

[SIDE CONVERSATION] All right.

During the break, Lily, you mentioned something about the Austrian government getting in touch with you now. Could you tell us about that?

Yes. I was mentioning it because I was looking for my documents, which I told you I couldn't find at the time. So I know that I-- otherwise I would have brought some, and I couldn't find them. I had a letter from-- it was official from the Austrian government-- that said they recognize now the terrible things that happened to the Jews.

They seemed to have suddenly suffered some pangs of conscience, and they wrote this letter. They said they were sorry, and they want to extend some sort of gesture of goodwill. They didn't say it in so many words, but I know that they're planning some sort of-- in other words, they're going to send some money.

They realize that it is in no way compensate for any of the terrible things that happened to us, and that were done to us, and that were taken away from us, but this is just simply a gesture of goodwill. They just want to know that they feel bad about what had happened.

How did that feel to you when you got that letter?

[LAUGHS] It only took them 50-some years. But, so they sent you a questionnaire, asking the all the information. When were you there? What happened to you? And so on and so forth. And then, they asked for some kind of proof that you were really there during that time. So that's when I started looking for the documents, but I couldn't find anything.

And then they said also, well, maybe you know somebody that could testify to the fact that you were there. So I guess my friend, my girlfriend in Paris can do that. So that was when I started looking for all these documents that I couldn't find, otherwise we'd have brought them here.

OK, we'll talk now about the things you did bring then. Why don't you tell us what--

That's my mother when she was a young woman and visiting her sister in Chicago.

And the year was about?

Well, it was a few years before World War One maybe 1910.

What was her age, roughly, if you know?

Maybe she was 19. She had many suitors. [LAUGHS]

One who proved invaluable, huh?

That's right. And they all did-- she heard about them through her sister in Chicago, and they all did extremely well, became very rich. But she wasn't ready to get married, so. Oh, she loved America. She always wanted to go back. Never happened.

So this is my father. This is my father when he was a young man, already with a receding hairline. [LAUGHS] He didn't have much hair by the time I got to know him. I think this was just shortly before he got married, and I'm not sure how old he was at the time. Perhaps-- he was older than my mother, a few years older than my mother. And I would say he was in his late 20s, maybe 30.

Where did they meet?

They were introduced by friends, or actually, relatives. And in fact, my mother even then wasn't ready to get married,

but her mother got so mad at her. [LAUGHS] I know my mother told me she went through the house slamming doors, and got mad at her, and said it was time she got married, and so.

Was your father from Poland too?

Yes. He was from Lvov, Lemberg it was called in German. And while my mother was from a very large family, he just had one sister.

Do you know anything of why those two families had come to Vienna from Poland?

They met in Poland.

Oh, they met in Poland.

Yeah, they met in Poland.

So they--

They-- just by, yeah.

--together.

Right.

And their families--

The families stayed in Poland.

And what brought them to Vienna?

I think opportunity for work. And actually, my father's older brother was by that time already established in Vienna in his business, so he brought my father and my mother both to Vienna.

And my mother and me when I was 18 months old. And we were taking our picture because we needed a picture for a passport, because my mother was taking me to Poland to visit her family at that time. And of course I don't remember anything about that visit, but she took us to Poland again when I was eight years old, my brother and me, and I remember a lot about that visit. But we have no picture of that visit.

So at this age you were on one passport with your mother? Yeah. Uh-huh. And this is me and my girlfriend. We are about 15. This is the girlfriend that then emigrated to France and with whom I'm still in touch.

She's on the left?

Yeah, it's hard recognizing me. [LAUGHS] Yeah, she's on the left, and we were both about 15 sitting in a friend's garden. In fact, I'm still in touch with the friend. The friend is now 90 years old. She lives in San Francisco, but she's in very poor shape. But this was her garden in Vienna. And this friend was not at all Jewish, not in the least bit, but she emigrated because she couldn't stand the regime.

OK.

And that's my mother. I think it's just maybe a year or so before the Anschluss. She's going-- coming back from shopping. She went to the market every morning. And she had her [INAUDIBLE], her shopping bag, because you had to bring your own container for whatever you bought. She went shopping every morning to the open air market, which was not too far from where we lived.

But you picked him.

Yes. [INAUDIBLE].

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

You told us about that.

Yeah. And look at your brother's hair.

Yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

Your father must have been jealous.

[LAUGHTER]

Oh. OK, this is a picture of our family, my mother, my father, my brother, and myself. And this was taken after the Anschluss. The year would be about '39.

Do you remember why this picture was taken?

There was no official reason. I think my brother had a-- he wanted a picture of our family together, and he had a camera, a little camera that could take pictures. I mean, it was one of those that you could set and then it would take your picture, so he set it and then took our picture.

It wasn't any person that took that picture, he just took it himself. And it's really not a very good picture. My father looks startled.

[LAUGHTER]

I think I was about 16 at that time, yeah, and he 14. That was in our apartment.

Were these pictures-- were you able to bring these pictures out of Austria when you came to the United States?

Yeah.

Is that how you got them out?

Yeah. That was not a problem.