

Got you now. OK. Anytime.

This is the Holocaust Oral History Project in San Francisco, California. Today is Wednesday, October 21, 1992, and we have an Oral History with Doctor and Professor Werner Goldsmith. This is part three of the oral history. My name is Eric Saul, and the producer is John Angell Grant. You mentioned that you wanted to relay some more information from the previous interview.

There's one area that I don't think has been covered-- if at all, certainly not in sufficient depth-- and that's the area of restitution concerning the loss of property, the loss of the educational value, et cetera, in Germany.

Now I must say this. I was put onto this by some second cousins in New Orleans who were so intent-- at least the senior member of the family was so intent on doing this, that I think that he ruined the rest of his life, because it became the major and almost only focal point that he could concentrate on. And initially, seeing the intensity of his desire for restitution, I almost said, no, I don't want to be involved at all. And then they convinced me that I should go ahead and at least make some applications for these funds that apparently the German government put at the disposal for restitution purposes.

Well, I entered this process with a certain sanguine feeling. And it turned out that the process started in the late '50s, and didn't end until the middle '60s. And it didn't involve only the loss of my own family's possessions, and the livelihood and the education, but it also involved certain heirs to whose property I was legally apparently entitled to in part. And so there may have been about three or four different processes that went on. And this came before the Tribunal in Germany. And eventually I got some few thousand dollars in response.

But I felt very guilty about even touching the money because what I've lost cannot be repaid with money. And I felt it might have been better if I hadn't taken it. But this became a bone of contention later on. And my family split up. But be this as it may, I'm finished with this. The money went to nothing special, but it was used by me.

And then there has been a different form of restitution in the last, I would say two, two and a half years, which manifested itself by the city of Düsseldorf undertaking projects to commemorate the Holocaust, the Jews that were killed, the exodus of the Jews-- those who were allowed to leave. And they have a memorial institute in Düsseldorf that I have not yet visited, even though I was there about a year ago. But there wasn't time at that time.

And the idea was that the city of Düsseldorf, at least last year, and the years before have offered to pay a substantial sum for travel expenses, and put up people in the good hotels with all expenses in Düsseldorf paid as a one-time-- what shall I say-- restitution offer to indicate what has been done to eradicate the deeds of the Hitler times, and to hopefully indicate that this will never happen again.

So they have this memorial institute, which is sort of a smaller version of the Yad Vashem, I imagine. And these people offer a single concentrated tour-- something during some week for every year. But if you want to come individually, they will let you do so at a different time. They feel that you do not get as much out of that as you would from the organized version of this. But I plan to do this next year if we are able to get our act together.

And in the process of doing this, I met a lady by the name of Dr. Barbara Sushi who obtained her doctorate degree in the area of the Jewish history in Germany, and in particular in the area of Düsseldorf, and who then, subsequently, convinced the city to allow her to have this research project on the history of the Jews. And when I went to Düsseldorf, I actually stayed with her and her husband for two nights while we discussed various phases of this. And I think that it would be very useful to be in contact with the Oral History Project here in San Francisco, and vice versa.

Anyway, she has written a number of volumes that can be documented through Xerox or duplication. And she also has taken me, for example, to the cemetery where my maternal grandmother is buried, and where my uncle, the brother of my mother, is buried. These are the two that died of a natural death. And all the

others cannot be found, in terms of graves, because they were extinguished in concentration camps.

Anyway, the city of Düsseldorf is doing a great deal to try to make up in their version for what has happened to the Jews. And I have written not only constantly to Doctor Sushi but there is also a vice mayor who was in charge of this project. I think he retired last June. But I visited him last year as well. And we had a discussion about the events that occurred some 40, 50 years ago, and what has happened to the people that were there-- and the fact that almost no one has come back. And there is another woman whom I did not meet-- she was on vacation-- who is arranging these trips for the memorial visits of the Jews abroad.

So that is what the city of Düsseldorf is doing. And that's all part of the restitution aspect. And I hope that this aspect of my life will be terminated after we visit Düsseldorf, and go through the process of seeing what they have done, and their memorial institute, and compare it with what perhaps I've seen in Paris and in Jerusalem. And that's about all I have to say about the restitution process.

You have been back to Düsseldorf.

I've been back to Düsseldorf on a number of occasions. The first time was actually 1960. I was married in 1953, and my wife would not allow me, even though we were in Europe, to go to Düsseldorf. We went to Cologne, but not to Düsseldorf.

Why?

She felt that the turmoil of seeing the place would be perhaps too much for me, since we had just come from Holland, where I had obtained, from the Red Cross, the death certificates of my parents who were extinguished in Auschwitz. So we did not go to Düsseldorf at that time. But in every other visit-- or almost every other visit-- that I've made to Europe since-- I've made a lot-- I have, in at least half the time, spent in Düsseldorf or passed through Düsseldorf.

My present wife and I passed through there in 1973. We were back again in 1981. I was in Düsseldorf last year. And I tried to establish contact with a former high school teacher that I think I may have mentioned-- which I did, until, when we were there in 1981, it turned out that his wife had just died. And I do not believe he's alive anymore. So those were my visits to Düsseldorf.

The time before, with my wife, I visited the three residences, or the locations of the three residences, that I recalled, of which only one is still standing. The others have been rebuilt. They were apparently destroyed. And I visited those three places also last year. I was there just two weeks before the firestorm that destroyed my home here. So that had a double meaning for me, to see the absence of the familiar surroundings that I recalled in Düsseldorf.

What are your emotions when you visit-- particularly the first time you visited, and subsequent times-- you visit Düsseldorf?

Well, my emotions are very, very mixed. Intellectually, I try to tell myself-- and I succeed most of the time-- that anyone who was, say, no more than six years old at the time of these terrible happenings cannot possibly be held responsible for them, because they had no free will. At the same time, you wonder whether any of this stuff can get transferred by osmosis in one way or another.

And at one time I was actually somewhat interested in a German girl, in terms of a marriage. And this did come into consideration. And it eventually, of course, didn't occur.

But I am extremely suspicious of dealing with anybody who I know, age-wise, would have been eligible to be in the SA or the SS or whatever, and especially when they tell me they knew nothing about the history of the Jews at the time of Hitler.

Well the Doctor Sushi, who's word I have no reason to doubt, advises me, when I raise this issue, that there were probably far fewer people who knew about the concentration camps, the extermination camps, than might be supposed by people abroad. It seemed impossible for me to believe that there wouldn't be word of

mouth that would get out. But she said, well, the people in the army didn't perhaps know about it, and the people in the concentration camps didn't want to advertise this, because they felt that the goodwill of the rest of the world-- at least the uncommitted world-- was worth something. And this would be turning them against this.

And so to get back to your question, how do I feel? I feel uneasy when I am with somebody of an age level that is, say, of 72 or so, or greater, at the present time, and transferred to that earlier at earlier times.

As far as visiting Germany itself is concerned, I have less of an emotion when I visit places other than Düsseldorf because I've had dealings scientifically with a number of people in Freiburg, all of them substantially younger than I. So-- except one, the director of the institute. But he was a Dutchman. So I couldn't in good conscience make a, well, a judgment about what his position was in the war.

So I do feel uneasy. But it diminishes. Each time I go back, there's less of an emotional trauma. And even the first time when I was there, I mean, I am not sure I can even recall the conflicting emotions that I was subjected to at the time. So.

It's often said that neighbors would turn in their Jewish neighbors for the SS, or expedite the process of deportation. Does that enter your mind that there was betrayal even by the civilian population of Düsseldorf? In other words, is there any anger that there was that kind of duplicity in German society?

Well, I personally did not experience it at the time, and I wasn't particularly conscious of it when going back. I'm aware of the fact that there was some such duplicity, of course. But I wonder what the frequency of it was compared to those that didn't do it. And since I was not personally exposed to this kind of thing, I don't think that particular issue-- and at my emotional or intellectual considerations concerning my feelings towards Germany and Düsseldorf-- the people there.

So you don't feel any generalized anger towards people in Düsseldorf?

No, I don't. In thinking over the situation, how I deal with people over there, when I deal with somebody who says, well, if we had not followed the requirements or the laws that were laid down, and that we were told we had to obey, we would have been killed, and we didn't want to be killed, so we obeyed them, I can at least understand that. I might not respect it in the way some obvious fighters and counter-insurgents reacted. But I can understand that. You don't want to be killed, that the-- if you take the risk of even dealing with or, particularly, helping Jewish people, it is those people that I was convinced were fully informed what was going on and then denied any complicity that I felt an anger towards.

And of course, I have asked this question-- why could such a thing happen in Germany? And I may have said this before. And the answers that I've gotten from psychologists and psychiatrists and so on in this country, and even historians, is that there was a mass psychosis.

