

Interview with LENORE HOLLANDER  
Holocaust Oral History Project  
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Q: I'M SANDRA BENDYAN, AND I'M HERE WITH LENORE HOLLANDER. WE ARE DOING AN INTERVIEW TODAY, WHICH IS MAY 2, 1990, FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT AT THE SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST LIBRARY. I WOULD LIKE TO START BY ASKING YOU TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF, WITH YOUR MAIDEN NAME, AND WHEN AND WHERE YOU WERE BORN?

A: Well, Lenore Hollander is my maiden name. I dropped my married name in about 1967, because actually besides my children, who were just about mature enough not to mind having a different (sp) name from their mother, I then dropped the (Kohler). And my (sp) children have their family name of (Kohler).

And I kept the family name of Hollander, which served as a much better introduction. There are lots of Hollanders, really no (sp) (Kohlers), no related people on their father's side living here.

Q: I SEE, SO YOU WANTED TO BE BACK AT ONE, WITH YOUR FAMILY?

A: That's right. I wanted to be identified with my family. And as soon as it was comfortable for the children to have me do so, I dropped my married name.

Q: WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

A: I was born in 1906, and have no recollection of that, except that it was in a place called Ferguson, Missouri, where my father (sp) was located as one of the chemists of the (Melencrot) Company. They had a prominent factory. My father is a chemist, was. He died in 1962.

Q: WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A: Charles Samuel Hollander. And his father's name was Samuel. And his great-grandfather's name was Charles.

Q: Was his family all Americans, American born?

A: The Charles of the family was the son of a Samuel, who came over on a ship in 1848, when there were political upheavals in Europe. It was well known that many immigrants including many Jews came over at that time.

And the ship landed in Baltimore, which was a friendly place to the Jewish Community, as is well known. And there are still plenty of Hollanders in Baltimore, some relatives and some not. But, anyone wanting to know who's related by the name of Hollander, if they can't trace back to mid 19th century in Baltimore, that's out.

Q: AND YOUR MOTHER, WHAT WAS HER NAME?

(sp) A: My mother's maiden name was (Vinshtoser), which is a blockbuster when you're giving your mother's maiden name at the bank.

(sp) Nobody could guess (Vinshtoser).

And there's a family history about that name too, because my grandfather's family were country people from a place called Rosenheim in Bavaria. Their name was originally Aber, which means boar, and they got the sur nickname, about the time that sur names were pinned on families. That's in the 17th century, because their farmstead was way up on a hillside where there was lots of wind. So they were the wind-blast neighbors.

(sp) There was a snobbish family in the 19th century, who considered the name of (Vinshtoser) too rural, too much smacking of the soil, so they went back to Aber. I don't think it's any better.

( Q: IT'S SHORTER ONLY.

A: It's shorter and easier.

Q: YOUR MOTHER'S FIRST NAME?

A: My mother's first name was Elsa. That's the opera buff tradition has stayed in the family. My maternal grandfather

(~~sp~~) Yosef (Vinshtoser) was a tremendous opera fan and went to the original performances in Bayreuth. My son has the librettos with little sketches made of the participants on the margins, but he lives in Vienna, so you won't see that.

Q: YOUR SON LIVES IN VIENNA?

A: My son lives in Vienna. My daughter lives in Munich. Both very nice places to visit.

( Q: AND SO I'M GATHERING THAT YOU WERE BORN AND I PRESUME RAISED IN THE UNITED STATES.

A: I was born and raised in the United States. And did not get to Europe until I was what 26 or 27, the end of 1933.

Q: DID YOUR MOTHER'S FAMILY EMIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF ANY PROBLEMS?

A: No, they did not. They stayed in Europe and my aunt lived at the time in Graz, Austria. There were two daughters in my mother's family, my mother Elsa, named after the heroine of Lohengrin, of course.

And she had a string of princesses names to butter up the princesses, because my grandfather was a cabinet minister in old time regency Bavaria, around the turn of the century. So it was politics to be real good friends with these princesses.

( Q: WAS THIS A JEWISH FAMILY ALSO?

A: No, my mother's family was definitely not. In fact, there were some relatives who were a bit unhappy with my mother marrying not only one of those barbaric Americans, but Jewish to boot! But, my mother was very steadfast, and stood her ground. Her parents backed her up. So the relatives swallowed hard.

Q: DID THEY MARRY IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: No, they were married in Munich. And there's pictures of the carriage driving off with my father in morning coat and my mother in her bridal costume.

Q: DID YOUR FATHER HAVE A BUSINESS OR SCHOOLING?

A: He was educated in Munich. He got his PH.D. there. Actually, that's interesting too because he got his PH.D. with Richard Willstatter who became a Nobel prize winner. And my father was his first student, and got his PH.D. under him.

I, in turn was the first PH.D. candidate of Vincent du Vigneaud who also got a Nobel Prize. Now, Willstatter got his because he had worked out the chemistry of chlorophyll and hemoglobin. My own professor, du Vigneaud worked out the formula for insulin. So they were both very notable people and very proud. That's sort of interesting. Don't you think that's interesting?

Q: SO YOU STUDIED IN GERMANY?

A: No, I did not. I studied at the University of Illinois. And du Vigneaud had just come back. It was considered at the time, that was the late 20's and early 30's, that a chemist did not have the right polish, if he had not had some time in Germany.

So Dr. du Vigneaud had just come back, and he had a bright idea to get a very significant breakthrough on the chemistry of an amino acid named cystine, which is one of the so called essential

( amino acids. It is necessary in the diet, and if a mammal does not get cystine, it starves to death. So I had the task of exploring a very essential link in that chain of knowledge about this very important substance. That was the beginning of du Vigneaud's very illustrious career and a nice launching for myself and my career. Not a whole big splash, but respectable.

