Interview with Hilda Catz

Holocaust Oral History Project

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Transcriber: Sue Ross

MS. FIELDEN: My name is Evelyn Fielden, and I am an interviewer with the Oral History Project of North California in San Francisco. Today with me is Hilda Catz, and my co-interviewers are Beatrice Netter and Sherry Landau. We have December the 18 th, 1990.

Q GOOD EVENING, HILDA.

A Good evening, Evelyn.

Q LET US START OUT BY YOU TELLING ME ABOUT WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND WHAT YOUR YOUTH, HOW YOU SPENT YOUR VERY EARLY YEARS AND YOUR FAMILY.

A I'm going back many, many years. I grew up in a very traditional middle class German Jewish or Jewish German home, depending on how you want to look at this. I was the youngest of four daughters. My father came from Bavaria. My mother came from Hamburg from the Hanseatic city of Hamburg so that there was a cultural difference between my parents. My mother was a blond and blue eyed. My father was dark.

And I grew up in a town called a Aschaffenburg, which today is known because a large American military base has been there for quite a number of years. And it was a typical, I wouldn't say small town, but not a metropolitan center . A town

of about 45,000 people.

Q WHICH PART OF GERMANY WAS ASCHAFFENBURG?

A Bavaria. This was about 45 kilometers east of Frankfurt so that the influence of a major city was felt. I would say I lived a fairly ordinary life.

I was born in 1924, so that when the Nazis came to power in 1932, I was still young but old enough to have some sort of feeling that it was an undercurrent. And some of my earliest memories perhaps go back to when my father voted, and I went with him. And he voted but told me please not to disclose how he voted. So I was aware then it was some political problems.

The first time I really became aware that I was different, and I don't mean that necessarily positively different, is when I played with a group of children. And perhaps we were very young then, maybe seven, eight. And they were playing a game having to do with winding up a clock. It must have been traumatic enough for me to remember it to this day. And the sort of the outcome was that the clock didn't work, because it was a clock sold by a Jew, so that I realized then there was a stigma attached to being Jewish. So these are really my earliest memories I can think of.

Q WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

A My father was in the clothing business. Aschaffenburg was the center of men's clothing manufacturing, and my father procured materials and sold them to the clothing industries.

My father was an educated man. One of my memories

is of his leisure time doing translations. My parents had lived in England at one time, and he spoke several languages. And my father, I remember, taking Shakespeare and translating into German, from German into French, from French into Italian, and then into Hebrew, and then back into German to see whether there was any relationship and then back into English between that and the original script. And so perhaps my zest for learning came from there. I don't know.

Q WAS YOUR FAMILY OBSERVANT?

A Yes. Actually, we grew up in a fairly orthodox household. But there, again, slightly a dichotomy, because my grandfather was sort of the patriarch, Jewish patriarch of the community. He was known as a very devout orthodox man, and we sort of paid our respects to him every Saturday by going to the synagogue and after that visiting.

And I remember spending somewhat boring but also pleasant hours, because we had to be seen but not heard. And I became familiar with the German illustrator Busch, William Busch. We went through this album, which was sort of caricatures of German life, some of it quite cruel. Two characters who would perhaps be called mischievous, but in many ways they were cruelly so, doing harm to other people. But we thought that was quite joyful.

And our grandparents did expect us to be devout, and to some degree we were. My mother came from a fairly orthodox household. My father did, too, but I believe gave more lip service to this orthodoxy than perhaps personal conviction. But it was a family where Jewish tradition was cherished, where

the rituals were very important, such as Passover and Hanukkah, and were observed with joy.

Q DID YOU GO TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL?

A My schooling actually began in a Catholic school, a parochial school, because my parents felt the education there was superior to the public school. I'm sorry, I mean private parochial school. And then I was sent to a public school and went back to the parochial school when I was, I suppose, something like the seventh grade. And then came 1938 when we were no longer allowed to go to non-Jewish schools.

And as a Jewish school was established in that town under the auspices of the ministry of education of Bavaria, but it was a makeshift institution. We had a teacher who really dearly tried, and we dearly tried him, I'm afraid. And we did have religious education, and then when we were sent to someone who was -- I really don't remember -- the cantor or some official in the synagogue who gave us Hebrew lessons, which we detested, for which I'm grateful to this day. So we did have some feeling for Jewishness.

I really don't quite know whether that was sort of -- whether the times exacerbated the need, really made it necessary for Jewish children to have a feeling of being aware of their Jewishness and being proud of it.

And, indeed, when we went to the Jewish school, and we were taunted by children on our way to school, we were very proud and said, "Yes, but we have the five Books of Moses, which you do not." So somehow or another we were made to feel that this was very important.

Q WHAT ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS? WERE THEY JEWISH, OR NON-JEWS, MIXED?

A My friends were Jewish, because I think at the time where peer and peer pressure is very important, we were no longer able to really associate with non-Jewish children our age. And so my closest friends were Jewish, although I did have a close friend, and I still do to this day, who was a neighbor of ours. And his people were very good to us during difficult times and also were good to my parents after we left. So we have a lot in common background even today.

Q WHEN DID THE IDEA COME UP IN YOUR HOME TO MAYBE IMMIGRATE, LEAVE GERMANY AFTER THE NAZIS CAME?

A Well, the idea did not come up consciously. By accident, by lucky accident of birth, my two older sisters were born in England during the time my parents lived there and had British passports, had dual passports, so that they were able to leave. And they left 1935 and '36, I believe. It could be 1937.

My two oldest sisters, I should state, are 11 and 12 years older than I am. So they left, and they came back to visit. And at one time when my older sister came back to visit, she was asked to relinquish her passport, I believe, for a brief period of time and became very panicky and decided not to stay. Of course, she got her passport back and never returned again after that.

The time to emigrate came seriously after the Crystal Night when children's transports were being organized to get young children out of Germany and where Jewish committees in

England were very active to try and find families for these children. And that is when my parents seriously made plans for my other sister, who is two and a half years older than I am, and I to leave.

Now, my parents, unfortunately, never did leave for one of the reasons being that we were among those few unlucky people who had no relatives in the United States. They did apply for a quota number, but it was a very, very high number, which would have meant an awfully long wait. So that was one reason they did not emigrate.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER CRYSTAL NIGHT AT ALL?

A Yes, very well.

Q WOULD YOU EXPLAIN?