But that's no explanation. Here you have a country which produced the culture of a Goethe and the culture of a Beethoven, and who had a very, very enlightened government, even though some people might not have liked it, under Bismarck, who made tremendous strides in social progress. And all of a sudden this gets turned into a total catastrophe in a extremely short period of time. And you wonder what the mentality is that would allow this.

And one of the things that I guess I have thought about is give a German a uniform and he's happy. You don't have to give him a salary. Give him the uniform and he'll be happy. At least I noticed that in my earlier visits to Germany. I don't know whether it's still true or not. There have been tremendous convulsions in the last couple of years, so I don't know whether that still applies.

But this is the problem in reflecting on my relationship with Germans, and particularly the city of Düsseldorf, and the citizens, currently is I would imagine that no more than 10% of those still alive had any way of participating in the activities of the Hitler regime. And the rest of them, are you going to assume that they are equally guilty by association, or by being sons and daughters of those who perform these acts? I intellectually can't accept that they are equally guilty. So my anger, if you might call it that, is very much

tempered by these considerations.

You mentioned that a lot of people-- a lot of the survivors-- are unwilling to visit Düsseldorf, but you are. What makes you different?

[SIGHS]

I'm not sure I can have the answer to that question. There are as many people who are willing to visit-- perhaps even more-- than those who are not. I have a second cousin who never lived in Düsseldorf-- actually first cousin once removed who lives in Holland; won't visit Germany at all because of what had happened. There were some of my scientific colleagues, most of them dead now, who were treated badly by the Nazis. Some of them weren't even Jewish. But the Jewish ones, they wouldn't visit. Others would.

And I really don't know what the trigger is that keeps you from or actually allows you to visit the country. Perhaps it's age. Perhaps it's how you were brought up. Perhaps it's not thinking intellectually about what had happened-- in other words, not coming to the conclusion that you can't really blame the present citizens of Germany for what had happened any more than you can blame the present generation of Americans for bringing slaves into the United States.

So perhaps people don't think about that part of it, and just emotionally react to the fact there were 6 million Jews that were exterminated, and this was done at the behest of a single person, and the people who followed his demands are guilty, and so are the children and their children's children. And I can see that that would be an emotional issue that perhaps any kind of logical reasoning cannot overcome. But I look at it differently.

Perhaps do you see yourself as more of a forgiving person, or--

No, as a matter of fact, I'm not very forgiving in my general dealings. It depends on the slight that's done. But here, obviously, we have an extreme action. I don't forget.

And it's not a matter of convenience, really, either, because I haven't gotten anything particularly out of being associated with Germany, or even with the German scientists of today. But you see, am I going to stop listening to Beethoven, who had never even known of Hitler? Am I going to not read Thomas Mann or whatever have you just because they have the label German as part of their birth condition? And I don't see that.

And it's not a matter of being forgiven. It's just a question of reality-- who can you truly and justly blame for what happened? I think if we have a Klaus Barbie, Yes, execute him by all means, if he is guilty. And I think the Israelis have done this. They have no death penalty-- except for the mass murders that occurred in Germany. So I guess people look at this differently depending entirely on their rational and emotional makeup.

If you were to meet a perpetrator in Germany, or found out that somebody had participated in the Nazi regime, what would you say to them? Can you speculate?

Well, it's a very, very iffy question. My reaction would probably be that I would want to distance myself from them as quickly as possible. I wouldn't talk to them at all. And I don't think I would go up and shout "murderer" in their face.

But there's a person in Freiburg who I feel may very well have been a active Nazi with whom I've had some contact. I've always felt very, very uneasy whenever I'm in his presence. And yet I don't know why I didn't tear it up.

But what has happened is that I've made certain very definitive statements about what I thought the Germans had done, both socially and culturally with respect to the Jews. And not just the Jews, either-- other countries as well at that time. And I made it fairly clear that I thought that he might very well have been one of the perpetrators of this. So I would not, with this one exception, talk to people like that.

Now I've become convinced that as a man exactly my own age, and that would have been 13 when I left, which was 1939. So there's a possibility he might have been in the army. Also possibly he might not.

He convinced me, really and truly, that he was not only not a Nazi, but he had done a great deal to try to oppose this. I think I may have mentioned this. He took me to a Jewish synagogue down in the southern part of Germany, and the synagogue had been reconstructed. And it was there before the war.

Primarily, Southern Germany is inhabited by Catholics, and the Catholics don't get along too well with the Jews. And here was this little enclave where there was tolerance. And so people came from all over the area to worship in this town. And after the war, somebody had given them money to rebuild this synagogue, and he took me down.

So I am sure that if he had some reservations, this would not have happened. I think I can see into his soul, if you might say. And I feel convinced that he was, if I may call it, a "good guy."

Are you going to be doing any public speaking when you go to Düsseldorf on your memorial visit?

I don't know. I doubt it. I will, of course, if I'm asked. But I do not know what this undertaking requires.

If you were to be asked to speak to German schoolchildren or to a general audience, what would you think you would say to them?

Speaking about my experiences?

Or whatever you'd like.

Well, I mean, my normal way of speaking to a group is on technical subjects, but I don't think that you're interested in that at this point. I would perhaps relate some of the things that had happened to me, and would indicate that I personally was a far luckier person than most people. And yet the total sum of everything that happened to my family would certainly not put me any more than the middle, because I think a number of families got out.

I would tell them that I would hope that they could judge a person by their character, and not by the color of their skin, or their religion, or the economic status, or whatever. And I would hope that they would recognize the danger signs of any bigots trying to arouse the populace in a similar endeavor, and that they would resist.

And I just read-- and we talked, I think, last time I was here about East Germany and the problems they were having. And I just read that the city of Cottbus has rebelled against the reactionary and neo-fascist or fascist groups that have tried to arrest the power and the authority away from the city. And they have put them down. And this is very heartening.

You wonder, when you look at Germany, which was an economic miracle for 30 years, thanks to the, at least initially, to the Marshall Plan, that they would even consider tolerating something of this sort. But apparently, the economic conditions in at least East Germany have deteriorated to the point where you have this diatribe against foreigners, against anything that's not endemic German-- and that includes even the religion of Judaism. So I would certainly warn them to try to avoid that.

I would preach the other aspect of it, and that's tolerance of somebody's behavior that you may not understand, may not actually want for yourself. But that isn't damaging to you. And to accept that each human being is different and hopefully endowed with the creativity and the perseverance and the intellect to lead a life that doesn't harm other people-- at least not deliberately.

And so that's, in other words, tolerance on a grand scale. And I would preach that, and the hope that this would never happen again. So.

Well, I hope they ask you to speak, then. I think you'd be a good speaker.

Well, I won't volunteer. I'll tell you that.

And I think we asked before if you had visited Auschwitz or any of the other concentration camps, and you said, no, I believe.

Correct.

When you go back, would you still not go to these sites?

Yes, I would not go to the sites.

For the same reasons.

Same reasons.

It's just too powerful.

Well, not only too powerful, but I cannot see that it would accomplish any good for me. It's not an ablution or anything like that. I think I would-- I would feel horrified.

And I know what happened. I've seen pictures. I don't want to subject myself to the emotional trauma that I'm sure would accompany that, because I can't see that it would do any good.

And as I mentioned, I mean, some people were not only surprised, but even angry at my refusal to visit these, saying they were national shrines. Well, so was that prison in the South where the Union soldiers were systematically murdered. I don't think anyone would get a kick out of going there, unless they were truly perverse. It may not be quite the same rationale here, but no, I cannot see going to a concentration camp.

And I don't want to see the documents. I don't want to see the belongings of the prisoners and people who were murdered, the collection of gold teeth or whatever they have. I don't know. It just strikes me as being too barbaric to even consider.

The only thing that would be of interest to me in this area would be to see what the mechanisms were that people dealt with it in terms of getting out of the country-- how they managed. What the resources were that they had. Who helped them, et cetera, et cetera. And I'm sure there would be a lot of extremely interesting stories in how they meandered out of their initial residence in order to gain freedom in a Western country, or in the Western hemisphere.

No, the reason I ask is I've interviewed a few survivors, and they felt it was a cathartic experience, like, going back to Auschwitz, having been there, to relive it in some way, and put it behind them in a final sense.

No, I can't. First of all, I wasn't in any of the concentration camps. And secondly, I've been to where I lived. And while I lived in these three residences whose location I can recall, I was a small child. I was fully aware of my surroundings and how hostile they were to me. But I had the protection of my family to that extent. And so I had a, shall we say, acceptable childhood, even though it wasn't totally happy-- happy because of the external influences.