Q: BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD. DID YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A: I did. I was the second in the family. My older sister Edith became an architect, married an architect, and they moved to Canada. He was a Canadian. The rest of the family is all not Jewish, only my father.

Q: DID HE REMAIN A PRACTICING JEW?

( A: He was not really. Even his mother Emilia Hollander, she was one of the reform branch of Jews. Both my father and my uncle, were what they called in those days free thinkers, I think they still do, and did not practice traditional Judaism.

Although they were not, they both became converts, at the time they married their brides. My mother's family felt much better after my father became a Lutheran. He was not a practicing Lutheran either.

I remember how shocked I was at 14, to hear him explain that he did not believe in the God that appeared on a cloud wearing a white nightie. It was kind of a shock because my father was usually right about things.

Q: WERE YOU RAISED AS A LUTHERAN ALSO, THEN?

( A: American families, when they moved to a new town, will join whatever Protestant church is there and will sort of get them ahead socially. In other words, if they like the minister or

( if the children like the kids in Sunday school, they'll join whatever church. So it was more or less, it was sort of interchangeable. I think you are familiar with this phenomenon. So my mother finally landed up being Episcopalian, having started Lutheran is not much of a break, but she was a Presbyterian in between.

Q: I WAS ALSO TRYING TO GET A SENSE OF WHETHER YOU FELT JEWISHNESS IN ANY WAY, AS YOU WERE BEING RAISED?

A: As a matter of fact, I am ashamed to say I did not. I knew that my grandmother was Jewish. She "looked Jewish" and you know the prevailing sentiment was that was somehow not quite right.

( And I used to look in the mirror and think do I look Jewish, and decided that I was, and kept very quiet about that.

I did not begin to get interested in things Jewish until I was in college. I regret to say, but I have to be honest.

Q: WELL, THAT'S THE TRUTH. SO AS A CHILD YOU WERE AWARE OF THE...

A: As a child I was dimly aware that there was a connection through my grandmother, and I loved my grandmother dearly. I was very close to my grandmother. I think I was probably her favorite grandchild. I loved her dearly. But she had an interesting history also.

( She had taken her sons to Germany to be educated, because back in the 80's and 90's that was the place you got the best education. So she moved to Frankfurt and then Munich so that my father and uncle could get the very best education you could get in those days.

( She lived in what they called a pensione, that was a sort of a step up from a boarding house. And it so happened that one (sp) of the local noblewomen, named (Grafen Luxbourg) spent some time there when her apartment was being renovated, and took a shine to my grandmother. My grandmother says this in wonderment, "she knew I was Jewish." But she thought that was intereresting. They became very good friends. And my grandmother was very proud of that friendship.

I met this dear old lady, in the 1930's when I first went to Europe. She was still alive, and I visited her in her apartment in Munich. It was a fascinating place. There were 21 clocks, I counted them. She had had a palatial apartment in Munich, ( and a so called cottage which was quite a lavish chalet in Bad Reichenhall too. So all the clocks survived, and they softly ticked in the background. Every once in awhile one of them would strike when it felt like it. She could not see very well either, and the time didn't make very much difference.

Q: BUT SHE WAS PERHAPS COMFORTED BY IT.

A: Her loyal companion. She had put all her money into war bonds for World War I and lost it. And actually it was her loyal companion who had prosperous relatives, who bought into the (sp) (stift). The (stift) is the European version of the retirement place. So they bought two residences. One of them out in front, (sp) and of course (Fraulein Shletter) had Frau (Grafen) move into that one, and she moved into the apartment in the back building, ( Naturally, with her relatives having paid for both places, this was the magnanimous gesture. But she was the companion, and (sp) Frau (Graven) was the important person.

Q: SO, HIERARCHY WAS IN PLACE.

A: Oh, absolutely. But, they enjoyed it that way. They were proud of each other and very loyal to each other. It was a wonderful example of that relationship.

Q: YOU WENT TO GERMANY IN THE 30's.

A: Yes. I had never gone to Germany.

Q: WHEN DID YOU GO?

A: 1933. In the fall of 1933.

Q: YOU HAD COMPLETED YOUR STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: Yes, I had completed my studies here in 1931, and my doctorate degree was issued in February 1932. And I already had a job, which I was very proud of. Remember it was the depression then.

Q: REALLY.

A: And I sort of talked myself into a job, which I was on the second year of.

Q: IN THE UNITED STATES?

A: In Philadelphia.

Q: WERE YOU MARRIED THEN?

A: No. I hadn't even met my later husband. In fact, it was in connection with that job, that I did meet him. I was not really terribly enamored of that job, although I was allowed plenty of leeway to do my own research, and did, and had a couple of publications out of it. But, what I was really interested in, enzymes were a brand new subject in the early 1930's. I talked the head of the institute, into what I thought was gonna be sending me to Europe to get educated under the leading researchers, who were located in Germany.



( Instead, I was not consulted about this. He had one of these experts come over to Philadelphia and work in his laboratory, bringing three assistants. And the #1 assistant was my later husband. This was in the fall of 1932, that we met.

Q: SO HE WAS A GERMAN? GERMAN NATIONALITY?

A: Well, he was a German from Czechoslovakia. As you know there are compact enclaves of German ethnic people in Czechoslovakia. He stemmed from one of those in old world Moravia.

Q: WAS HE A JEWISH PERSON, OR A CHRISTIAN PERSON?

A: No, he was very Aryan, you might say. I hate that word.

Q: CERTAINLY THAT MUST HAVE BEEN UNUSUAL FOR A WOMAN TO HAVE A PH.D. AT THAT TIME?

