he became employed at Grodin's. And later on he became manager of a Grodin's clothing store in Hayward for five years. And then Grodin's brought all kinds of different people from back East in, and they wanted to give him a different job.

Also, he had made that store. He was there from the beginning, and he had really made the store in Hayward. And he came home and he said, should I take a different position with them, or should I quit? I said, you quit. You are not going to be demoted.

And so he did. And it took him two or three weeks to study real estate and became a broker. And then, the last 10 years, he worked in real estate and was very happy. So that was my wonderful husband.

What about your wedding day?

Oh, that was-- it was OK, but it was-- under Hitler, we could not be-- that was when the yearly Nazi rally that they always assembled in Nuremberg, thousands and thousands and thousands of Nazis under Hitler, and we wouldn't have dared to be in the synagogue. Because it was the 5th of September. It was at the same time that the Nazis were there.

And so we had it in my mother's house. And Dr. Freudenthal gave the little talk, and it was very nice. And my mother had a luncheon there. I think my father's brother was there from Deggendorf, and his wife, and one of our friends, I'll say.

But otherwise-- and my brother? No, I think Fritz already had left the country at that time. Fritz was just before the bar examination. And so he couldn't follow through. And so he went to Holland. And what helped him was, that when my father died, I think each of us children inherited a certain amount. And he could take his money along. And that helped him.

So it was a nice gathering. But at 3 o'clock, I think we took the train to Italy and then on to Palestine.

You took the train to where in Italy?

Oh, we went first to Milan-- that's in northern Italy-- for one night. And then we spent a day in Rome, I remember, just one day. And then we went to Naples, from where we took the ship, then, to Palestine. And we were in Naples, I'm sure, for two days or three days before we took the ship.

And what do you remember about Palestine in 1933?

Well, it was already-- what I remember very well is that we went to the Habima, to the theater, and saw a performance. And there were a lot of camels on the street yet. And Tel Aviv was already sort of a city, and so was Jerusalem, with some modern houses. I have pictures at home from that trip.

And we traveled around quite a bit. We made friends with a family and shared a car, which was nice. And then, when we got to Jerusalem, we became ill, in what they called pappataci. It was, you'd get stung by a fly. And so my husband was pretty sick for a few days, high fever. And then I got sick too. But we got over it. That I remember very well.

And I remember, see, we couldn't go to Temple on Yom Kippur because we were ill that day. But I think, I know we must have gone to Temple on Rosh Hashanah. And we just looked around. And we were in Pardes Hanna, which is not too far from Tel Aviv.

And we spoke there with a family who had a grapefruit farm. And we really liked the whole thing. They lived in a nice little house, and had a little girl, and were quite happy. But then my husband decided that it wasn't for him.

So we decided again-- and it wouldn't have worked out anyway, because the British were very nasty. And they needed the money right there and then, and we didn't have it there.

What money did they want?

For the grapefruit farm, for the house and everything to settle there. You had to buy it. You had to pay for it.

Remember how much they wanted?

No. No idea.

When you came back to Germany--

Yes?

--where did you settle?

In Furth, where my husband lived.

A house he already had?

No, no, no. No. We rented an apartment. In fact, we rented-- didn't buy our furniture because we knew we would not remain in Germany. We knew that already in '33. So we rented an apartment, a furnished apartment, from a lady who was visiting her sons in Israel. And she had a lovely apartment. And so that worked out very well.

When did you become aware of Streicher, Julius Streicher?

Oh, you couldn't be unaware of him, ever, no, right from the beginning of Hitler time. I mean, he brought out that newspaper and he was just horrible, you know. He was just a horrible Nazi, a good friend of Mr. Hitler, I'm sure.

I'm sure he was there before '33 already. But I wouldn't be able to tell you exactly when I became aware of him, but as soon as he made noise. We all were afraid of him too, and aware of him, definitely.

You say that every year, September 5, there was a gathering of the Nazis at Nuremberg.

Yes, the 3rd to the 5th, I guess, yeah.

Do you remember anything about that the year before you got married? Did stores have to close? Did people stay off the streets? Was there violence, or after that?

No. No, I don't remember. I don't remember that stores had to close. I really don't. Maybe they closed on their own. That could be. That could have happened. But I know, for instance, that my husband rode on the streetcar. I don't know if he came from my house. But it was in the middle of town, around that time. It was the year before.

And apparently, Hitler came in his automobile, came by, right next to the streetcar. And everybody went crazy and lifted their arm and screamed Heil Hitler.

And my husband was on the outside. I mean, he was on the streetcar, but where you could really see him. And he went way in back. I mean, he just went way in back because he was not going to lift his arm. And luckily that nobody saw him because they would have lynched him, I think. Because they were just, like, out of their mind, so crazy.

We had a dairy shop across the street from where we lived. And I went over there to buy a quarter of a pound of butter. That's all you could dare to ask. Things were very scarce. And the man said, I can't give you that much. I said, Well, how about an eighth? No. Then he gave me one-sixteenth of a pound.

And I made a remark, you know, that I was dissatisfied. And when I came home, I don't think I slept for three nights because I thought he will report me just because I said something. That's how hard it was.

What year was this?

It was between probably '34 or '35, while I was married in Furth. You know, Furth is the place where Henry Kissinger comes from. And my husband corresponded with Henry's father until the man died. Or maybe my husband died before him. I don't remember, but anyway.

How did he know Kissinger, Senior?

Oh, in Furth, Jews knew each other, and certain families, for sure. And I'm sure that old Mr. Kissinger-- you know, people visited on Shabbos and after school. And I'm sure that old Mr. Kissinger and his wife visited my grandparents and also visited with, probably, Philip's parents.