So I didn't have a real traumatic experience living there, the only traumatic experience having to deal with the separation for my parents and my family, and never seeing them again. So this is-- but that, I don't think I can overcome by any visit or by any act. It's just something that I have to live with. And I've-- don't think that, because of that, I would benefit from going to any of the concentration camps.

I'm willing to look at some museums where there are some, shall we say, professional exhibits of the sort of things that I have mentioned to you. Now I think you, being a historian, would probably be able to realize that a professional can arrange things to be not traumatic for somebody who walks in. The Yad Vashem is deliberately the other way, and that I couldn't even visit either. So it depends on the kind of exhibit.

When I find that my soul gets touched too deeply, and there's too much turmoil in it, I'll just leave.

I'd be interested in hearing your reaction after you visit the Wiesenthal Museum, which deals with a lot of the pre-war and the early evacuations and deportations, how you feel how that was arranged.

This is the first anniversary of the disaster in the Oakland Hills where you lost your home. Do you have any reflections one year after?

Yes, I have reflections on it. Both my wife and I, individually and separately, went through the Hills yesterday, which is the exact anniversary. And also, on Sunday, we went up there and met with our neighbors, and shared a bottle of beer, and talked about the future.

And that's about where we are. We're talking about the future. Our house is approximately 40% rebuilt. We have not had the trauma that we've had-- that other people have had with the insurance companies-- not that we're totally satisfied, but at least we'll be able to rebuild, and not have to expend every single cent of our resources for the process.

The feeling is that there is a parallel-- and I do draw this very much-- between this loss last year in the firestorm and the loss of my home, my parents, my family in 1939-- 1938, excuse me, is when I left. '39 is when the war broke out.

And there has been one other disaster which, to me, was even-- well, not quite of this magnitude. But one of my divorces left me very, very emotionally drained.

And so these three events, plus some lesser misfortunes, are things that make you, I think, stronger in the long run. And if I look at the disaster that happened in the Hills last year, and I see the different reaction of people to the event, some people, I don't think, will ever get over it. I think my family and I are recovered 99.9% in terms of our emotional status. Financially, or what we had, we'll never, of course, recover our belongings, because some of the things that were lost belonged to my wife's family from hundreds of years ago or so. And I lost some of my things from my parental home also-- not to mention the collections that we both have had.

But [SIGHS] the way to deal with a problem, as far as I am concerned personally, is to say, OK, you had a discontinuity of extreme magnitude, but unless you get back to that plateau where you were before, you're going to keep sinking further and further into the morass. So my endeavor has been to get back to normal as quickly as possible by starting my collections again, realizing that it'll never get to the level that it was before.

The stamp collection.

Stamp collection. The collection of old maps, which is even more valuable. And I collect maps and stamps. I've collected some masks. Those were the three collections I had.

I'm going to start trying to play the piano again, which I haven't done in a serious way for 55 years or so. And I will try to do some outside reading in different areas than I have done before.

And, of course, I've immersed myself in activities at the university in a professional level. I'm teaching, which you're not supposed to do five years after you retire. And I've taught every year for at least a month. This semester I'm teaching a full course. I still have graduate students.

I'm going to try to increase my professional activity in consulting. And it'll keep me busy, and it'll also diminish the trauma, such it may still reside from the firestorm and from any previous disaster that I've been subjected to. So that's how I am trying to deal with it. I think it's constructive. And we feel very fortunate in that, even though we have suffered the loss of our home and all our belongings, we weren't hurt, unlike other people.

And there was something that my wife and I have discussed several times. We were there when the fire storm came at us, and we speculated about our emotional reaction if we had been out of town and never

been exposed to the danger, and to visually observing the approach of this just horrendous inferno.

And my wife said, well, if we had not been there, we would have lost everything. We managed to save a couple of things. But we would not have been subjected to this personal seizure of having an force that's out of control just bearing down on you, and forcing you to make a decision as to whether we can stay even one moment then to look for something else to take out. And the other alternative is if you had waited a few more minutes, could you have gotten out because of a potential traffic jam, which is what occurred on one of the streets where the people died.

So these are speculations. But she felt that we would not have been subjected to the personal trauma if we had not been there. We might have ended up with less possessions, but that the images of the firestorm would not have been in our eyes and our minds the way they are now.

So it was particularly appropriate yesterday, because the television stations almost all day long ran the tapes from that firestorm. And we looked at them. And last night, at my daughter's school, the Junior League had given some money for a dinner for the firestorm survivors. And so we talked to some of them. But I don't think any of them were Jewish, other than us-- other than me. My wife is not Jewish.

And so that is how we have dealt with the fire. And I do draw a parallel between that and my exodus from Germany.

[INAUDIBLE] that you--

Not at this particular point, although I am sure that the moment I leave here, there will be things that I recall that I should have mentioned. But that's my short-term and long-term memory problem.

No, I can't think of anything that would specifically require extensive comments-- not even small ones-- that I can think of. I think I've covered pretty much everything.

I've had a very useful and hopefully productive life in this country, which has been very good to me. The University of California has been very good to me. My present family has been very good to me. And so I have all kinds of reasons to be grateful.

There's no question in my mind that, looking at it coldly and intellectually, that I've had a better life here than I could have ever had in Germany if there had been no Hitler. So you might say, for me personally, it might have been a benefit.

Do you think you still would have been an engineer had you been in Germany?

I have no idea. And the reason I'm saying that is the opportunities for education in Germany were far fewer than there were in this country-- for everybody, but particularly for Jews. And when you look at Jews in Germany, they stayed out of engineering. If they did go into some professional areas, it was mostly medicine and, to a lesser extent, law. But there were very few Jewish engineers.

In this country there was a prejudice against Jewish engineers also in the '30s. And in fact, when I came to the University of California in 1947, the then-dean was the first dean in the entire country who had opened up the college to Jewish faculty. And if you looked around, you found very few in other institutions. But he had assembled a core of, oh, maybe six in the college, which was very unusual. And they didn't ask you your religion before you signed your papers to teach. So I can say that there was a change in the attitudes of both the institutionalized situation and in personal representations between people with regard to being Jewish and not being Jewish.

In Germany, my recollection is that there were relatively few intermarriages. When I came to this country, there also were relatively few intermarriages, but it has increased enormously, to the point I think that more than half the marriages between one partner who is Jewish and someone else involve a non-Jewish spouse.

And it so happened-- and it's very amusing, but last Friday night we had a little dinner party. And one of my



friends from the university, who also was, a long time ago, my graduate student, but who is now an associate dean, and whom I'd also known at the Naval weapons center where I worked; and another colleague from my own department, with whom I collaborated, and was the only other person who lost his house in the firestorm-- we all three are Jewish men who-- I'm sorry-- were all three are men who married Jewish partners. In my case, my wife is not Jewish.

Then there's still one other faculty member who we've had at the house who is also Jewish-- married to a non-Jewish person. And sometimes I'm a little bit bemused that my children from this marriage-- my child from this marriage-- is not Jewish, and yet this friend of mine, who's Indian, who's married to a Jewish girl from New York, has two daughters who are Jewish by the Jewish law.

Well, we don't take that so seriously anymore today. But still there's something that ought to be done about this in a formal way. I know it can be done by just converting. But I think perhaps a religion ought to look and not just automatically exclude people when there's one Jewish parent, regardless of which one it is.

So I have not followed the Jewish religion in any serious way. In fact, I haven't gone to a synagogue for decades, except for a bar mitzvah. I did go to two Kol Nidres that were special, but in general I just don't observe them. I don't fast on Yom Kippur. So as I think I also mentioned before, I feel that my ethical standards are more than equivalent to what a formal religion preaches, and I'm satisfied with that.

And you mentioned you really don't associate with other survivors of the Nazi regime.

No, I didn't mention that. It's certainly not deliberate. But as I say, this colleague of mine, who was my graduate student, is a survivor. His father was killed in Yugoslavia. And he's from Austria.

He's a survivor. There's one other colleague in the department who is a survivor. I associate with them some.

It's not a matter of whether he's a Nazi survivor or a Holocaust survivor. It's a matter of whether or not our personalities match or not, and by the way of common interests and so on. And I think that's-- I don't exclude or include anyone in my circle of friends automatically, except people that I know specifically who are perpetrators in the Holocaust. Those, I would not have even among my speaking acquaintances-- much less friends.

So some survivors do identify very strongly with the fact that they were survivors, belong to organizations or groups. And you haven't done that.

No. I've-- have to thank the B'nai B'rith for helping me in my initial year in college with financial assistance. And I accepted that. And I was grateful for it.

So my position-- and I think I may have mentioned this before also-- my position is that I'm not a Jew unless it's not popular to be Jewish, and then I'm very much of a Jew. I do have a cultural affinity with people that have practiced the religion with the art, and the literature, the music, whatever you like.