( A: No, not at all, not really. It wasn't unusual. We were very much outnumbered and I did have friends who said, "Oh my gosh, with all those men around." Well they didn't quite realize that the atmosphere in a research laboratory or a university, is not very conducive to flirtations. So I let them fantasize over how wonderful it was to have all those men around not realizing how much of a disadvantage a woman was, outnumbered and put down, literally, really.

Q: SO THERE WERE A LOT OF DIFFICULTIES.

A: I'm not aware of just how, to what extent those difficulties have been surmounted to this day.

Q: NOT VERY FAR. SO BY 1933, YOU HAD MET YOUR FUTURE HUSBAND?

( A: 1932, I had met my future husband and we became engaged in the spring of 1933. But, we worked there in the laboratory in Philadelphia for another year. And then the professor and his crew, shall we say, went back to Prague, and I went along.

Q: YOU WENT ALONG AS A WORKER?

A: Yes, I did research there in that institute, on the subject that I had worked out before.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF FEAR OR ANY FEELING ABOUT THE POLITICS OF WHAT WAS GOING ON?

A: Yeah. Well, now in 33 when we went over there, Hitler had been in power a half year. Everybody was saying well they made all these anti-Semitic noises. Who knows? They'll simmer down, and grow up and this is gonna improve. That's what they thought. That's what practically everybody thought, except the Nazis zealots, who had other ideas, as you very well know. In Germany, if I'm not mistaken, at the time before WW II there only were about 650,000 Jews, at all. There only were that many living there. The big concentration of Jews was eastward. This is very well-known, I think. There was a certain snob trip between the German Jews, who were very prosperous and well-fixed, and the not nearly as well off Polish and Russian Jews. This is certainly a familiar subject to you!

Q: WELL, HIERARCHY EVERYWHERE.

A: It seems to be a law of inhuman nature. And whoever can snoot or put down somebody else, they're going to be people who do it.

Q: SO, MAYBE I'M A LITTLE CONFUSED BUT, YOU WERE IN GERMANY IN 1933, BUT IN PRAGUE IN 1934.

A: Excuse me. The trip to Prague was through Germany, because everything was by rail in those days, naturally. So, we made a stop in Munich, partly to visit my father's professor, and

(sp) I also wanted to look in on (Grafen) Luxborg. But, then we went on over to Prague.

Q: WHAT WAS THE CLIMATE LIKE IN PRAGUE AT THAT TIME?

A: Murky. It's a very unpleasant climate and probably has stayed the same or gotten worse.

Q: WELL, AS MUCH THE POLITICAL, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU NOTICED ANY DIFFERENCES GOING INTO CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

A: Yes, there was a different kind of anti-Semitism in Prague. The people that were anti-Semitic in Prague were oh, the street ruffians. There were slogans being passed around. At the time, the Germans were as much disliked as the Jews in Czechoslovakia, because they had just separated out of the Austrian empire and for many years the German speaking part of the population had been sidetracked on the better jobs and better education. So there were a number of Czechs who resented that.

Then when Hitler came along there were people and I really heard them say it, who said, "Well look at all the wonderful things Hitler's doing for Germany. Why can't we do that kind of thing here in Czechoslovakia?" And that's when the trouble began. Up till that time, if you're familiar with the Czech history, the country had been independent only since W.W.I, taken out of the Austrian empire. But they were in a very enlightened political climate.

The first President was Thomas Garrigue Masaryk. He had taken his wife's name, which was Garrigue. He had big ideas to make Czechoslovakia a friendly tolerant place like Switzerland. The central European Switzerland, he wanted it to be. This did not pan out. The Czech history has been pretty regrettable, because their geography is concave, where Switzerland is convex.

( And the Swiss had been able to stay independent for century after century, and more or less democratic. Just recently there was a town in which the women didn't get to vote. Do you remember? That was in yesterday's news.

Q: OH, I DIDN'T HEAR IT.

A: A holdout town in Switzerland, where the women still don't have the vote.

Q: AMAZING! I WAS THINKING BACK. DID YOUR FIANCE, WELL I GATHER AT THAT POINT, WAS HE SUFFERING ANY PREJUDICE AS BEING ONE OF THE GERMANS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

( A: Yes, he was, because in Czechoslovakia the universities were having a tussle. The original university was founded in the 14th century, 1300 and something. And then, the learned people all spoke Latin, so there wasn't a linguistic battle going on originally.

Then naturally under the Austrian empire, the German part of the university more or less, outpowered the Czech part, and had the insignia of office. For psychological reasons, which I think you can understand, the Czechs resented that deeply.

There were two different universities. In one the teaching went on in German, and the other the teaching went on in the Czech language. Naturally, once they were independent, the Czech contingent wanted to get the insignia, and be the big shots. Well that had been soft pedaled under the regime of Masaryk and then Benes. But, when Hitler came to power and this new rowdy spirit came in, they began to boil over, and there were riots.

I remember very well during that atmosphere, and possibly there was danger. There were bricks thrown. In fact I sat on the street car next to a man who had a battered briefcase, in which you could plainly see the outline of the interior brick. There were no books in there waiting to be thrown.

Q: SO, IT SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS HAPPENING AMONG THE INTELLECTUALS AS WELL, AS THE STREET PEOPLE?

A: I wouldn't say the intellectuals. But among the university people, there were some very well educated people who still were very chauvinistic Czechish. I think that's understandable in view of the history.

In all of Prague, when Czechoslovakia separated from Austria, all the German language street signs and restaurants signs, and all kinds of public signs, had to be in Czech. And if you wanted to buy something or get in, what you did was start talking English. And then everybody understood German. So then you could get in to German particularly if you had an American or English accent. And everybody would be friendly. But, Germans and Austrians well they were friendly to Germans from Germany than they were to Germans from Austria. All kinds of gradations.