Why was there a scarcity of food?

Everything was scarce. I think that-- I'm sure-- we didn't have margarine at that time yet. I don't remember much ever using margarine at home. And in Germany, no, things were not plentiful. Why? Because the economy was bad.

And no, when I came over here and I saw 5 pounds of apples for 19 cents, I couldn't believe it. That's what I paid it when I came here. I remember that.

And then you had a son born when you were--

In Germany.

Yes.

Yes. And he was seven months old when we left. He was born in February of '36.



Why did it take from thirty-- what took so long? Why did it take from '33, when you returned from your honeymoon, to '36, when you finally came? Did you change your mind?

No, no. But that all takes a long time to-- first of all, with my husband's business. And he still did business with Jewish customers, mostly. I mean, the gentile customers came through the back door, but not many. It was too dangerous for them to be caught at a Jewish store.

And, until the [PERSONAL NAME] bro-- sent over the affidavit, you know, those things all take a long time. After all, it was October '33, when we came back, and then '34, '35. Maybe we were not in such a hurry. But we never-- I mean, we knew we had to leave.

And then we had to buy-- we bought all our furniture. And that all came along in a big lift van. And I wanted a child, and I didn't know what to expect in America. So I had my son Leon in February, 1936.

And how did your mother feel about all of this, about you're leaving?

She realized that that was the only thing to do. And unfortunately, we couldn't take her along then. I mean, we wouldn't have known how. And I don't think she would have gone with us anyway. I don't think so at all. She wanted to be together with her brother and sister-in-law, with Hugo and Cammie. And Philip's mother, we put into a Jewish home in Wurzburg. Later on, the Nazis destroyed that home.

And luckily-- I told you that she had been Catholic to begin with. So luckily, one of her Catholic nieces got her, came to get her, and then she ended her life at the niece's house, which was very nice. Of course, she had to become Catholic again to be buried in a Catholic cemetery. But, after all, she was a woman in her 80s at that time. So she at least died a natural death.

And your mother?

My mother went illegally in-- no, first of all, she came to us, to see us. We came in '36. She came in November, '37, for six months. She had a six-month visa. And she came, and she was not gifted for languages. And she had taken English lessons. But she was so embarrassed when she opened her mouth to say something English, that she started laughing embarrassedly.

And it was a very-- let's say a nervous time when she was here. I had the little boy and was very protective of him. I mean, before that, my mother and I were the best friends. But two women in one kitchen don't get along so well. So this was already one thing that didn't work out so well.

And then, we wanted her, of course, not to go back to Germany. My husband begged her on his knees. I remember that so well, that she could have gone to Cuba at that time. She could have gone to Canada or to Mexico, any place, and then come back on an regular affidavit visa. No, she has to go back to her brother and sister-in-law and come with them.

Well, we had to let her go. I mean, there was no way, holding her here. I mean, we didn't fight. But it was a nervous kind of time. And we were still struggling, and she was used to everything so plentiful. And she was probably disappointed, too, that things were not all there yet. And anyway, she went back. And then, of course, she got a very high number at the consulate to leave.

And later on, she moved in even with her brother and sister-in-law. And my cousin, their daughter, says that my mother came back because she was financially able to help her brother and sister-in-law, because my cousin came, via England, very late to this country. And she lived through a lot there, so she knew more about it.

Anyway, those three then went illegally into Holland. And if you had known my mother, who was such a lady, you know, that she does something illegal, you couldn't have believed it. And then they lived in Holland yet for a few years.

We tried everything to get them over here. I mean, that was really our only conversation, I think, for a few years. And

we made telephone calls to Washington, DC. And, I mean, we tried everything. And then we sent them tickets to go to, I think-- I don't know, a big ship-- but anyway, from Rotterdam to Cuba in May of, it must have been '42.

And that day was the day before the Nazis marched in to Holland and burned the Rotterdam harbor and the ships that were there. So that was out again. So then, not probably soon after, they were arrested and taken to concentration camps and killed.

But the last few days-- and that I know through a friend, and it is true-- that my mother-- why, I don't know-- she separated from the two and lived the last three days in Anne Frank's house, on a different floor, with a family, with one of my girlfriends. I mentioned her to you when we were in school, Ruth Wexler, with her and her husband and her mother.

And my mother came with flour and yeast on a Friday and baked challah and stayed with those people for a few days. And those people escaped the Nazis, but my mother didn't. Now, I don't know any details about that. I don't. Nobody told me.

And I even talked-- I met Ruth, who is in South America. She was here once, but she didn't tell me details either. How come that she, and her little boy, and her husband, and her mother escaped? I know they went on foot.

But my mother and her brother and sister-in-law were taken. And that was it. So it was-- I mean, we really tried everything, everything possible. And, like it was not meant to be. So that was very sad, very sad.

But what I always feel is, she was a very religious woman. And I'm sure that her belief helped her some to go through all that. I'm sure. Because she was-- even in Germany, she joined the-- I guess it's called Havra'ah, to wash the dead. And she did that. I think you have to be pretty religious to do something like that. So I hope that that helped her.

I think this is a good time to take a break. Do you know that you've spoken for almost two hours?

I did.

And you spoke-- for somebody who had nothing to say about her childhood, you spoke for an hour on your childhood, as someone who had nothing to say?

Well, because you asked me.

So, you had something.

Well, I hope so.

We'll take a little break. The air is--

Yes.

It gets very hot in here. And we'll--

Yeah.

Those pictures even--

Oh, the pictures will be--

Do you want me to turn the lights--

Shall we ask the questions? Let me see your pictures.

Oh, would you--