And in my visits to Israel-- I think I've been there four times-- I found that the people that I associate with feel pretty much the same way that I do, except they have the additional burden of defending the State of Israel against the Arabs. That's something I personally I don't have to worry about it. But other than that, in terms of the attitude towards the religion and their practice, they're no different than I, or many other people that I do know.

One of my friends that I mentioned, the associate dean, says he doesn't believe in the Jewish religion, but he practices fasting on Yom Kippur just to show him he can do it. [LAUGHS] It's not a religious matter with him, but a matter of principle, to show that he doesn't deny the religion because of the inconveniences that are associated with it.

Now you just mentioned you saved your papers from the fire.

I saved many papers, but certainly not all. I have lost quite a bit. What I have in my papers are some documents which involve the legal processes of restitution. And these--

Why don't you describe the collection, some of the papers.

OK.

You don't have to read them in detail--

No, I won't.

--unless there's some part that's particularly [INAUDIBLE].

Well, what is at the front of the package is the death certificates of my parents, which I received from the Netherlands Red Cross in January of 1952. And then statements to the effect that my father and my mother were killed in Auschwitz. And they are assigned, I guess, arbitrary date to the assassination. And then they indicated that these are formal documents that can be used for death certificates.

Then I have a whole series of documents here relating to the legal aspects of some of the--

Why don't you describe the documents, and maybe the process of collecting them, and what you've done with them?

Well, there were at least two lawyers in Europe who were acting on my behalf, and they took a certain commission to process these cases through the courts in Germany. And they were the ones who sent me copies of these. I am sure that I do not have perhaps even the majority of them.

This is the restitution of the property of a distant relative of mine, Adolf and [? Bertha ?] [? Richard, ?] who lived in Munich. I recall them. I had, in fact, a picture of them at one time, but the picture is no longer there-- of which I was one of perhaps eight heirs that could participate in this. And then I may have been only a part heir of one of these. And I am, together with my first cousin once I moved in Holland, that I described.

So that is the listing of the property, and it's involved. And the amount of money in terms of stocks, and in cash, and so on that was available.

Then we had another lawyer here. This is concerning another heir. Yeah, this is the property of [? Solomon ?] [? Stamm, ?] who is-- I'm not even quite sure. I think he was the brother of my-- not the brother. He had married the sister of my grandmother. Something like that.

And again, we have here a series of-- this happens to define who the heirs are in this case. This is an official document which had to do, I guess, with the-- what I had to do in order to get any of the money back. And this is much, much later. I'll put that aside for the moment.

Here is another letter which, again, there were many exchanges between the lawyers and me because I needed information that they thought I might be able to provide. In many cases I couldn't. But here are two legal cases that I mentioned concerning, well, the division of property of deceased. And these were deceased as a result of action by the Nazis.

Here is another one of the same--

So you received several--

--restitution.

--forms of restitution, but not only for your parents, but for other relatives.

Yes, but these-- for other relatives. What they were trying to do, as I understood is, is they were going to

take the money, or the equivalent sums that they had confiscated from these people as a result of Nazi action, and distribute it to the heirs. And I am, in all of these, only, like, maybe 1/16. So the amount of money-- and especially at the time, when you consider the status of the dollar then, didn't amount to very much. So it was more or less a--

Here is a rather interesting document. Let's see. Yeah, this is again, I think. This is a different item. And this is rather crucial to me.

What this is is a information bureau in Berlin that investigated the status of the business of my grandfather-- my grandfather and his brother founded, and my father participated. In this indicated the order in which the business was carried out by change of ownership or by change of location, and what the amount of money was-- I know it was contained in one of these-- that they dealt with. And so this is a rather interesting and important document.

Here's another one from the same organization. In fact, all of these are from the same organization.

So you're saying that the restitution was paid was for loss of property and not for loss of life.

I think there was a certain sum for loss of life automatically, but there was certainly for poverty. For example, I see that this business at one time was of the order of 1,500,000 Marks, and that they, when they were in Berlin, they had 14 employees. And so these things were considered, I imagine, when they gave, provided restitution in-- to me as a result of confiscation of this property.

So this is all. And I should, I guess, all keep that in here. This is all from the same information bureau. Like a detective bureau, I guess, that's given here.

So when they provide restitution, it was only in the hundreds of dollars.

My recollection-- and it's been a long time ago-- I think I got several thousand in the final analysis, in these. The restitution to the heirs-- not of my family, but of these two other groups-- were in the hundreds of dollars. But for my family, and the business, and the loss of education-- I do not recall whether there was-- what it was, if there was any for the loss of life.

This is the documents-- rather interesting. It is the decision of the Court of Düsseldorf, dealing with the matter of the-- one of these items. And it gives a detailed account of the stocks, for example, and what the income was, and how each person was to be recompensated. And so that is in here. This is, essentially an inventory. I'll leave that for later.

What we have here is-- I don't know how these all got in here. This is a vaccination for my father. And it was done on-- let's see-- 29th of May. And I don't think-- I don't think they even gave-- oh, he was five years old. So it must have been 19-- 1888. And so this document.

Then we have some depositions that I had to give-- copies of depositions I had to give-- here in the Consul General-- German Consul General of San Francisco-- essentially to say what my life's history was, what my family history was, to document the right to this money as an heir.

Then I have a letter from my grandfather with a note for my father and my mother both, to a lady in-- who is distant-- second cousin of mine who is in New Orleans. And I think she's 86, and she's quite ill. But it's very critical for me, because it's a copy of the writing of my mother, and my father, my grandfather-- something I don't have much of. So that's a document in between the documentation of the-- the documentation of the-- yeah.

And so I will separate all these. Simply further conclusions by the court. And I'll get those separately.

I think the new material is 30 years later than this, which I am separating. And this has to do with the new material, with my present connections with Düsseldorf, and this memorial.

So these are all documents that-- I think this is another representation of the stocks and bonds and so on that were in the case of the heirs of [? Soli ?] [? Stamm, ?] of which I was one.

Next, I'd like to show some letters here, what might amount to envelopes. And these were addressed to me. This is from one of the gentleman whose heir I have-- I have the letter in here. It's almost impossible to read. But they were wondering why I had not communicated with my parents. But I had. But I guess, being under Nazi domination, this shows opened and censored. That may very well not have been transmitted.

This is a letter from your relative. This is not--

The relative, yeah.

--by your parents.

No. This is an envelope from my grandfather mailed to me in Mount Vernon. And the letter is lost.

Do you remember what was in it? Do you remember what the letter had said?

Well, they're wondering how I was doing. And I guess they were wondering.

Those are so poignant because they have Nazi postmarks, a swastika and the German eagle.

And this was sent from Holland under occupation, you see.

This is a letter I actually received in Germany-- or a postcard. And-- because I was a stamp collector.

And this, I think, was sent from my father and my mother's, who knew that I was collecting stamps. So a it was generally a pleasant social letter.

Some more of the restitution material, which I think the documents, in a way, speak for themselves. There's nothing further than the three separate cases that I mentioned-- the heirs for [? Soli ?] [? Stamm, ?] the heir for [? Richard, ?] and then with my own parents, and the business of the loss of their property and their business.

Yeah, this has to do, actually, with my own life. They decided on how much money to give me based upon my education in this country. They have made a fairly complete documentary of this. And they say, for example, I was pretty well educated over here, which is true. And no question about it. And so I probably received somewhat smaller sums of money than I might have if I had just been out pounding a beat or something of that sort.

Here is again, in going through this-- I'm sorry I'm not more organized.

No, that's OK.

I'd like to put this down and then get to that later. This is also an heir question of who gets what in the way of heirs. I really didn't care. I think that some of the people who were involved were very, very aggressive towards the others, who were perhaps entitled and did not.

This is still part of this.

This is an interesting document, totally different. This is my secondary school in the United States, which shows the grades that I received that I had to use for entrance to the university. Yeah, they weren't too bad.

This is a documentation from the gymnasium that I had attended in Germany stating that I entered there at a certain time and left at another time. And that they also said that after the 2/7/1942 no Jews were allowed to attend this gymnasium beyond that. So there are a couple of documents here of this sort. And that involved my gymnasium in Germany.

Some more documents concerning the legal aspects of restitution, which I don't think would necessarily be of interest. Here you can probably, well, Xerox them and determine what this involves.

This is a letter that I received after the war from a woman, Neva. She writing to me in French, and saying that what has happened to some of my family. She also bitterly complains about a fight that she and another--

No. This is strictly from-- I'm sorry. This is wrong. This is strictly from a relative who was married to my uncle by marriage. She was his sister-in-law. And she explains to me in German-- in-- in French what has happened to my family.