A Very well. It was at that time I went to this Catholic parochial school, and our first class was an English class. I remember very well the first things we learned in this class was to articulate very exactly, "Please pass the marmalade," because survival English perhaps at that time. But I came late to that class, which was not unusual, and for the first time I was not being berated, which surprised me.

I looked around and found my Jewish friends not in this class. This was girls' school, by the way. I went through the first period, through the second period. I think the third period someone took me aside. And this was a girl who had really been quite abusive to us Jewish girls in the past and said to me, "I don't think you know what happened last night."

I said, "No."

And she said, "Well, you live a little out of town,

so perhaps you haven't been affected. But the synagogue was burned down. All Jewish men were taken to jail, and some of the houses were badly damaged," I think she said. "I think you better go home."

And I took her advice. And I had a bicycle, and I went through the back entrance of this school to take a back road, and she covered me. And, indeed, they were other girls who threw stones at me, which was not unusual, because we were stoned even in this Catholic school and constantly being abused, verbally abused.

And I took a very circuitous route home along the river and finally came home and saw my mother peacefully sitting at the sewing machine. And I didn't want to alarm her, and I asked her where my father was.

And she said, "Well, you know he won't be home until later." And where my older sister was, who was not then in school. She had just graduated and was doing an apprenticeship. And I was very nervous until they came home. My father came home. My sister came home. And we barricaded ourselves in our house.

My father then told my mother what had happened. And we lived in a house on the first floor, and upstairs was an office. And the office manager stayed overnight. My father had a rolltop desk and somehow or other pried that rolltop out and placed in front of our beds so in the event someone would come and smash the windows, we would be protected.

We stayed close together and did not leave the house for several days. Our neighbors provided us food,

purchased the food, and also some news. And I remember about five days later going out, because a friend of mine was leaving for the United States, to say goodbye to him. And I remember sitting on the doorstep, and we were both weeping. Probably we didn't know why we were weeping, but we knew something had changed.

And at that time, we were informed that we could not return to the school. I could not return to the school, which I had attended. And we then heard a little about what happened in the town. The synagogue was burned. We went to see it, and it was like a massacre of a family, because it was the central focus of Jewish existence in this town.

And we knew most people whose families were disrupted, because the men were then taken to the concentration camp, to Dachau, primarily. And my aunt, who lived in this small town nearby, apparently told the story of when their house was attacked. First her husband was literally sort of torn away from the house and taken to the jail.

And another Jewish family lived downstairs that had a small child, and when the SS men came, they first went upstairs and hacked every room, including the bathtub. And I remember this so clearly, because I couldn't figure out why anybody wanted to hack a bathtub, smashed everything.

They went downstairs to do the same, and apparently when they opened the door of the living room where this family had placed a small child in a crib, and had covered the crib, apparently the first person to open this, the SS men looked in, saw the crib, closed it, and said, "There's nothing in here."

That saved the child.

My aunt's husband returned, I think, a few days later, I think with the promise that he would leave the country very quickly, which many of the Jewish men had to do in order to get out of the concentration camp. And when he came and saw the demolition of that house, he had a heart attack and died; apparently just collapsed. I was very fond of him, so this made a real impact on me.

Life changed very drastically after that. This was really the first evidence of mass violence against Jews. There were many incidents that took place in our town which I learned later, such as one man was tarred and feathered and then shot. Another man was shot in his bedroom. It was sort of the hoodlums let loose and really no one was protected.

Q WHEN DID YOU HEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME ABOUT THE WORD "CONCENTRATION CAMP"?

A Interestingly enough, I heard that from a non-Jewish person. I heard some children talking about this. They were building a concentration camp in some location, and it didn't mean much to me then until then I connected with what I heard from the Jewish men who were taken there.

And what I was told, "Please," at the time, "don't say anything." You know, "It's being built, but my God, don't ever let the word get out." And, indeed, many of the Jewish men that came from the concentration camps spoke very little about what occurred there, I think as most people know. Probably personally they could not bring themselves to describe the horrors, and, secondly, they were really afraid of what might

have happened if the news did get out, that they or their families were in jeopardy.

Q DID YOUR FATHER EVER APPLY TO GO TO ENGLAND? AND DID IT OCCUR TO HIM THAT HE WOULD SEND YOU OUT AND THEN GO WITH YOU? WOULD HE HAVE DONE THAT IF HE COULD HAVE?

A I would hope so. My father very much felt like a German. My father lived in England, and the outbreak of World War I, he was interned on the Isle of Man in England. So he was an enemy alien. He had lived in England for a number of years. He said to me once, "I always felt as a German first."

My mother had these two very small children, my older sisters and found her way -- I guess, she had no means of support. And so, in order to get some support from Germany, she fled to Holland, which was in that neutral country, and lived with the two children there and then went to Germany.

So my father -- they did still have some friends in England. My two sisters were young women who were single and earning their living, and my parents really did not feel perhaps they wanted to be a burden to them. But I do know that there was some correspondence with my older sister, who had just gotten married, as to what the possibilities might be for all of us to go to England.

What happened after we left, which was -- I left in June '39, about three months before the war broke out -- I really don't know. And we really never talked about this with my sisters a great deal, what actually did happen. Did they really ask? Were any attempts made? I think that's a personal shame involved in this.

Q WERE YOU ABLE TO CORRESPOND WITH YOUR PARENTS AFTER YOU LEFT GERMANY FOR ENGLAND BEFORE THE WAR STARTED?

A Yes, yes, we did. And we had fairly regular correspondence until the war broke out. I remember one of the correspondence, one of the letters that I wrote very quickly, because when we left on the children's transport, I took along a couple of necklaces.

And as you may know, Jews had to relinquish all valuables, everything down to -- I think we were allowed to keep watches, but everything else. And so I think a little necklace kept and put around my neck. And I was pretty defiant then, and I really felt I wasn't going to give it up.

And so as we traveled in this train to England, we were wondering whether at the border the German border guards would search us, body search us. But they didn't, and I wrote that I arrived in England without any sore throat, which was our sort of code word to say they came out all right, as though this was important. But at the time to me, it felt I had accomplished something. I had defied them and won. This is perhaps, you know, stays in my mind more readily than anything else at the moment.

Q DID THE SS OR THE SR, DID THEY EVER COME TO YOUR HOUSE?

A Yes, they did. When we were packing to leave, when I was packing, and then later my sister, we could take a trunk. And they really sat there and observed everything that went into it and if something was wrapped.