The Europe of before W.W.II was incredibly fragmented. The borders were awful. Traveling from one country to another, you had to count on at least a half an hour at the border, if not more. There was a whole ritual of customs inspection and pass control. Only Americans could go just about everywhere with an American passport.

Q: DID YOUR HUSBAND, WAS HE SPECIFICALLY SUFFERING ANY INJURIES OR JOB DISCRIMINATION?

A: He did later in the 1940's, when he was looking for a job. In Czechoslovakia he couldn't get a real good job, because he was German. Then when we were in Germany, he couldn't get into the academic world, because I was half Jewish.

Q: HOW WAS LIFE FOR YOU IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING THAT PERIOD AS A PERSON?

A: I was only there a year and a half.

Q: DID YOU EXPERIENCE ANY NEGATIVE JEWISH REACTION?

A: Not directly, but it was in the air. It was in the air. You overhear things, and you read things, and you see ugly posters, and hear rumors, and that kind of thing.

Q: WHAT KIND OF POSTERS?

A: I'm trying to recall. It wasn't as blatant as it later was in the Hitler years in Germany. That became gruesome. But in Czechoslovakia, at that time it was covert.

Q: HOW LONG DID YOU SPEND IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

A: I was there from the fall of 1933 to the spring of 1935.

Q: DID YOU MARRY DURING THAT PERIOD?

A: I did. I married in a glamorous place. The old town hall right on the main square in Prague. And if you have a picture of the beautiful clock tower in Prague, the hall in which I was married is just down diagonally from that. It was a beautiful renaissance room. I'll never forget it, with handsome wall paintings of linen folds paneling was painted on. And the windows were beautiful renaissance windows. The clock tower was Gothic, as everyone knows. Well, it's all still there. And they cherish it. They very much cherish the city picture in Prague. It's a very pleasant feature of Prague. However the climate is and was miserable.

Q: AS YOU SAID, "MURKY." THEN YOU DECIDED TO GO TO GERMANY?

A: Well, my then husband, had finished his doctorate work, which was in the German polytechnic in Prague, when he finished that he wanted to continue working in the chosen field of enzymes. He had done a great deal of very good work. This was the beginning of the whole subject of enzymes and their involvement in physiology; and goodness it was a terribly important topic.

But, the seminal work was done back in the early thirties and my husband did some of it. And wanted to continue in that same field. So he went to Heidelberg under another Nobel Laureate named (Richard Coon), who in turn had been another student of Professor Willstatter. Remember him?

Q: I KNOW THE NAME.

A: My father's preceptor. This all more or less tied together. He received a Nobel Prize in the Nazi time, and wasn't allowed to accept it, because the Norwegians and Swedes were not properly anti-Semitic.

Q: I SEE.

A: They had given Nobel prizes to people who were Jewish. So the Nazis forbade anyone from accepting a Nobel Prize. By the way (Coon) later received his prize, but without the money.

Q: WHY WAS THAT? WHY DIDN'T HE GET THE MONEY?

A: Well, there had been a delay of maybe ten, fifteen years, between the time that he could actually claim his prize. He got the documents. They lived quite well without the extra money.

But he told me sort of with wry humor, "I got the documents."

Myself, brought the Nobel Prize documents to a prominent chemist, who had been deprived. His name was (Meyerhoff). So here I was on the ship, on which we were repatriated in 1946 and I had this Nobel document with me in my care to hand over to Professor (Meyerhoff) in Philadelphia, also without the money.

Q: BUT STILL AN HONOR!

A: Oh, yes. A Nobel Prize document is a beautiful thing. It's absolutely wonderfully illuminated. The calligraphy is handsome. It's illuminated in lovely little colors. A beautiful thing to see, bound in beautiful red Morocco leather. Gorgeous.

Q: YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE ONE I GUESS?

A: I carried one in my suitcase.

Q: SO, THERE YOU ARE IN HEIDELBERG, I GUESS RELATIVE NEWLYWEDS.

A: Yeah. We were married in the summer of 1934, July 4, 1934, is when we were married.

Q: BY THE WAY, WHAT WAS YOUR HUSBAND'S FIRST NAME?

A: (Franz Yoseph Yulius Kohler.)

Q: AND WAS THERE ANY FEELING AMONGST HIS FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT HIM MARRYING YOU BEING PARTLY JEWISH?

A: Not really. They were country people, quite simple country people. And my being so educated, and being an American at that. That was very exotic, among the country people. I was kind of a curiosity.

Q: POSITIVE?

A: Yes, this was very positive. In fact, they felt at a disadvantage being countrified. But, I didn't see it that way at all. I loved the farm, there, which was a perfectly beautiful place.



The family had built it up. They had become quite prosperous. This is a German enclave in Czechoslovakia.

Q: THIS IS IN PRAGUE, OR THE OUTSKIRTS OF PRAGUE?

A: No, this is in the country, in Moravia. Moravia is north east of Bohemia. This was an island enclave in Moravia. Later history of that is very sad. All the German ethnic people were expelled at the end of W.W.II shipped in box cars or shoving push carts or with backpacks on their backs over into West Germany, which already devastated, starving and humiliated. That happened to my husband's family.

They lost that farmstead, and all the cattle and all the farm machinery, and everything. They didn't receive any indemnities whatsoever.

And that happened to a couple million Germans, three million, I think is the total. That fact has been hushed up to this day. I mention this to some Americans and it strikes them with complete surprise. Did you ever know this? Did this ever get told to you?

Q: NO, I WASN'T AWARE THAT PARTICULARLY FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I KNEW THAT OTHER SETTLEMENTS OF ETHNIC GERMANS WERE NOT VERY POPULAR.

A: They were thrown out of Poland and Western Russia in the same fashion.