Can you read-- do you want to read part of that?

Well, I have-- you mean translate it?

"I would like to write to you in English, but it's very difficult for me to write in English. I have received your letter, and I immediately wrote to your cousin, Ilsa Vandenberg--" that's my first cousin, who died, I know, in Auschwitz-- "--who lives in Amsterdam. I am not--" some of these I can't even read.

"I am not certain that I know the address of your father and mother. I have again written to [PERSONAL NAME] Vandenberg--" who I don't know, "--who lives in The Hague in order to find their address. I am sad that I do not have any further news.

"Your uncle, Joseph Vandenberg, does not live anymore in Dordrecht. My postcard, which I have written in there, was returned to Portugal--" So this must have come from Portugal.

--with the sad news that he was sent to Auschwitz. Louis Vandenberg--" who is the brother of my uncle by marriage, "--is-- I do not know what happened to him. And I shall inform myself with all speed. But I today have had no response to my inquiries. But one should not lose courage. Perhaps everything is OK."

So this is essentially what-- I mean, there is more and more. But this is the nature of the--

Here's another letter to me-- only the envelope. I don't have the letter anymore. For my grandfather, who had migrated, together with my parents, to Holland.

And here is a card, addressed to my mother, from-- I don't know who. I'd have to look. Maybe is her friend. Maybe it was a relative. So this was about maybe '37 or '38.

Here's another card. And this is from my mother's friend. I know this is from Italy. [INAUDIBLE].

This was sent to me because, again, my collection of stamps from Paris, from the Louvre. And this is addressed to me. And this was the girlfriend of my uncle, who died on this bicycle trip that I described.

I have here another letter from the address of my uncle in Holland. And this was clearly, again, opened. And it was either from my uncle or from my grandfather, who lived with him.

This is the birth certificate-- copy of it, for the static copy of my birth certificate-- together with the copy.

This is another document from the general consul here in San Francisco concerning the-- let's see-- the restitution for my parents; maybe their death. And these are all receipts.

OK. Here is something. This was a card. I don't know why I have it, but I do. This is my great-great uncle, who was in business with my grandfather. And it's a bill of inventory kind of thing. I don't know what it means. 1894 or something like that.

This is the menu that was done upon the occasion of my grandfather's 80th birthday. They had a celebration. And this was the party I was the invitation to. This lady in New Orleans, who married my father's

cousin, and who also was a very close friend of my mother. And that's, as I say, the reason that I'm alive is because of their friendship, because my mother went to their wedding, and my father went to their wedding. And that's where they met. So this is the menu which, again, is in German.

There's a letter here from my great uncle who wrote this. And he says, "Dears--" so I don't to really whom this is meant. And there are two scripts of Hebrew in here, apparently-- at least in handwriting. And this is very difficult to read. You have to sit down and really study it because of the handwriting.

And then the rest of this material I think deals with my current correspondence, or relatively recent correspondence, with the Dr. Barbara Sushi, who I recalled, and before has conducted this research project on the history of the Jews in Düsseldorf. And the rest of this deals with essentially that also with the vice mayor who sent me this, because I had written to him that I wanted to meet him. He is in charge of this project, and all the other restitution.

And this documentation here, of course concerns the letters that we have exchanged-- personal and quasi-official. And they relate also to what is in this [GERMAN], the memorial to the Jewish in Düsseldorf. I was asked to address myself to them for some information that I wanted.

So all of this material here is within the last year or so that actually can [INAUDIBLE] the other material. And I think it's more of a self-explanatory.

If you wish me to look at each of these individually, I can. But--

I'd like you to describe the book of calligraphy by German students, to hold that up and describe what that is again [INAUDIBLE].

OK. I'd be very happy to do that. Oh, incidentally, I have here an actual signature-- I guess it's duplicated-- from the Oberbürgermeister, the highest mayor. I don't know. We don't have this kind of title in this country. It's a super-mayor of Düsseldorf inviting me to this event last year that I described.

Read that letter. That's interesting.

Well, I'll have to translate it. It'll take a few minutes. The Super-Mayor of the principal city Düsseldorf of the Rhineland, "Dear Professor Goldsmith. You were informed in February that the period for the usual invitation of a group of former Jewish citizens to come to Düsseldorf were postponed by reasons of--" I guess this is "-- warlike activities in the region of the Gulf. And since then, fortunately, the war has been suspended. And I would like to invite you most heartily, from the period of 16th through 23 October 1991."

If I had accepted that, I would not have been here for the firestorm. That just occurred to me.

"Düsseldorf was formerly your home city, even though it was a long time ago. In the meantime, a great deal has changed with us, and I would like to help to convince you that there have been these changes. I would be very grateful to you if you would write no later than the 15th of August your consent to come. With your response, please give an indication whether you will be coming alone, or whether you will have a significant other coming with you. You will receive, in each case, in August, a letter from us in which all other still unresolved questions will be posed. Please direct your answer to Frau Renata [? Bartlett, ?] [GERMAN] Düsseldorf--" et cetera. The address.

"As host, the city will take care, during the period from 16th to 23 October, of your accommodation in a hotel, and will give you the support for your meals.

"I would also like to indicate that we do not have any possibility to provide kosher food for you. We will, as far as it is possible for a group, make special arrangements for your normal eating habits and problems.

"As far as the cost of travel is concerned from the USA, those guests will receive from the city in the amount of D-Mark 1,000 per person. I would appreciate it if you could advise me in good time of your travel bureau in order to start the-- or initiate these-- processes. You will receive the additional sum for the journey in D-

Marks after your arrival here. I would be very happy to greet you in Düsseldorf, and I remain your Bürgermeister."

It is difficult to believe this, but I do think this is a form letter. I deduce this from the fact that there is a slightly different type for the address than there is for the remainder of the letter. But it is difficult to believe that this would apply to everybody that they would write this stuff.

OK. Then this is my correspondence with Frau [? Bartlett, ?] the lady who was mentioned in here. This is a correspondence with the Memorial Institute in Düsseldorf.

Most of the rest of this concerns the correspondence with Dr. Sushi about my visit there, the questions that she had. I lost some of this document in --

Here is another letter from the mayor, which I guess involves the same sort of thing. The earlier letter to the one that I just read, which was the initial invitation, that was the postponement. So that corresponds to my writing. Kept it all together with the responses of this lady, and of the Institute for-- that's the memorial responsibilities. So that's where we are with regard to this documentary.

So tell me about the archive, and their projects, and what you think about it, in Düsseldorf.

I haven't seen them yet. I have talked to-- I spent two nights with Dr. Sushi and her husband. And we talked a little bit. But she said she is in contact with the official bureaus trying to verify deaths, trying to verify family relationships, burial grounds. She has a list, for example, of all the Jewish graves that are still existing in Düsseldorf, and who is where and what.

We tried to find my aunt's grave, who I had never knew she died before I was born. And we weren't sure that we found it or not. So I have no answer directly to your question about what I think of the memorial. I haven't seen it.

Regarding the projects.

Oh, I think the projects are fantastic. What I've gotten here, and you asked for a response to this book. I think this has touched almost more than anything else has-- not quite as much as a fire, but pretty close.

What this is is a book which was put out by the city of Düsseldorf, and involved a writing down of all the Jewish people who died as a result of Hitler and his actions from the city of Düsseldorf and the immediate surroundings. And each page was put in calligraphy by a student from one of the schools.

And they made three copies of each of these pages. One was put in the Yad Vashem in book form. One was put in the local Memorial Institute. And the third copy, I think, went to the institute for the country. There is also a Memorial Institute for Germany. I think it's in Bonn. I'm not sure.

And then the city decided to reproduce these for those who would have an interest, or had one of their relatives in here. And I have my father, my mother, and my grandfather listed in here. My father is listed here, Goldschmidt, Siegfried, born 18/11/1883 in Dortmund and died in Auschwitz, with no dates, although the Red Cross had given me a date.

My mother is also in here. Goldschmidt, Margarethe, geborne Grunewald, born on 24/8/1924 in Cologne. Died in Auschwitz.

And my grandfather is in here. Goldschmidt, Adolph, born 29/9/1851 in Lemförde and died in Westerbork.

Now I must say this. My name was Goldschmidt. When I became a citizen in this country I changed it officially to Goldsmith-- simply to Goldsmith, to simply anglicize it. So that's what you wanted to ask me about--

This book was also sent to me. Many things have been sent to me that I didn't bring which deal with a city of

Düsseldorf and its cultural activities. But we're not specifically directed to this project concerning the history of the Jews there.

This was gathered, and collected, and commentary made by Barbara Sushi, the woman that I mentioned. And this is Düsseldorf, Thursday, the 10th of November, 1938. And this is, I guess, the day she concentrated on, because probably it was Kristallnacht, or very close to it.