I remember, I think there was only one SS man, I

believe, and asked what was in that package. I think my sister, my older sister, then engaged him in conversation, because they had a mutual friend or something or knew each other from school. And so he was distracted a little bit. But I'm not aware that anything went into this trunk that shouldn't have gone in tjere. But imagine, yes, it was sent to the home to supervise to make sure nothing valuable was leaving the country.

Q DID THEY ACTUALLY COME IN UNIFORM?

A Yes. But before that, I remember my mother going with our silverware and so valuables to Frankfurt to hand them over when the law requires for Jews to relinquish anything that might be of value and anything that is of jewelry or silverware.

I also at that time -- you know, I had forgotten that -- buried something. We had a very nice silver Kiddush cup, and I said, "You're not taking this," and I buried it in our garden backyard. And after I had returned to Germany, I tried to find out if anyone ever found this. I think they did, because the garden later became a sort of access area to a bridge. So some bulldozer may have eaten that up.

Q WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TRIP TO ENGLAND, HOW YOU WENT.

A Yes. This was by the so-called kindertransporter, these children's transports. And as I said, my parents must have applied after the Crystal Night. And for some reason after the time, the time between the application, the actual leaving was quite a long time. And my parents were a little concerned and made some inquiries. And it turned out that they had someone by the same name in Augsburg, which sounded a little

like bit like Aschaffenburg, and so there was a mix up.

So when I left in June, I remember with great excitement and delight. I was finally going to leave this small town bound for adventure. Little did I realize what an adventure this would be. And hurriedly, as you always are when when you go on a trip, my parents took me to the station and went with me to Frankfurt, which was the gathering point of this these kindertransports, children's transports. And a number of children, there were several children from my town that went, one or two, a smaller child that I was sort of asked to look after.

And in Frankfurt, there was a long delay and quite a lot of chaos, and I think a whole morning's delay. And the last thing I remember is my father blessing me. To this day, I cannot attend -- it's difficult for me to attend the closing services in the synagogue and to hear that blessing after these many years. And we parted. My parents didn't want me to be anxious. And somehow, I didn't want them to be anxious.

I remember my mother adjusting my collar and giving me some good advice in how to behave, especially in England. She had lived in England, how important it is to be polite and have good eating manners. And it must have been a very difficult time for my mother to see her third child leave. And for my father, I know it was very difficult, too.

And I was very bound up in this adventure of going on a long trip. And we boarded these trains. And these were comfortable trains. These were not the sort of trains that some three years later rolled east. And when we came to the Dutch

border, and I remember very clearly after the German passport and the guards came in and asked if we had anything we shouldn't take. And I was holding on to my necklace, and I said, "No, nothing."

And as we got across the border, the first stop in Holland, the trains stopped at a crowded platform. And there were huge numbers of people, mainly women, suddenly passing chocolate, toys, candies, food through the window, some coming in and hugging us. We were nonplused. These were strangers. Why they would do this? I don't think any of us really comprehended what took place. Suddenly, after having been rejected by everyone for these years, complete strangers who flocked to us. And I think it took only later, I think, when the accompanying adults explained why in the world this warmth was expressed to us did we realize what took place.

We went to Hook of Holland, I think on a boat, over to Harwich, and then were taken by a train to London. We all had a little cardboard sign with our name and destination. And I arrived in London with a suitcase and a shopping bag, one of those with big letters of the store, I think, the local store with some belongings. And my sister then greeted me and put me on a train, on an underground train to my other sister, who lived a little bit outside, a trip which I'll never forget.

She was working in an office and only had a little time and obviously waited for us, for this transport to arrive. And said, "You will have to get out of the station, and the station -- look, you will change trains." And that I could do. "And you're going to get out at Southfield and count the

station. When you see Southfield, you have to get out." My other sister would meet us.

And there I was sitting in this train, and I looked, and I looked. There's a map on the subway train. I could not find Southfield anywhere. And for the first time I tried out my English. I could only say, "Please pass the marmalade." So I did get up and said to a lady, "Excuse me, please. Where is Southfield?"

This lady said, "Oh, on this train, on this train." That I understood, but what do I do then?

I went up again and asked her, "Please, where is Southfield?" and this cascade of strange sounding words came out of her mouth.

And then some people who obviously had seen this shopping bag came to me, asked me, knew I was German, talked with me in German and said, "No, Southfield is a new station. It is not yet on the map. Leave two stops after we do. And if the train does not stop, just push the button."

And I was so grateful. And, indeed, I waited for one stop and waited for the second stop. The train did not open. I got up with my bags and pushed the button, and two English school girls pulled me back and said, "Not here. This is Pudney Bridge." The train had stopped prior to entering the station to clear, I guess to let another train clear. I would have stepped right out into the Thames, probably. And I have not been able to cross that part without ever thinking about that. And my other sister welcomed me there.

Q HOW MANY CHILDREN WERE THERE ON THIS TRANSPORT?

A I really don't remember. There were large numbers, because it was an entire train, and they were dispersed throughout various cities in London.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHO WERE THE LADIES WHO ACCOMPANIED YOU?

A No. I have no recollection whether they were women or men.

Q SO NOW, YOU ARRIVED AT YOUR NEW DESTINATION. WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

A Well, I got my feet wet as far as English was concerned. My sister had married just a few months but married a man who had two small children, and they had a nanny. And I was initiated into speaking English very quickly. I took with me a small dictionary, and my sister let me loose with the nanny and the children, and within three days I had to speak English quite quickly. My parents did speak some English, but the first words I learned in English at home were, "Please, later. Not in front of the children." So this is something you learn very quickly. And I learned survival English in those few days.

And my destination was Coventry. Coventry is in the center of England, and it was an industrial town. And these were my host parents who had been recruited by the Jewish Committee. I think I stayed with my sister about less than a week. I'm not sure whether that's accurate or not. The nanny put me on a train to Coventry, and I arrived in Coventry and was met by, I guess it was, my -- I know the mother was there. There was a host mother. I'm not sure whether the father was there, but there was someone else there.

And when my luggage arrived, I remembered she was absolutely astounded that I brought this big trunk. To me, it was great adventure. It was a very simple family, very different to my home life. He was an ambulance driver; lived on the grounds of the hospital. She was a Welsh woman who had had no education. They had a 19-year-old boy and a five-year-old boy. And my place in the family was to take care of this five-year-old boy and to help in the household, which I did.

I was homesick, but there were so many new adventures, perhaps I was constantly distracted. I learned a lot very quickly, and I did communicate with some other German Jewish children who had come to England to live with families in Coventry who were in a better situation than I was. But I really wasn't aware as much as perhaps I was later that this was not a healthy setup for a young girl to be in.