Q: WERE THEY GIVEN ANY HELP OR ABSORBED BY GERMANY?

A: Oh yes, as best they could. These people were received in a friendly fashion and their meager resources were shared. And at times these people were for the most part very worthwhile people. Goodness, my husband's family, were skilled farmers,

( without their land of course. They found other vocations, but for the most part they gradually were welcomed into Germany. There were of course a lot of disharmonies, because everything was so scarce. The housing, half of it demolished by the bombs and everything. But, the newcomers for the most part were able to pull their weight, and for the most part were well respected and worked their way into the life of Germany. And that has all been outlived. Mind you not really forgotten.

Q: NO. I GUESS THERE WAS GREAT SUFFERING ALL AROUND.

( A: However, even to this day, you don't hear complaints. There's a certain amount of cringing being done by the people who perpetrated it, and all the noise you hear about the insecure borders and everything is on the other side of the equation. The Poles are kind of worried. But keep in mind the Poles were newcomers on the political scene too, having also been separated out of Russia, after W.W. I.

Q: WELL, YOU DISCUSSED ALL THESE BORDERS GOING BACK AND FORTH AND BACK AND FORTH, IT CONTINUES ON TODAY.

A: The Polish-Czech border was just fierce. If my husband having a Czech passport had wanted to travel to Poland, he probably wouldn't have been admitted.

Q: SO, I WAS JUST NOW THINKING BACK, AS TO WHETHER, HOW YOUR FAMILY BACK IN THE UNITED STATES, WERE YOU IN TOUCH WITH THEM DURING THIS PERIOD? WHAT WAS THEIR FEELING?

( A: The Red Cross transmitted a 25 word message each month. At the end of the war, I wrote them a long sad letter, communicating that there had been a divorce. That was the first they knew of it, although it had happened the year before.

Q: YOU WEREN'T ABLE THEN TO WRITE BACK AND FORTH WITH ANY FREEDOM? WHEN DID THAT STOP?

A: Not freely. At the end of W.W.II mail still didn't go through for the better part of another year. Normal mail I mean. Now I became friends with a number of American officers. Although that was verboten under the infamous non-fraternization regulations, which were for the most part not very well observed by the G.I.s. So I had a number. They had been originally forbidden to have any conversations with the German population. Didn't you know that?

Q: WEREN'T YOU STILL AN AMERICAN CITIZEN? I MEAN YOU HAD AN AMERICAN PASSPORT?

A: Oh, yes I had an American passport, which was perfectly valid. I guess it had expired by then. I didn't have any difficulty identifying myself. And I speak, I talk American.

Q: I DO TOO. I WAS WONDERING WHETHER THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH YOU AS AN AMERICAN HAVING AMERICAN SERVICE PEOPLE AS FRIENDS?

A: Not really, not on their side. There were a few. I got just one conversation with a rather chauvinistic American nurse, I think it was, who was very stiff about it. She couldn't understand how an American woman could get into this position, that I was in, mainly living among Germans, and married to a German, with German children and all that.

Q: WHEN YOU GOT TO HEIDELBERG, WHAT WAS YOUR SENSE OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GERMANY THEN? NOW A YEAR HAD GONE BY.

A: This was the early Hitler time, and the Nazis were getting very assertive. But, this was more or less the party line by the Nazis.

( There is documentation. One thing I can tell you about in every little town, they put up the current issue of Der Sturmer. You know all about the Der Sturmer. I never once saw anybody stop in front of it and read it. Never once! And there were copies in every coffee house among the stack of newspapers. You know what they do in the coffee houses, everybody reads newspapers. Nobody, I never saw anybody pick up Der Sturmer to read.

( The only person I saw stopping in front of Der Sturmer and reading it was my poor father, the only Jew in the family, on a visit in 1936. And of course it did not give him any pleasure but he was curious, he wanted to see what it was like. I sort of pulled him away, and said, "You're not going to like it." Well, I want to see it.

Q: WHAT KIND OF THINGS WERE BEING PRINTED?

A: I'm sure you may have copies around. I never bothered to read. They have of course the most distorted kind of caricatures of Jewish faces and bodies. And probably the ugliest things they could find to say about them. I never really read the stuff myself.

( And once I even saw a woman with a couple little children. The frames around Der Sturmer were always painted red. So here was this thing in the red frame and glass over it. Sometimes the glass was broken, nobody noticed by whom. Anyway, here's this lady with a couple of children who were curious and gravitated over there. She recoiled and called the children away.

( Q: DID YOU NOTICE ANY ANTI-JEWISH THINGS GOING ON IN THE TOWN, ANY PREJUDICES AGAINST PEOPLE, OR BRUTALITIES, ANY PROBLEMS?

A: Not directly. I lived in a country town near Darmstadt. And, myself didn't suffer any difficulties at all, with three little children in tow, who were as cute as anything.

Q: WHEN WERE THEY BORN?

A: (Points to daughter sitting next to her) She's the youngest born in 1941, and the oldest was born in 1938. So they were all little toddlers, and cute as could be. And the people were really very friendly in that town. Always saw to it that I got my rations and everything, quite friendly and normal. Did you have a question? You wanted to know about the atmosphere in the town?

Q: I WAS THINKING OF JUST RIGHT THEN IN HEIDELBERG WHEN YOU WERE THERE.

A: Oh, in Heidelberg I was in... this was the Kaiser Willhelm Institute, as it was then known. It became the Max Planck Institute later. And that was a scholarly community. The head of the Institute was supposed to spout the party line, and he made a couple of gestures in that direction but you could tell that this was all very repugnant to him. And most of the people that I met, in fact just about all of them were still saying, "all this anti-Semitism is a phase and they'll have to drop that sooner or later because it's so outrageous."