And so there are various sections in here, which deal with an introduction. And this are documents, the first series, a series of articles from the local Jewish paper-- community newspaper-- of the region of the synagogue of Düsseldorf.

And in here there are some extremely interesting items. For example, there's an advertisement of my piano teacher in here, by the name of Alice [? Liffman. ?] Right over here.

This lady was still alive in February at age 92 or 93 in Providence, Rhode Island. And I did talk to her on the phone. But she was not in such great shape.

So there are a series of newspapers here. There are also, although it is not in here, Dr. Sushi showed me an advertisement from a newspaper from the comrades of my uncle in World War I, when he died with me. They had taken out a big notice-- death notice. And I'd ask her for a copy of that. I haven't received it. But I hope to get this.

Then, after that, there are a series of descriptions of the pogrom of the actual-- of what happened. And they say in the letters here as though nothing had happened. And all Jews have to give immediately up all weapons of any kind. And this is the paper, the newspaper articles, concerning the-- kind of death in Paris that was used as, apparently, a pretext for the Kristallnacht.

Then there are a series of statements of your own experiences. And the first is by the chief rabbi, by Dr. Max Eschelbacher. Apparently these people were interviewed by Dr. Sushi and they gave these written comments of their experiences. And together with some photographs, which can be copied.

Then there is a series here on the documentation of the arrests of people, and the order for the arrest, as-- and these are, for example, I guess what the police took when they arrested these people.

And then there are some statements about what happened to children's groups. The first one is to a youth transport to Palestine. I myself was on a youth transport to the United States. And I am not sure just how that was arranged. There must have been some sort of group taking care of this.

There are two more to England. And I guess the documents were written by the people who were the leaders of these groups-- the adult leaders.

Then there is the question of immigration, and where can you go, and how did it look in 1938. And then there are these documents concerning applications to leave. Here's one to the SS, the [INAUDIBLE], asking for permission. And then there are some-- these are all to the secret police.

But also there are some letters to consulates requesting visas. And there are also in here some refusals for these requests. So this is a rather extensive documentary of what happened in Düsseldorf.

What goes through your mind when you see how well they've documented that? You must be very happy with this Doctor Sushi.

Oh, I think she's done a fantastic job. And I do think that she's sincerely and honestly trying to bring out all the facts-- good, bad, or indifferent-- as to what happened. She's not making an apology for Germany. She's just setting down, here is what happened. You make up your own mind.

And we had a wonderfully-- a elegant, informative conversation, in which her husband joined. Her husband is a just-retired professor of physics at the University of Düsseldorf-- which didn't exist when I lived there.



That's been created since.

But she's obviously interested in the subject, and trying to do much to get as complete a record as she can.

She'd probably like a copy of this tape for her archive.

She certainly would. I've asked her if she would, and she said she would be delighted. I'm wondering if you might be able to provide that.

Well, we'll ask Lenny.

Yeah. Yeah. No, I think she would be more than happy.

And here is a third document. This-- the book with the names, and-- well, mean this, I mean what I've just talked about-- book with the names. And this third document, which says "History in the West," which is a special edition dealing with the chief rabbi of Düsseldorf, Dr. Max Eschelbacher. And it's his history. And she gave me an addendum to all of that when I visited her, because I certainly was very, very curious about it.

And the reason this is so critical is because I found something I would never have believed I still had. And what that is the prayer book that was given to my father at the time he entered World War I. And it was signed by the Chief Rabbi of Düsseldorf, about whom this biography, I guess, was written. And the date on this is 1917, and it's an abbreviated prayer book. And he wrote that also in German.

So that's a treasure.

And you grandfather was killed at Westerbork.

Yeah. My grandfather. My father was killed in Auschwitz. My father fought in World War I in the Eastern Front. He was in the Battle of Tannenberg, which is rather well known.

My grandfather fought in the Franco-Prussian War. And since he was born in 1851, that was 1871 to '72. He was just 20 years old. And he fought at Verdun, among other things. He told me a lot of things about this, but I've forgotten most of it.

While I was home, they never really dwelled on either of the wars or their service in them. But he told me individual incidents, as something occurred, in the process of something else. But there was never any formal description of what they did, what they didn't do, or how it went, and so on.

Were they officers, or--

No. No. I have a picture of my father in uniform. Not of my grandfather.

So those are the documents that I have here. Then some other documents that may or may not be of interest. This is not in any particular order.

This is my high school annual. I went to high school in Mount Vernon, New York. And somehow or other, the banner that I bought 50-odd years ago is still there. The high school doesn't exist anymore. It's been torn down.

But I did go to the 50-year reunion last year in the end of September. And I met a lot of people that I used to know. And here is the list of addresses of the people that were there. I'll take this picture later on. My own picture in here is somewhat small. I was involved in a lot of activities. I played chess. I was a member of the math team. I was a martial, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

And you had to write down here where you expected to go to college. So not knowing any better, I put down Columbia, which would have been a disaster. And I did go, in fact, as you know, to the University of Texas. So my favorite American institution at the time, again, not knowing any better, but it wasn't that bad, was

football, which, of course, existed only here.

So I have saved this from the debacle that happened last year, just because it was lying on top of the desk as I was rushing out of my study. So I don't know if that's worth looking at further. But--

Absolutely.

Then would you like me to go through the rest of this material, or--

Are there pictures or archives?

Well, there are some archival material. Let me--

Maybe you just briefly describe it, and then we'll start doing the pictures.

OK. Here is my high school graduation certificate, which is from this high school whose annual I just showed. And indicates that I graduated in June 1941. And also, for some reason-- well, because I had just come back from this trip, it was saved.

And this is a replica of the commencement of the people who participated, the people who spoke, et cetera, et cetera, which was reproduced for the 50th anniversary and could find that.

So these are three documents. I had three of them, because I was going to send them to friends who did not come.

I lived with a family first after leaving New York City in this town of Mount Vernon, New York, by the name of Reicherts. And they were interested-- their business was repairing of binoculars.

My actual residence there was somewhat of a disaster for me, because there were in their 40s. They had never had any children. And at this reunion, I found out that a woman, who was my classmate, had been asked by these people before I arrived there how you deal with a German refugee boy. And she thought that was very strange to ask somebody of the same age-- 14-- how you would handle them.

Well, I'm afraid they really mishandled me, and this woman agreed. I couldn't have gotten into a worse environment.

However, what it did is one of these semi-minor disasters-- semi-major disaster. It just strengthened my resolve. I don't know if I've mentioned this or not before. Possible I did. I have--

Yeah, this abusive family.

Yeah, then I won't pursue that. But this is something that I apparently had in my file at the office to remind me of my residence with them.

And I don't know what else there is in the way of documents. I think almost everything else involves [MUMBLES]

Well, I treat that as a photograph also. That's the genealogy of my family compiled by my daughter. That falls more in the category of a photograph than of a--

And that's all I brought. There was a lot more, but I felt there should be a limit to what I should be presenting here. And I cannot give you the documentation for every year of my life.

A lot did survive. Are we going to do the pictures now?

Yes, I think that--

What about you, John.

--would be a very useful thing to do.

John, ready to do pictures.

[INAUDIBLE].

Before we can talk, I'll let you know. And basically, I'm going to ask you who it is, the year it was taken-- to the best of your estimate, and the city that it was taken in, and then any other material you'd like to talk about, either of you. So can you tell us who this is, please?

Yes, I believe that this is my paternal aunt, by the name of Greta, who later married a Dutchman by the name of Joseph Vandenberg. And this was taken in the city of Duisburg, which is where my grandfather lived when she was a young woman. And I had a great deal of interchange with her, because I went to Holland and visited her and her husband.

And they were killed in Auschwitz. And I can't give the exact year. My best guess that would be of the order of 1918 to '20-- something of that order.

Tell us about this photo, please.

All right. That is a photograph of my mother in the lawn chair in the backyard of our house in Grafenberger Allee in Düsseldorf-- the last residence where I lived before coming to the United States. And this would have been taken in something like 1937.

I'll let you know, Tell us about this photo, please.

All right. This is a photograph also of my mother. And it was taken in a garden somewhere in Düsseldorf. I don't know the exact place. And my best estimate of the time this was taken would have been about 1932 or '33.

Tell us about this, please.

All right and that is yours truly standing in front of my governess if that's what you want to call her. And it was taken right outside our house, next to the zoo, in Düsseldorf. And there's a little, oh, place with flowers in the front that precedes the entrance to the zoo.

And it looks to me like I was about maybe three years old. So this would have been about 1927.

OK.