When war broke out, which I remember very well, we were issued gas masks. The 19-year-old son quickly, I guess, joined the Army, and I was told that I could not know where he was. So when letters came, they tore off his address. And also, the woman then began working in a war factory, and so the responsibility of running the household was totally mine. I was not sent to school. I lived with this family for almost a year.

My other sister, Lottie, who was two and a half years older, also came to Coventry. I think it was July, a month or six weeks after I did, who was placed with a family of retired people who had a son who was, I think, in his late teens or early 20's. It was a better set up than mine. But I really didn't complain. As far as I was concerned, I mean, this was

just an adventure being with this family.

I won't say that they mistreated me. They were not a loving people. But they included me in all family activities. But I felt I was being mistrusted because I was German. I felt very aware of that. And I felt throughout the whole time in England that I was a German. I was a Jew, so I had this additional stigma.

Q BUT THEY WERE JEWISH?

A No, they were not Jewish.

Q THAT FAMILY?

A Was not Jewish. We speculated later how this could have come about that this family was chosen. But, look, I think they were desperate to find families to place children, and it saved my life.

Q DID YOU EVER HAVE A DESIRE OR CHANCE TO GO TO SYNAGOGUE WHILE YOU LIVED THERE IN COVENTRY?

A Not that I remember. I think as far as I was really cut off from Jewish life pretty much.

Q DID YOU AT ANY TIME FEEL LIKE A SERVANT THERE?

A Yes, I was. But I was a kid. I was a young servant, so I really never felt this was my place, that I sort of had a lower rank since, as I said, when they went on a drive, I was included in on it. And they were simple, working class people.

I think my sister was. The setup was treated as a servant. She was a little older than I was and complained about all the dusting she had to do. So it was a little different.

Q SO NOW THE WAR BREAKS OUT AND, OF COURSE, WHAT DID

THAT MEAN BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR PARENTS, THE COMMUNICATION?

A Yes. When war broke out, I was very aware that something ominous was taking place. And the only way we communicated with our parents were through Red Cross letters. My parents were allowed to write 25 words by the Red Cross, and we were allowed to reply, I think, in 25 words. And I think my sisters and I took turns doing this, writing these letters.

So my parents usually wrote, "We are fine. You know, don't worry about it," or wrote notes in sort of veiled terms. And one of them later was that my mother's brother, who lived in Hamburg, had been deported to Poland, and my parents were concerned. I'm aware of that. I had an aunt who lived in the United States, which then was a neutral country, so some mail went by the United States, some via Switzerland.

So I think my sisters received perhaps mail of more substance than perhaps I remember receiving being younger. I know that we did write that we were safe, and I think they did worry my parents that I was in this sort of set up and wished that I were in a better setup where I would have a chance to get some education.

Q HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE IN COVENTRY WITH THAT FAMILY?

A I lived in Coventry for almost a year. One of my sisters visited, came to visit, and was appalled at the setup, my setup, and began making arrangements to get me out of there. And so in London she went to what was called Bloomsbury House, which were the Jewish agencies. And they provided for me to go to an institution in London. I was always interested to be a kindergarten teacher. For some reason, it seemed glamorous to

me. I don't know.

But I liked children, and this used to be a children's nurse training institution. And it housed women who had come from -- Jewish women who had come from Germany, I think mostly Germany and Czechoslovakia. I'm not sure whether from Eastern Europe, either. Most of them who had illegitimate children or their children and their husbands were still left behind on the continent.

So these children were the subjects, and we were trained to be nurses. And so we were beginning there, what, 16 years old, and I was placed there. It was in the north of London. It was an institution. It was run by -- some of them were trained German Jewish nurses and children nurses. It was called Highbury Home, and most of us were German Jewish young girls who had come. Some were not there because they wanted to be children's nurses, but because they were not old enough yet to go into the training institution.

And I learned to take care of children. We worked very hard. It was really mainly a lot of hard work, but we also formed close friendships, one of which I still treasure very much of a friend who I still am very close to, because we've had common experiences in our lives that go back to this time, which was a time of formative years.

I remember working in night duty, being on night shift. And when the first sirens began in London when the first German bombing attacks took place, and I don't know whether they were unprepared or whether they were prepared, but I was asked to go downstairs in the kitchen and turn a table over so that

the small babies could be placed inside this.

And I remember going down and turning over a table, and then we hurridly placed these children inside this table. It had a ledge so that they could not crawl out of it.

And then next day they asked me who helped me with that table, and I really couldn't figure out. And it turned out to be a huge table. And to this day, I don't know how I overturned it. But I suppose in times of panic, you really have herculean effort; enables you to do things you normally would not do.

And from then on, there was panic almost every night because of the air raids. We slept in outdoor shelters. They were brick buildings. I mean we girls, we workers there just -- sleeping bags didn't exist. We slept on the floor in blankets. And it was summertime, and I remember this friend of mine, Lily, and I, we went out one night, because something smelled. And it turned out the next day that it had been an incendiary bomb, which we put out. But it was just very natural for us to do.

I know we had to go out every morning to comb the park before we took the children for a walk to clear the shrapnel. And one night, I remember, one evening, it was a beautiful summer evening, this friend and I going to a candy shop. and as we got there, there was an air raid, and they began to drop, the Germans, the doodlebugs, which were bombs that they dropped. And then they would burrow in the gound. And I remember one coming towards us as we came. We were petrified, because really there was no escape. We were very

lucky it did not explode.

And we stayed there for, I think, about nine months, because the bombing in London then became quite heavy and there had been some direct hits in the neighborhood. And I think some very quick arrangements were made to evacuate us.

And we were evacuated to a small town in England called Bedford and there continued. But these were makeshift circumstances and conditions. What I remember about that time is just working, perhaps not learning a great deal, but just working. But I also remember sort of social life. I mean, we all sort of had a feeling of being in the same boat and enjoying whatever we could enjoy. And we were young, so there was a certain feeling of community.

Q COMRADESHIP?

A Yes.

Q HOW WAS THE FOOD SITUATION?

A I have no idea. I don't think I ever considered it, not at that time. Later on I was when we really did not get enough food. But I'm not aware whether the food was good or bad or shortage. Like institutional food, we probably complained, but --

Q I REALLY MEANT TO ASK YOU IF YOU HAD ENOUGH, IF YOU WERE HUNGRY. NOT HOW THE FOOD WAS, BUT IF YOU REMEMBER BEING HUNGRY.

A Probably all teenagers are hungry.