Q: DID YOU SEE ANY OUTRIGHT ACTS OF BRUTALITY HAPPENING TO JEWS AROUND YOU?

A: I didn't, no. Remember I was living in the country.

Q: SO IN THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU WERE LIVING NONE OF THAT WAS HAPPENING?

A: Not really. The house I lived in then was across the street from the mayor's house in (Alsbach) near Darmstadt. It was in

( the country, asparagus, and grape country. And the mayor was very friendly and did not give me any difficulties whatsoever. All the townspeople were friendly too, they loved the children.

Q: DID THEY KNOW YOU WERE PART JEWISH? OR WAS THAT SOMETHING YOU HID?

A: They did. Well once in awhile, I could spot when somebody or other found out and there would be a friendship starting, which would suddenly terminate. I could tell exactly when they heard. But there were people who were my good stalwart friends. I had a friend who was an American lady, also married to a German who lived in the city of Darmstadt.

Q: WELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT YOU AT LEAST FELT IT WAS SOMETHING YOU WEREN'T GOING TO ADVERTISE, THAT YOU WERE PARTLY JEWISH.

( A: I don't think people go around advertising their ancestry. But the people who knew my father or knew somebody who had known him in Heidelberg when he was a student, they would know, and they either put up with it or shun me, whichever suited them. And I put up with that.

Q: DIFFICULT THOUGH IT IS.

(sp) A: Oh, let me tell you an interesting incident in the town of (Alsbach). This was at that time, a country town which had one row of rather mansion like country homes. And that was the street we lived on.

( Further along the street was a building with interesting arched windows to it, a stone building, and some of the others were part stone and part frame. This one was stone. I was approached on the street one day by a German man, a stranger. I didn't know him at all. But, he apparently knew who I was, and that I was part Jewish ancestry. He said, "Come along with me,"

or words to that effect, "I want to show you something." He took me inside a building that was a storage place. There were sacks of grain and stacks of bay of the straw, and farm supplies of that kind. I looked around, it was a dim interior and sun came through the windows and made sort of beams in the dust bolts.

And the man said, "This used to be the synagogue." That's all he said. I didn't say anything either, what could a person say. This was after the Krystallnacht, after the night of broken glass. And he just added as he showed me out, "God will punish us." This was about 1942 or 43.

Q: THE FACT THAT YOU WERE IN GERMANY AT THE TIME OF KRYSTALLNACHT

A: I lived there continuously. That was a terrible shock, because up to then as I already described, you could kid yourself that this was going to be a passing phase, and that it wasn't really going to get murderous. But that's when it became clear. It was 1938, of course. And I remember that night. Things were quite normal between my husband and myself. We discussed the situation with a lot of grief and suffering. We resigned ourselves to the coming of the long night, and more or less realized that it was probably going to end in war, which it did the next year. That was just before the Munich episode.

Q: DID YOU OBSERVE THE EFFECTS OF KRYSTALLNACHT OF PEOPLE BEING BEATEN?

A: Not really. It didn't really happen in our town, not in (sp) (Alsbach). I didn't travel around much, I had three little children.

Q: WERE YOU AT ALL CONSIDERING LEAVING GERMANY?

A: Wait a minute in 1938 none of the children were born.

What was that question?

Q: I WAS JUST ASKING WHETHER YOU ALONG THE WAY HAD GIVEN ANY CONSIDERATION TO LEAVING GERMANY?

A: Well, I was very much in love with my husband. And it was mutual. We had a very normal marriage, until it got broken up the more or less traditional way with the arrival of the attractive laboratory assistant who could dress up every day.

And my husband would come home to a kind of frumpy existence with my mothering three little tots. I remember one time when noticing that I really wanted to be a little more spruced. I was pregnant with my third I think at the time. I was wearing a maternity dress, which needed some attention, and my maid at the time and I cleaned that up and we managed to get it all washed and pressed in the evening. So just before my husband comes home, my little boy, a baby at the time, spits up on my left shoulder. At that moment, he walks in. This is so prevalent. I think we're not exempt from it to this day.

Q: NO. HE DIDN'T CONSIDER LEAVING GERMANY EITHER?

A: He didn't want to leave Germany, no. He went into the chemical industry, having been refused an academic career, on account of my ancestry. And that was a subject of deep grief. He remained loyal. He did not persecute me or leave me on account of that. But, it was the domestic interference, by the other woman that did it. But not till 1941, after she appeared on

(sp) the scene, when (Kyle) my son was a baby, and before (Nan) was born. But, then when (Nan) was a baby, was the time things began to get difficult.



Q: DID YOU ANYWHERE ALONG THOSE YEARS FEEL A FEAR THAT THE NAZIS WOULD SIMPLY SHIP YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN OFF, BECAUSE OF YOUR JEWISHNESS?

A: Oh definitely, all the time. I felt very threatened all the time before and during the war. Because I think it's well known that informers and people holding grudges could get you in trouble. Well, in that little town, where everybody knew me, and I was in a friendly atmosphere, they didn't do it.

Q: SO YOU NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEM?

A: Not directly. But, then came the situation where Germans and Americans were on opposite sides of the war. And after the war was over, I was showed the lid of a cistern, an old, dry cistern. In case I had to be bumped off, that was where they were going to put me.

Q: HAD TO BE BUMPED OFF BY WHOM?

A: Well, the German army, now the Americans coming in.

Q: WERE THERE ANY OTHER JEWS IN THE SMALL TOWN YOU WERE LIVING IN?

(Sp) A: I did meet another half Jew, a Mr. (Zimmerman), who lived right around the corner from me. We got quite friendly during the war, and right afterwards. His mother was Jewish. At one time, the Gestapo came around to fetch her, and Mr. (Zimmerman) got the Doctor to intervene. She was too sick to be moved. The Gestapo respected that and buzzed off. And the poor lady died of natural causes, if you can call them that.