Tell us about the governess. You were--

Oh, the governess was-- I remember her name was Annie. And she wasn't a full-time governess. She just took care of me now and then. She was very nice I tried to find out what her last name was, but I couldn't recover that. And so therefore all I remember is the name "Annie." And she was very sweet to me-- as much as I can remember, in the few flashes that I have of her.

You look like a happy child.

I was quite happy. I was an only child. And I wouldn't say my parents spoiled me, but they let me go in the directions of my own tendencies. | example, I was a great one for drawing maps of countries.

Is that why you collect maps now?

That is quite possibly a connection. I did them in watercolor, with rivers and towns and everything else. I

wrote down the times when the trains left and when they arrived. And I looked at atlases. I did a lot of reading even then. And so I would say I was certainly not inhibited.

Tell us about this, please.

All right. This is, again, a picture of my mother on skis in Switzerland. And I was with her on this trip. It's in a tiny town, or near a tiny town, called [NON-ENGLISH], which is close to a larger town called Chur in a canton called Graubünden.

And we spent, I think, 10 days there as a courtesy of my uncle, or my mother's brother, who was a travel arranger and travel agent, and took groups there. And then my mother and I usually got along to go along for free.

And she was skiing there. I think that's her first time in that time that I was on skis. And I skied, I think, two years, and then I had to lay off as a result of an injury-- actually, an illness. And I started again in 1948 here in the Sierras, which then led to my skiing until my back no longer permitted it, about two years ago. One of my very favorite hobbies.

OK. And tell us about this one.

Oh, that's another one of these travel journeys, by arranged by my uncle. My uncle is the tall man standing at the middle. He's the tallest of the group. I see my aunt, who is from New Orleans, who died a few years ago, just to the right of the harmonica player. The harmonica player was the driver of the bus.

My mother is standing next to my uncle. And my--

So this is your aunt right here?

Yeah, that's my aunt there.

And your mother is here?

That's my mother and that's my uncle. And my father is the man with the hat right next to my aunt to the right of the harmonica player there.

So this is your--

That's my father.

Your father right there.

Yes.

And you're in there?

No, I don't think so. I probably took this picture myself. That's--

That's a typical family outing.

Well, it's not a family outing. It's an outing of the group that was this travel group being taken from Düsseldorf to Hungary to Balatonalmádi [INAUDIBLE]. And this was en route somewhere. The buses weren't so quick in those days. So this is actually in Hungary.

Six seconds. Tell us about this photo, please.

OK. To the left is my mother, in the bathing suit. And to the right was a visitor from Brussels by the name of Anna Bolle-- B-O-L-L-E.

I did look her up when I went through Brussels, oh, maybe 20 years ago. And she was, well, in her 60s at the time. So this was taken at approximately 1934, '35.

And it was taken near the Rhine. As you can see there is a-- not a canoe, but a kayak, which is the favorite mode of German water sporting. And I did some of that on the Rhine and on the Ruhr and on some of the tributaries.

And this was taken. The Miss Bolle-- that's not her married name; that was her maiden name-- stayed with us as a guest for, I don't know, a period of maybe a month or so-- sufficiently long for me to become fairly well acquainted with her. And some of my relatives in Holland whom I visited some years ago were able to direct me to her in Brussels when I went there at the time.

And tell us about this, please.

Yeah. Well, that, again, is my aunts, who I will identify now by the name of Herta Oppenheim. She was in the previous picture in Hungary-- not the immediately previous one, but the one prior to that-- together with my mother in front of her. And that was our--

So this is your mother in front, and that's your aunt.

That's my mother. And that's my aunt, Herta Oppenheim. And this was on the beach, if you can call it that, in Balatonalmádi, 1936, in the summer. And this was, again, part of this group that you had seen an earlier photograph of.

My mother and my aunt were there, and I took this photograph. I think the lady to the right, whose name I don't know, was also a member of that group. But the background people were not. They were just from somewhere else.

OK. And tell us about this photo, please.

Now that photograph is my mother on the right, and my grandfather. When I talk about my grandfather, it's my father's father. I never knew my mother's father. He died before I was born.

I don't know where it was taken. Apparently there's some snow there. My father was a very stately-- grandfather was a very stately gentleman; very much, I would say-- no, how could I call it-- courtly, and very impressive individual, both in terms of his character, in terms of his business acumen. And my mother and my grandfather got along very well, which is not always the case.

And the date for this, I would place about 19-- well, let's see. 1928 maybe.

So your grandfather would be almost 80 if he was born in 1851.

That's correct.

And he was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War.

Correct. And he also-- he lived to be 92, and he died in Westerbork.

OK. And tell us about this photo, please.

Yeah. This photograph, it has the background. I'm sorry. The back of it says Dordrecht. And Dordrecht means that it is the family of my aunt-- my paternal sister. And that must be her, and her mother, and her grandmother, and her daughter-- at a very young age, since this daughter would be the older one, Ilsa.

By the way, her daughter is the only closest living relative that I have. I guess I have two first cousins once removed. I have one by the name of John Goldsmith, who lives in Liverpool. And the other one, Vera DeYoung, who is the daughter of this child that is being held on her lap. So this is the series of maternal

pictures.

And where would this photo have been taken?

This was in Dordrecht, Holland. It said so on the photographer. It was there. So from this--

From what year, roughly?

My best guess would be that this would have been about 1910, perhaps. Something of that order.

OK. Tell us about this photo, please.

OK. Now that is my mother. And that was my mother before she was married. So I don't know the people that are with her. There are obviously some companions in the woods and my mother. I guess maybe there might have been some soldiers. And my best guess, that this was taken about 1922.

Again, the exact dates are very difficult to describe. And it might not have been in Düsseldorf. It might have been in Essen, where she worked, or anyplace she might have taken a vacation.

--let you know.

Tell us about this photo, please.

OK, this photo is a mountain in Switzerland, in the vicinity of a town called Lenzerheide. And that's snow. That's not a glacier. And we were on a summer walk. And again, this was a group which was conducted by my uncle.

And I don't know the people around him. But obviously, I am in the very center of it. And this would have been 1936, possibly '35. We were there two years. I don't think my uncle is in this picture. At least I did not find him when I examined it.

OK. And tell us about this photo, please.

OK, now that photo was on a very fateful journey for me. That's Munich in front of the so-called Feldherrnhalle in the central square. I had bought-- or my mother had bought-- these knickers for me to go to the United States. And we'd gone from Düsseldorf to Munich to visit this relative that I had discussed with you earlier, from whom I obtained a small inheritance.

And we had gone there to go to Stuttgart, which is where the American consulate was, because I was getting my visa to come to the United States. And my mother took this picture, I think. And that is me and the pigeons. 1938.

OK, tell us about this photo, please.

OK, that photograph gets us back into Hungary. It's at a gas station in 1936. The bus in which we were traveling is on the far right.

My aunt is in that picture, I know. And I think I took it. My aunt is standing sort of next to the-- next to the gas pump. And--

You mean right there?

No. Next to-- next to us.

Oh, I see. This person here?

Yeah, right.

OK.

And so this was on the way to Balatonalmádi. I don't know whether it was the town of Gyár, but somewhere in that vicinity in Hungary; again, 1936.

All right. Tell us about this photo.

OK. And this photo is above the Danube in Budapest. It's on the Pest side, on the right side of the river as it flows down towards the Black Sea. I myself am in front. And I don't know any of the other people at this point. But obviously, people were having a good time and enjoying their vacation.

Tell us about this photo, please.

This photo was also taken in Munich. And that is the castle of the Bavarian emperor. And at this time, I had the long pants. That's the other suit I bought in Holland to go to the United States-- on my way to Stuttgart to get the American visa at the consulate.

OK, and tell us about this photo, please.

And that date is dated 1932. I would suspect it was Düsseldorf, but I cannot be sure. My grandfather is in the center, seated. And next to him, on the left, is his sister, whose name is Ida Oppenheim. And her son is the husband of Herta Oppenheim, whom I had pointed out earlier, that went with us to Hungary, and with whom we will have several other encounters in other pictures.

I do not know who the other two people are. I cannot place them.

OK.

And please tell us about this photo.

All right. That is my mother. And that is at a swimming pool in the city of Dordrecht in Holland. And the swimming pool was, as was often the case in those days, arranged in such a way that the main river, which was the Maas, actually that was diverted to flow through it. And so there was-- of course, they had barriers, so it didn't go with the full force of the current. But you had fresh water dumped in there by this diversion process. And I would think that was about 1930.

That was a big part of German culture, wasn't it, the water cures, and the water resorts and spas.

Oh, definitely. This was a question of the Kur, as they call it-- K-U-R. You still can get up to eight weeks of sick leave, as it might be called, in order to take the cure. And when you go to one of these towns that calls themselves a cure city, you pay a special tax to be allowed to be there.