I remember being in this Highbury Home in London still when we were punished, because in the dining room we were speaking German to each other. And the persons in charge

punished us, because we were supposed to speak English. And so we, this friend and I, had to scrub down a wall of an entire floor one afternoon, which was supposed to be our afternoon off. I don't know whether that had any positive effect in our speaking English to each other, but that was the intent.

No, later when I was in another institution, I am very much aware of not getting enough food.

When we were in Bedford, the institution lost its accreditation because of the makeshift facilities. And so I did become aware that I could be working there forever and never have a certificate and never be trained.

So I looked in trade journals to see if there was some schools that would train me as a children's nurse but would require no tuition. And I must have written to some, I suppose, and I found one in Cheltenham, which is the western part of England. And I'm not sure whether I had any support from any of the Jewish groups, welfare groups, or not.

But I left Bedford and went to Cheltenham. And this was a setup right out of Dickens. This was a training institution training children's nurses run by two older women. They were maybe 40 at the time, two single woman. One was a children's medical nurse. Another was a (*fer bell) teacher. And their, let's say, guinea pigs -- I'm sorry to say that -- were children of British parents, most of them who lived in the colonies and left their children in England. Some lived in England, so these children were cared for by us.

spelling

And, indeed, we did learn. We learned how to wash. We learned how to iron. We learned a little bit about

psychology but very little about theory. Primarily, you know, care taking. And there we were really deprived of food. One reason was it was difficult. Food was rationed. We got half an egg every two weeks. I never saw a banana for years.

I remember going to -- we had one afternoon every two weeks and going to see a movie and buying a raisin bun and being with a friend, also one of these inmates, who all of a sudden she turned to me and she said, "Guess what? I found the raisin." Indeed, it had one raisin.

But I know we were hungry there. It was sort of a colonial atmosphere really, but we were really being taken advantage of. But I stayed there for a year and did get my certificate.

Q DID YOU HEAR FROM YOUR PARENTS?

A Yes. By that time it was 1942, and the last letter we received -- and I'm not sure who that was addressed to -- but I remember getting it. It said that, "We're being resettled," and the word, I think it was, "resettled to the homeland of so-and-so." So-and-so were the parents of my -- who had been my closest girlfriend in Aschaffenburg, whose parents came from Poland.

And my father wrote a few lines, and my mother wrote a few lines. "Don't worry. We'll communicate." That was the last I ever heard from them. It was only many years later when I returned to Germany that I found out what really happened.

Q AND YOU SAID IT WAS 1942?

A Yes. That was in 1942. My parents were sent away,

the last group of the Jews of my home town. I think there were 134 people on an April day. I think it was April the 24th in 1942 in the dark of night.

Q SO HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN BEDFORD?

A I stayed in Bedford throughout the winter, so it must have been perhaps several months. Then I went to Cheltenham, and I stayed there for a good year in order to get my training. And left in elation with a certificate, my work permit.

Q AND DID YOU SEE YOUR SISTERS?

A Yes, I did. I visited them. I think perhaps it was afterwards went to London. And my second sister by that time was married. And, yes, I think between -- after I left this Dickensonian institution and began to work in a war time nursery, I had perhaps some days off and went to London and stayed with my sister. And I saw both my sisters then, family.

Q YOU WERE CLASSIFIED AS AN ENEMY ALIEN?

A I was an enemy alien, yes. I had a gray card so, yes, that's right. When I was 16, I think I was still in London, I had to go before a tribunal -- you probably know this -- in order for the British authority to determine whether I might be a security threat. And so I was asked several questions, I suppose. I really have no recollection what they asked me. But they pretty well determined that I really was not a spy.

I'm sure I didn't have the intellect or the guile to be suspicious, but I do know others in my situation who were not cleared and were sent to the Isle of Man; interned, the

second generation. So it was whatever the British authorities determined.

Q WHEN YOU MOVED ABOUT IN ENGLAND, DID YOU HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE POLICE?

A Yes, of course. Exactly. Each time we moved from one address to another, exactly. We had to go to the police and register, exactly. But first we had to unregister whatever, and then register. And I remember at one point going for the weekend with a friend, going to somewhere and arriving to register and almost being imprisoned then, of being incarcerated, because I did not notify the authorities that I was leaving for the weekend.

And I was sincere, and I said, "I really wasn't aware of that or had forgotten," I don't remember. And they let me go. But I never did that again. But this all sort of reinforced your feeling of being stigmatized. You were somebody inferior to everyone else.

Q SO IN 1942 YOU GOT YOUR CERTIFICATE. WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER THAT?

A I stayed in Cheltenham and worked in a daytime nursery. These were nurseries where children were cared for whose mothers worked in war industry. And there were two shifts, one from 7:00 to 3:00 and one from 12:00 to 8:00. And since I was qualified, I was in charge of a shift. Not only that, I was in charge of young girls who were perhaps a year younger than I am, maybe some not, to train them.

And it was just a lot of sloshing around and work. I remember washing diapers under very, very primitive

circumstances and just being constantly aware of taking care of children meant feeding them, cleanliness, and rest. There was very little opportunity for any play. And fresh air, of course, being in England.

There was a supervising matron who came every so often to supervise, or to make recommendations, or to berate us, or whatever. Actually, everyone was working at that time. These were dark days in England, and it was cold and joyless. And it was really working.

I lived in a girls' residence club, and these were also primarily young woman who were working in the war industries, and we lived in sort of a dormatory situation. There was very little privacy, but I was never aware that missed much, to be very frank. There were good times, too. I guess a sense of community, again. And these were, you know, growing up into adulthood with new experiences and some joyful experiences, too.

I was always aware that what was happening on the other side, in other words, on the continent. I do remember, though, when France fell, I was, again, in this institution where I was getting my credential, my diploma and being told that France fell. I remember walking down the stairs and being told that we can expect a German invasion. And I was saying to myself, "Which is the best way to commit suicide?" I was determined I was not going to wait. I was not going to be victimized. So I must have known at the time that if Germans did come to England, life would be impossible for us.

Q OF COURSE, YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO

YOUR PARENTS AT THAT TIME, WERE YOU?

A No.

Q DID YOU WRITE TO YOUR AUNT IN THE UNITED STATES AT ALL?

A Yes. I think we communicated with her until the war broke out. We no longer could, and there really was no one else to communicate, because there was no communication from our parents. There was a feeling, I think, that something very bad might be occurring. Exactly what, we don't know. We didn't know. Really, it was that we couldn't bring ourselves to think about it.