Q: BUT, HE HIMSELF, THIS FELLOW, WASN'T PICKED UP?

A: No, he suffered a lot of persecution. He was, I forget what he did to make a living. He was actually a journalist. They were very much disadvantaged, if they were part Jewish or Jewish.

( But I don't know enough about his story to tell you anything much. But he did tell me this episode of the Gestapo coming.

Q: YOU SAID YOUR AMERICAN PASSPORT, YOU HAD ONLY TO A POINT, WHERE IT EXPIRED.

A: It must have expired.

Q: BUT YOU WERE STILL OFFICIALLY AN AMERICAN CITIZEN?

A: I had dual citizenship. And while it was not officially recognized in Germany, it was pretty much respected. And I still have somewhere among my papers an identification paper (sp) that stated (die humpted noch Amerikanische Staadtburgerschaft) and that could have gone either way.

( If they had wanted to bump me off, here was evidence of my being an American citizen. Was that ever useful after the war, because here was a document with a swastika on it, official Nazi thing proclaiming that I still maintained American citizenship. It was very handy in renewing the passport when it was possible to do so. It could have worked the other way, but fortunately it didn't.

Q: IT WAS NOT AS DIFFICULT AS I WOULD EXPECT IT FOR YOU AS A PART JEWISH PERSON TO LIVE OPENLY IN A GERMAN TOWN, DURING THE WAR. IT WAS UNUSUAL.

A: Well, it was a very dangerous obstacle course, and believe me I was very much aware of it. The compact knot in my solar plexus partly fear of physical bombardment from all those planes going over, and partly the threat.

Q: BUT, OF COURSE THE CHILDREN WERE  $\frac{1}{4}$  JEWISH, THEY FELL WITHIN THE...

( A: Well, the townspeople apparently overlooked that entirely. They were all terribly cute little blond kids, and very appealing. The whole idea of somebody bumping off their mother

( was just not to be done, not in that town. They were not going to do that.

Q: SO I CAN SEE YOU HAD KIND OF A LOYALTY OF THE LOCAL TOWNSPEOPLE.

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: I WOULD HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE NAZIS, OR THE GESTAPO, OR OTHERS WOULD HAVE HAD SOME OTHER IDEAS.

A: The only time I even sensed that was when I had to go to someplace or other for some kind of papers, and they had under glass a set of regulations for how to treat Jews. This man that I was talking to kept sort of putting his finger where I could read what was underneath his glass. It was not very pleasant. But he himself didn't really come down on me.

( Oh, the paper that I was telling you about, when I first applied for it, I was given a yellow paper with brown printing, and a big "J" in the background. I looked at that and said, "I can't accept this." I knew it was a death warrant. So I left it on the table in that office there, and walked out in the hall and just stood there.

I had come on a bicycle. I didn't feel up to taking the fifteen kilometers, that's about ten miles, home on that bicycle that day, that time. So I just stood there trying to think what to do. One of the officials, in fact the one that had given me that sinister yellow paper, walked by with papers in his hand a couple of times. Finally, he sort of told me out of the corner of his mouth, "Try room 11."

( Well, I went to the door of room 11, shaking on my pins, and knocked. The door opened and here at the desk was a human being,

(sp) his name was (Trumff, Heller). He's probably dead now, Bless his soul. He was peculiar looking with a funny forehead, but he had bright blue eyes. And, I knew this was somebody I could talk to. So I sat down and burst into tears. My family warned me. My friends warned me. That was not the place to come, to Germany. And I came anyway, because of my husband.

He heard me out. He said, "Well, I'll see what I can do." Nearly a year later, I got this gray normal identification paper. It took them almost a year to grind that out, with the notation, "claims American citizenship." And that got me through.

Q: NO "J"?

( A: No, "J".

Q: PERHAPS THAT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR BEING EXEMPT FROM...

A: In the meantime I didn't have any formal status as a citizen, because I claimed dual citizenship, and of course was denied it on the German side. But since the townspeople, whom I lived among ignored it. It didn't really impinge on me, except of course, as a matter of the lurking background.

Q: THE CONSTANT FEAR?

A: Constant fear, and of course the war was going on.

Q: DID YOUR HUSBAND HAVE ANY PRESSURE TO BECOME A NAZI HIMSELF?

(sp) A: Not really. He was in a company. This was the (Ruhn  
(sp) Haus Company). The president of that company, was himself  
( persecuted because his wife was Jewish. She was Jewish, and  
had been brought up in very aristocratic Jewish circles of  
Prague.

( She had married a German industrialist, and lived in Darmstadt. They had lived a very elite kind of life. They were among the (sp) social leaders in Darmstadt, right along with the (Merk) family, right up there. But, then came the war. One of the things they (sp) did on the "night of broken glass," was paint Dr. (Ruhn's) house bright yellow. And he was forced to have that paint removed as an eyesore, at his expense.

Q: AND WAS THAT THE ONLY DAMAGE THEY SUFFERED?

A: Well, not really, because that company made a lot of important war contracts, which were essential. It's well-known, that one of the leading Nazis was very protective of the industry. He was in the Nuremberg trials later, Albert Sparer. He knew ( how exactly to protect the industries that were important to the war effort. He was very much respected.

They had in that company sort of a front man, who was a Nazi. He sort of had to do the talking, when the Nazis came around.

(sp) But, Dr. (Ruhn) was of course very much suffering from this disadvantage, although the firm was not. They continued to make money until... They were producing essential goods, so they did very well.

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHETHER HIS JEWISH WIFE LASTED IN GERMANY FOR THE WAR?