Did you ever go to one of these spas?

Not myself. Well, I did pass through just to look at them. But I certainly never went, that I recall, to stay there any length of time. And whether or not they do any good, we don't know. I mean, we're talking in this country about taking the waters. And this is the equivalent of it.

Perhaps the most famous of these places is called Baden-Baden in Germany. And there, in order to get into the main hall of this little town, you have to pay a fantastic amount of money-- just about getting into the gambling halls in Monte Carlo.

So you would drink water, and take hot and cold baths, and showers, and massages. Sounds like fun--

Well, I--

--actually.

Well, I think the hot and cold baths are more than just the drinking water. I think that part of it was not-- we have sort of this sort of thing up in Banff, in terms of the various pools-- natural pools-- with their minerals and the sulfur content. And people believe in them. I guess a hot tub is a take-off from that.

Tell us about this, please.

Well that is my father. And--

Yes?

--my father was 41 when I was born. And so I would guess that this was about when I was, perhaps, seven or eight years old. So it would make it about 1931, '32. But that's an estimate. I really don't know.

And this, please?

And that is the same chair that we had in one of the earlier pictures, in the same backyard. And that is the interviewee enjoying a moment of sun. And as you can see, I think I was reading something there. That would be the normal situation. And the house on Grafenberger Allee, Düsseldorf, circa 1937.

OK. And this is similar to an earlier photo that we had.

Yes. And this is the ladies, although they weren't all named that way, or what I would call the Vandenberg branch of my family. Grandmother, mother, daughter, and granddaughter. Not grandmother. Great-grandmother of the child.

And these are the Vandenberg.

Of course, Jewish.

Jewish.

OK. And can you tell us about this photo, please?

Yes. And that brings us back to Switzerland. And this was on one of the hikes, in 1935 or '6, out of the city, the town of Lenzerheide, in the Graubünden canton of Switzerland.

And that's myself. I don't know any of the other people, including that probably very adorable young girl. But I was too young to be interested at the time. Nor were the cultures right.

And let's see. Can you tell us about this photo, please?

Yes. That photograph was undoubtedly taken at our home in Düsseldorf, on [? Breidenplatz ?] 2. In front is, in the center, is-- I guess I'm a little bit embarrassed there or something. My grandfather is next to me on the right. My mother is immediately to the left of me in back. And the head that's sticking out is my governess.

And my best guess is that was about 1930, '31. Something of that time.

OK. This is going to be a little tiny one here.

Yes.

Can you tell us about that?

Yes. As best as I could tell on that, there's myself, again on another rock in Switzerland, with another part of the group that my uncle had conducted. And we were on a walking tour through the hills. They were not



really mountains. And that was part of the same tour that we had seen two pictures ago.

OK.

And this is a sort of a duplicate of one we had earlier. Is that right?

That's right, except a slightly different pose. And that is my mother in the backyard in a lawn chair, and our address in Grafenberger Allee, of Düsseldorf, about 1937.

OK. Tell us about this photo, please.

OK. And that is my paternal aunt on the left, and her husband, Joseph Vandenberg. Her name was Greta. This was my mother's.

So this was taken in Dordrecht. And my best guess was that this was about 1928. Again, to try to date some of these at this time is very difficult. But they were living in Holland in the town of Dordrecht, and I assume that is where it was taken.

And what happened to them in the Holocaust?

Oh, they were killed. They were killed. Their two daughters, who were married, were killed. And one of the daughters had a baby that was killed. The other daughter had a baby who got out to Australia. And this woman I know. She lives in Amsterdam, and she won't go to Germany. They were very nice to me.

Tell us about this photo, please.

OK. Now that's a very strange photo. That is the shop of Daniel Oppenheim-- and his son, later, Hugo Oppenheim. They were in the wholesale for a little town, in retail business of cloth and clothing-- especially men's clothing. And this was in the town of Rahden-- R-A-H-D-E-N, I believe. I'm not sure now.

No. No, I'm sorry. That is incorrect. And I don't know who that is. I thought it looked familiar, like that door. But it is not. It's not that town. I don't know what that picture is, I regret.

So you're not sure what the picture is.

I'm not sure what that is. No, I just--

Yes. Yes I do too. There is the name Oppenheim, who's a successor to S. Frank. You see the D. Oppenheim at the bottom, and son?

Right.

Yeah, so this is the town of Rahden, and that is their shop. So this is correct. It's a shop of cloth and clothing-- especially for men.

And this is the couple-- the previous couple-- that we saw in--

No you haven't seen-- Daniel Oppenheim I don't think I have shown. I may or may not have a photograph of him. I know I have some photographs of Hugo, his son, who is mentioned there.

And Hugo's marriage to Herta Oppenheim was the occasion for producing the marriage of my parents, as I mentioned earlier. And their sons of Hugo live in New Orleans, and we're still very close.

OK. And tell us about this photo, please.

OK, that brings us back to Hungary. And this is at a wine cellar in the mountains around the town of Balatonalmádi, somewhere between the Lake Balaton and Budapest. And who you can see there is my

mother and Herta Oppenheim, whom I call my aunt. She's not quite my aunt, but it's close enough.

My mother is next to the vintner there on the right. The vintner is standing. And my aunt is sitting next to her. I don't know the other people that are part of this group. But the gentleman with the slightly protruding midsection was also in one of the other photographs in Budapest.

So this is the vintner here on the left.

Yes.

This is your mother, you said.

Right.

OK. That's your mother.

Well, you haven't pointed the pencil there yet exactly.

That's your mother right there.

That's my mother.

And this is your aunt right here.

Yes, Berta. Right.

Very good.

A wine and cheese party.

Yeah. And I probably took the picture, although I probably-- well, I don't know. I may have taken some wine because my parents were very liberal about allowing me moderate amounts of alcohol. I remember as a young child to drink beer. And so a glass of wine now and then would probably have been allowed.

You're holding the camera very steady.

Well, I have never been affected by alcohol at any time in my life.

Tell us about this photo, please.

That photo was at the same location where we had another photo with my uncle and my aunt, and my mother and father and the harmonica player. And this is my uncle, who is standing on the left, in a somewhat S shape, supporting the rather portly gentleman we've seen before. And underneath, having fun, is the bus driver, sticking his tongue out. And this would have been in Hungary, in, again, 1935 or '36.

Tell us about this, please.

OK, now that is during the war. That is in Breda, Holland. On my left is my mother. To the right is the lady who took my mother and father in-- secretly-- and hid them for a number of years.

I did speak to her daughter when we visited Holland immediately after the war. I've lost track of them, unfortunately. I don't even remember their name. But I owe a deep debt of gratitude to them, except that, in the final analysis, they did get caught.

Were they punished for having been caught?

I don't think so. I think what happened was that my father and my mother were accosted on the street by

the Nazis.

And I did get, through various hands, a carpet from my parental home, and a silver ship, and a silver ornament, where we put the herbs and that-- what is it? Not Hanukkah or Pesach. Or is it Pesach? I don't even know. It's a Jewish religious device.

And I got them through her. I guess she sent them out. And I've kept my-- my daughter got the carpet and the two silver things out of the house. So I have that from my parental home.

What was the name of the family that hid them, again?

I wish I knew. I don't. I have lost track.

I need to ask you that--

I'm sorry.

[INAUDIBLE] the chair there.

So these were Righteous Among Nations. These are people who were the risk-takers. And of course, they could have been killed if they were found harboring Jews.

Absolutely, without any question.

I do not know exactly when this picture was taken. My parents left in February of 1939 from Düsseldorf and went to Holland. So it could have been taken any time after '39.

It could even be that this was taken before the outbreak of the war itself, which was in, I think, August '39.

So that may have been the last picture of your parents of that series.

It's possible, yes. I have no way of knowing, except I know it was taken in Breda. And I got them-- a number of photographs were sent to me after the war.

Tell us about this photo, please.

This photo is a same location as one of the earlier ones, on our trip to Stuttgart to get my visa, in front of the castle of the Bavarian king. And it's my mother and myself, and my long pants, which were not so unusual.

Tell us about this, please?

OK. This is in the little town of [NON-ENGLISH] in 1935. And I am in front in the middle. And I did not see my mother in there, but she certainly was along on this trip. You have a picture of her on skis-- an earlier photograph.

And in those days, there were no such things as chairlifts or anything of that sort. If you had a rope, you were lucky. Most of the time, you ski down and hiked back up the hill on skins. And when you went on a cross-country trip, that's how you did it-- by skins.

You mean snowshoes?

No, not snowshoes. She wore skis. And on the skis she put skins of-- I don't skin--

Oh, animal skin.

Animal skin.