But I know it was a wait. It was not until 1945 and the the war began to, I would say, wind down and end until the stories came out that we were very much aware of where our parents were, what might have happened. And we hoped and prayed that our parents might have been sent to Theresienstadt, which was the camp, the only camp, from which people did survive. By that I mean there was in some era some semblance of other than pure subsistence level, even though it was tragically subsistent, that people could survive there.

By that time, I was in London, and I think my sister, too, went to Bloomsbury Home, the central agency of the Jewish welfare organizations, to look at lists. This was very chaotic, because lists came out, and people were searching. And there was a name. There was a name of my father, the same name as my father, Yacob Meyer. And I made inquiries and sent packages immediately. It didn't matter who it was, and we hoped, but it wasn't my father. And we never heard anything.

Q WHEN DID YOU LEAVE ENGLAND?

A I left England in '49. I worked in these war time nurseries for three years. And when the war ended, and I read about the youngest survivors coming out of the camps and coming to England, I felt I really would like to put my service to some use that I felt I had done enough and applied to work with these children.

And I was sent to the south of England, to Sussex, to a home in the country where the six youngest survivors between the ages of three and five were housed. These children had been sent from Theresienstadt. Some from others had been gathered in Czechoslovakia and Prague and then sent to England and then housed in various areas.

And the home was made available by some nobility in the country. And these six children were taken care of then by two persons who had been working in the Anna Freud Nursery in Hampstead in London and one other person. And then I came.

Q THE NAME OF THE PLACE WAS?

A The name of the place was Bulldog Spank, (*West Holdly,) Sussex. And the name may ring a bell to some people, because this was featured in the Winds of War, the statement, the last segment of that program.

spelling

And these children were deprived. They had spent most of their lives since they were born in camps. I heard at the time -- I'm not sure how true it is -- that one of the children, one of the most, what shall I say, secure little ones, had been born in the camp and had been handed down through various foster parents. Because each successive parents were

then sent to their deaths, another group of parents took care of this child. And eventually this child ended up in the children's home in Theresienstadt.

They each have stories to tell. I have followed them until now and recently met them this year again as adults, some of them. They're remarkable people. It was hard but very heartwarming work working with these children. Some little had been written about them. Their attention span was maybe 30 seconds when they first began to sit down to eat. They were very fearful of boots, of trucks, mistrusting. Had some problems, but generally speaking, they were amazingly resilient.

I worked -- then this group of six was transferred to a larger home called (*Wier Courtney) in Linfield, Surrey, together with other children who had come from camps. And I'm trying to remember. There must have been perhaps between 30 and 50 children. I ought to know, but I don't. And I stayed with them as sort of in transition with these children. I stayed with them through a very bitter, cold winter right after the war and left. I think I was with them for about a year altogether. It perhaps was the most significant year in my life, when I look back on this.

I also was emotionally exhausted and felt perhaps I ought to do something else. And so I remember on winter nights through the snow I trudged to a little old lady's house who taught shorthand. I guess my sisters told me that if you have shorthand typing skill, you can always earn a living as a secretary. So this lady taught me shorthand Pitman shorthand and typing.

And after some months, I left these children but left very gradually. I left for a few hours, then half a day, then a day, came back two days, and so on. And I was called once when I was in London if I would please come back. One of the little boys had climbed on the roof and said he would not come down until I came. I was also very much attached to this little boy.

And then I began an office career in London.

Q YOU SAID YOU FOLLOWED UP ON THESE CHILDREN, RIGHT, AND YOU MET THEM AGAIN?

A Yes.

Q YOU WOULD TELL US ABOUT THIS A LITTLE BIT LATER.

HILDA, I SEE A BOOK LYING HERE WHICH LOOKS VERY FAMILIAR TO ME. WOULD YOU MIND HOLDING IT UP AND EXPLAINING THIS BOOK TO US.

A Yes. This is or was the equivalent of Mother Goose, a German equivalent of Mother Goose. And we grew up on this, and in recent years I still see it on the shelves in Germany, although people tell me that although people tell me that is not used a great deal.

It is called Der Strumwelpeter, and if you look at it, you can see that he's not the sort of character that one would like to emulate. He's unkempt, so it's giving an example to children that unkempt -- by the way, I think this was published in the early part of the 19th century by a teacher. Hoffman was a teacher teaching morals to German children.

And here it tells you what an unsavory character he really is. It tells various stories, and this has to do with a

bad tempered young man by name of Frederick, how he abused a dog, animals. And then, of course, he has his comeuppance. The dog bites him. He is ill. The doctor comes, and dire things happen to him. The dog, of course, gets to eat his dinner and so on.

And this is a little girl who plays with matches, and what happens to her, she dies. And again, this is the kind of Mother Goose.

This is something that is to me, perhaps, more troubling than anything else, even though people say no, this is a story of tolerance. There is a black boy that the others make fun of. And here -- I think there's a page missing -- they are dunked into the ink well, the white children dunked into the ink well. And what happens, they turn out to be blacker than the actual black child. So that is to me a very perverted way of looking at and teaching intolerance and so on.

This is perhaps one of the more dramatic ones of a little boy whose mother leaves, and she says to him, "Don't suck your thumb, because if you do, the tailor will come with a big scissor. And what will happen? You will lose your thumbs."

Again, this is teaching morals. This is the story of Phillip, who is a very healthy, hearty boy, but he won't eat his soup. The first day he doesn't, the third day, and I don't know which day it is that he ends up being dead.

Phillip, who is a very obstreperous little boy, can't sit still. Hyperactive, he would be called, at the table of his parents he sits. And what happens, he falls. He pulls the table cloth; is buried underneath.

And this is a charming story in a way to me. This is the little boy, Heintz, who is a dreamer. He walks and looks in the air and looks at birds and thinks about ethereal matters. What happens, he ends up falling into the water. And, again, he has been stigmatized for being a dreamer.

And I just brought this, because I think perhaps it tells us something perhaps why people do things the way they do. It might have something to do with the value of the society. I think it's articulated very early in life.

Q IN THE GERMAN CHARACTER IN A WAY, DON'T YOU THINK SO?

A Yes. You know, I don't want to stereotype it, but I think if you're brought up with the fact that if you don't obey, and you have dire consequences, perhaps it has something to do with the sort of certain way that you look at life and conduct yourself.

Q THE WAY I LOOK AT THIS, NOTHING REALLY GOOD EVER HAPPENS IN THE BOOK, RIGHT? EVERYTHING IS BAD?

A Yes. Including the little black boy, yes. Nothing in this case has any redeeming value to children. The children are people to be not advised and guided but to be berated and punished.

It's rather beaten up, as you can see.

Q I THINK, SHERRY, YOU TOLD US YOU HAD A QUESTION TO ASK OF HILDA?

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SHERRY: MY QUESTION, ACTUALLY, IT'S TO GO BACK TO ENGLAND. AT THAT TIME, DID YOU FEEL ANTI-SEMITISM ON A DAILY BASIS? OR IN WHAT WAY DID YOU FEEL?

A In England, no. I wouldn't say that I did. But there was sort of a feeling that when I said we were different, that the official Church of England is an Anglican church, and we were not part of these institutions; that we felt different.

I don't remember really going to synagogue much, except my sister, yes, and my brother-in-law, who was a very kindly man and felt a certain responsibility toward me took me, I think, to synagogue. He also took me to a concert and to the theater. And I'm eternally grateful to him for providing me an opening to the world of culture that had been very important in my home in Germany. But I was not aware of really anti-Semitism, no, not in England.

Q I WANTED TO GO BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE KID, AND I WAS WONDERING, I WANTED TO GET MORE OF A FLAVOR ABOUT WHAT YOUR LIFE WAS LIKE WHEN YOU WERE VERY SMALL.

A You know, to tell you the truth, I really don't remember when I was very small. But I do remember perhaps eight, nine. I remember having, you know, friends as you do. You have one good friend, and I had a very good close friend who I'm still in contact with wh lives in the United States. And no matter how much time goes back, we just take off. You know, there is no loss of time or momentum when we get together. But we were close, and we do the things that people normally do.

I do know this, that I was always a little bit of a rebel, even though when I was very young I defied my father, who was very authoritarian. And apparently I got away with some of it. My sisters did not. I was very much aware I was the youngest of four girls, and I sort of played the role of a

tomboy. I think I did this consciously, perhaps to get attention.

And I also remember, now that you say it, before we lived outside of town, we lived in an apartment house in town. And my sister and I, it must have been a very warm summer day, were in the garden in a sort of a zink bathtub. I think they were made of zink. And what do little kids do? They take their clothes off. And we took our clothes off, and I'm not sure whether we were asked to leave the apartment, but I know the landlady was irate and said that nakedness is not allowed. With little kids, I mean. So that went against the propriety of perhaps the German character. I don't know. Or maybe just the individual. In other words, life was very structured.

Q YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WERE SOMEWHAT OF A REBEL. WHAT WERE SOME OTHER THINGS THAT YOU DID?

A I just never fell into line. I think, you know, if kids -- I remember my girlfriends wearing their hats in one slant. I would wear it on the other side. And I just never really wanted to conform. And today, I really must say that I think one of the dirtiest four-letter words to me is the word "obey," because I think that leaves no choice to anyone.

So I'm sure it had a great deal to do with being the youngest of four, but it also had to do with the system under which I grew up, that I was not ready to accept authority, and I'm still not.

Q HOW DO YOU THINK YOU FIGURED, I MEAN IF YOUR PARENTS AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE IS TELLING YOU TO GET IN LINE, HOW DO YOU THINK YOU FIGURE OUT THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BE THAT

WAY?

A It is, as I said, could be worth getting attention at a very early age but just by being different.

Q WHAT WAS SOMETHING THAT YOU REALLY GOT IT FOR DOING, YOU DID IT, AND YOU GOT CAUGHT?

A You mean negative?

Q AND YOU REALLY GOT PUNISHED BECAUSE YOUR PARENTS THOUGHT YOU WERE REALLY BAD?

A Maybe not because of rebel but carelessness. And I was careless. I mean, I lost something. I was in a play in the Jewish school. Again, as I mentioned, that during that time there was a really concerted effort by the community to make us feel Jewish. I'm sure it had something to do for us to give us some sense of self-esteem.

And we put on a Purim play, and I borrowed my father's yarmulke and lost it. And I remember I got into real trouble. I really was punished badly. I was somewhat humiliated, too, because of this. But I'm not sure whether because of being different or defiant. Oh, yes, I was defiant, and you get in the usual trouble that you say things to your parents that are not acceptable. They let you know.

Q WHEN YOU PLAYED WITH YOUR FAVORITE GIRLFRIENDS, FRIENDS, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS A GIRL OR BOY, WHAT KIND OF THINGS DID YOU DO?

A The normal things that kids do; hop scotch and things like that. Later it was in close quarters. We really were not so comfortable going outside and being seen by other people. Games, and I remember my sister and I standing in our

garden. There was a wall and then some iron railings, and standing there and talking gibberish to each other to be noticed by passersby. And that might have been after people started to emigrate.

So we were trying to act -- you know, sort of give out the image that we were very versed in different languages, something like. And we did other things like kids do. I had a friend who lived in town and lived above a store, and we threw water balloons down on people. I mean, this was even after, you know, it might have been quite hazardous to us. But we did and ducked.

So these are normal things, you know, that you do. I think our parents consciously perhaps were aware to try to maintain as normal a life as possible for us in growing up. And we were not so burdened by the fear, although I was aware that the adults were very anxious.

Q HOW ABOUT SCHOOL? WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A How about school?

Q YES.

A I think I enjoyed school, and I did quite well. Hated some subjects; loved some other subjects. And did some sort of pranks that kids do in school when they were very young; nothing unusual. I don't think I excelled in anything, and I didn't fail in anything, not that I'm aware of. I was never an athlete.

BY MS. FIELDEN:

Q BEFORE WE WENT ON THE AIR, YOU TOLD ME ABOUT A LITTLE BOOK YOU HAD IN SCHOOL. THE POETIC ALBUM IT WAS CALLED,

RIGHT?

A Uh-huh.

Q COULD YOU TELL US WHAT YOUR TEACHER WROTE IN IT?

A Oh, yes. It was a custom at the age of, what, 12 for your birthday, you get a little album. The closest thing I can relate is to the American yearbook. But you're younger at the age of 12 and no photographs. They're blank pages. And it's very creative. People write -- your school mates write little poems, and then do parodies of poems and little drawings.

And my teacher, this was when I was then in the Jewish school, and one of my teachers wrote in there in Hebrew and then in German, "You are a German. You are a Jew. You are a human being," and so on, but in that sequence. It was a sort of, I suppose, a morale guide as teachers, you know, felt they needed to do.

I remember even at the time then laughing about it but not realizing why, that in these times when we really were not considered to be German, when we were -- then when we became stateless, that we were still taught we were German. We still had a nationality.

BY SHERRY LANDAU:

Q WHAT I REMEMBER YOU TALKED ABOUT, A HOUSE WHERE THE FIRST FLOOR WERE LIVING QUARTERS AND THEN THE SECOND FLOOR WAS AN OFFICE.

A Yes.

Q AND ALSO A FEW MINUTES AGO YOU TALKED ABOUT AN APARTMENT THAT YOU LEFT OR WERE KICKED OUT OF. DO YOU REMEMBER, WAS THE APARTMENT THE FIRST HOUSE THAT YOU LIVED IN?

A No. In Germany, it's quite customary to live in towns where the bottom are sort of commercial buildings and then apartments. You find them now also in the United States. Go down Vanessa Avenue, you will find.

And we lived in the house outside of town. The bottom floor was our apartment; top floor was an offoce. The house we lived in previously were all apartments, and we lived on the first floor. And I think there were apartments upstairs.

Q THE HOUSE THAT WAS OUT OF TOWN, CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT THAT WAS LIKE?

A Yes. It was really very nice. It was with a large garden overlooking the river. And it was fairly spacious, and because we weren't hemmed in by other houses. The communities, you know, in Germany, the communities grew from the inside out. I mean in Europe, from the inside out, not from the outside and filling in.

So this was a little bit outside, so that we had play area outside, plenty of room. Plenty of room! Let me tell you, when you go back there after this many years, you realize how little room there is. But as a child, it seems spacious. As an adult, it doesn't.

Q WHO TOOK CARE OF THE HOUSE?

A My mother took care of house. And we did have servants until 1935, I think it was, when Jews were no longer allowed to have non-Jewish servants. So we had a cleaning lady and someone else, someone to come. Even came and did the washing, which was very customary in middle class life in Germany.

Q WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S -- WHAT DID YOUR MOTHER -- WHAT DID SHE ACTUALLY DO? WHAT WAS HER LIFE?

A She was a good German housewife.

Q SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A What a traditional housewife would do. She would cook. She would shop every day. She would cook. She would sew. My mother would sew. My mother was a very literate woman. She read quite a lot and was fairly social.

Q OUT OF ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN TOWN WHO WERE JEWISH, HOW MANY OTHER PEOPLE SURVIVED?

A Only those who emigrated. There was no one who survived the war. There was one man who was married to a non-Jewish woman, and he was hidden. He survived until after the war. But when I returned, there was absolutely no trace of any living soul.

Q WHICH WOULD MEAN HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED, ROUGHLY?

A The last people who left, I think the last, as I mentioned, who were sent away, I think I would have to look now, but I think 134. I believe it was somewhere in that number, including small children, including a classmate. As it was described to me that this group that had to gather at the station, I think at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, were then asked to board a train. And the last thing that remained of this group was a stroller that had been left on the steps. None of these people ever was heard from again. You know, that I know.

Q WHAT WAS THE POPULATION OF ASCHAFFENBURG?

A It was about 45,000 people, and I understand there were 200 Jewish families and some other families that lived in

the surrounding area. It was a trading center, actually, so people came from the country. And the people from around that area also, of course, were sent away, were gathered up and then sent away.

My parents were under house arrest before they had to report to the station along with others. Six or seven people committed suicide rather than submit themselves to the transport. So it's very evident that they knew they were going. I learned later that my father gathered along some things and took along with him some seeds hoping they would be resettled in the country where he could grow some vegetables.

My parents also left behind a trunk and an inventory of some of their belongings. And someone in town stored them; linens, and some silver, and photographs. And by accident through this friend that I grew up with happened to be in the bookstore, and that proprietor in this bookstore -- and she bought a book about the town. The proprietor asked, "Who are you buying it for?"

And she said, "For the Meyer girl."

She said, "The Meyer girl? Mr. and Mrs. Meyer left a suitcase. I still have it in the store here."

And this was what, ten or 15 years later. And she took it out, and she took this home. A lot of things were moldy and were spoiled. She sent me the inventory and also the condition of the items and sent some things, sent the things to me that were salvageable.

BY SHERRY LANDAU:

Q WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP IN GERMANY, AND IT SOUNDS

LIKE IT GOT ROUGHER AND ROUGHER TO BE JEWISH THERE, DID YOU EVER ASK WHY PEOPLE WERE TREATING YOU LIKE THAT?

A No. And that's a really good question. It was just we took it for granted that we were inferior. And this inferiority, when you grow up, I believe, is not because of what you do, which is alterable, but what you are, which is unalterable.

You know, somehow I knew that if I was a miserable kid, the action would be as a result of my behavior. But when I did not misbehave, and people mistreated me, and we were constantly being humiliated by being called names, and, as I said, by being stoned and being made very clear that we were undesirable people. It's difficult, and you carry that throughout your life no matter how much you can reason it out. That you are different. But this difference being inferior, not just being different.

Q YOU TALKED EARLIER ABOUT THE KINDER- --

A Kindertransports.

Q HOW WAS IT DECIDED WHO WENT, WHO WENT WHERE?

A I really think that was perhaps haphazardly done to try and get as many children out as possible. And whoever the applicants were, I know that obviously, in my case, Coventry, they tried to keep my sister and me together in the same town. And whoever made the selection, I really don't know whether there was time or whether it was a judgment that was used how to place people where.

Q AND WHY DIDN'T YOU LIVE WITH ONE OF YOUR SISTERS?

A Because, as I said, my one sister wasn't married.

She was, you know, working in an office. She had one room, lived in one room. And my other sister had just married and taken on being the stepmother to two other children, and new husband, was expecting a baby. And the plans were made to send us to these foster homes, whatever you want to call it. I really don't think they even had a name.

BY EVELYN FIELDEN:

Q WERE THERE CUTOFF AGES FOR CHILDREN?

A You know, I think there was. I'm not sure whether it was 16, although my sister was 16. Maybe 18. The cutoff age might have been 18.

Q HOW MANY GENERATIONS GERMAN WERE YOU?

A We're trying to trace it back; many generations. We came from central Germany, central parts of Germany for quite a few generations. But how how many, I really don't know.

It's interesting that you ask, because we're just working on a family tree, and I just discovered 101-year-old lady who is a distant cousin of my father, not-so-distant, in Palo Alto, in Menlo Park. And it's just joyful to see how the family has come together and came to the 101 birthday and doing a family tree. And we're discovering each other with tremendous joy.