A: She died before the "night of broken glass." And, I'm glad she was spared that. The way that her friends put it was that she died of a broken heart. Certainly don't doubt that. I remember being in the reception room, and seeing ( photographs, that I think must have been photographs of her, beautiful countenance.

( Q: I WAS JUST TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHETHER IN THAT PART OF GERMANY OTHER JEWISH OR PART JEWISH PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE WAR?

A: There were some. Yes.

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THEY HAD MADE IT THROUGH WITHOUT BEING SAY IN HIDING, OR TRYING TO PASS AS GENTILES?

(sp) A: Oh yes. Now in the (Ruhn Haus) company there was another family, that I knew quite well, who were  $\frac{1}{4}$  Jewish. They had about the same kind of atmosphere around them that I did.

Q: SO YOU THINK THAT BEING IN THE OUTLYING DISTRICT MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE?

A: In Darmstadt, I think it was quite spotty. I don't think they cracked down with a lot of broken glass and so on, the way they did in the big cities.

( Q: WHAT WAS DAILY LIFE LIKE AS FAR AS SAY, FOOD AND NECESSITIES

A: Well it was war time. We were pretty much all deprived. Naturally, we weren't as deprived as the occupied territories, that the Nazis were in. They had shipped everything they could into Germany itself. We got the doubtful benefit of that. An example the rations my children, if they were less than six, got a half pint of whole milk a day. We really got that. If they were over six they got half a pint of skim milk, things like that.

Q: SO YOU WEREN'T REALLY HUNGRY?

( A: Oh, we were plenty hungry! (Turns to daughter) Do you remember being hungry, Nan? (No, I don't.) The children were so nice about it. But, then all the children were hungry. And, whatever I had I would give the children. Believe me, there was no business of not wanting to eat. They ate when they got their skimpy dinner. They ate it, every scrap, and there were no complaints.

Q: I PRESUME YOU HAD RATIONS OF THE SORT, DID YOU NOT?

A: Oh, we had rations on just about everything. But I, living in the country could grow my own vegetables. I was sort of in the center of a very lavish spread of orchards, so I had people coming out from town with their baskets buying fruit from me, which was quite favorable. The townspeople all respected that.

Q: WAS THERE A BLACK-MARKET?

A: Oh indeed there was. I didn't participate really, because I partly didn't have to. I had enough spare clothing so I could cut things out for the children. We had various kinds of barter exchanges, and I could usually get the right size shoes for the kids and so on... But it was pretty difficult! But it was difficult for everybody.

Q: WAS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF YOUR HUSBAND BEING SENT OFF TO THE WAR?

A: Well, there is a story of that kind. He almost did. You remember we were saying that the industry was sheltered by (Sp) (Sparer's) efforts to hold things that were important to the war effort for Germany. Well, my husband was doing research that was deemed essential, so he was exempt.

However, there was one flurry, and I remember this was at the period when, shall we say my successor, this was before the divorce, she was living with us, because I had room. And my then husband, this was weird what we did, he said, "he would have to spend time with her, because he loved her more than me. He still loved me, but there was this gal that he really had to be with."

( So we struck a bargain. She could move in with us. Well, for most of the time the surface civilities were maintained, after a fashion.

Q: WAS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU?

A: Difficult is an understatement of the century. But, I put up with it because I wanted the children to be close to their father and the children didn't notice anything. They were too little.

(Turns to daughter) You probably don't. "That's the understatement." Why don't you speak up? Were you conscious

(sp) of anything abnormal in the presence of (Lisa Lauben) and her sister in the house?" They were just tante's aunts. They were aunties. Inasmuch as the housing was terribly short and everybody that had moved had to take people. And I had some strangers in the house, and stranger is the word. Some of them were really strangers, but we won't go into that. Everybody had to take people if you had room in your house.

Q: OTHER TOWNSPEOPLE OR FROM OUT OF TOWN?

A: Oh, yeah. The year would have been 1941 or 42. And the (sp) (Sitzkrieg) had stopped and the bombings began in earnest. A lot of the housing was destroyed. In Darmstadt there were fire-bombs let loose, and I think this is history that everyone knows. Most of the city was destroyed. Many miserable deaths. The town, I visited it about two weeks after the destruction. You couldn't really tell where you were, the town was totaled. Heaps of rubble, with paths snaking in between. And there would be little signs, the so and so's are staying with so and so. Or, all the people here have been killed.

Q: YOU MUST HAVE BEEN LIVING IN TERRIBLE FEAR?



( A: There would be little wreaths on the piles of rubble to commemorate the dead. It was a devastating scene. You could hardly tell anymore where the houses had been, and where the streets had been. Well, in that situation everyone, who had room in the country had to take in anybody that was quartered with you.

Q: DID THE BOMBING EFFECT YOUR HOUSE AT ALL?

A: No, there was one very dramatic night when the bombers flew directly overhead and there were flames to be seen. We had this old-fashioned house with a cat-walk on top. And going up to that cat-walk before day-light in the darkness, here was this wall of flame. I thought it was the ammunition depot in the nearby

(sp.) town of (Eberstadt). We knew there was a munitions depot, there.

( They didn't bomb that. They wanted the ammunition.

But, they were bombing the residential part of Darmstadt where all the people lived to terrorize the population. That was that wall of flames. It was ten miles away. But it was so plain, and you could really see the light of it. Well, after that, of course everyone had to take in anybody who was quartered in with you. Well, in the general terrorism atmosphere of the early forties, there was a big flurry of activity.

And my husband packed his belongings, and said good-bye and moved off.

Q: WAS THIS BECAUSE OF THE ROMANCE?

A: He was gone for about a day and a half, having left early morning on one day. He came back afternoon of the next day.

( This lady that was living with us appeared with a beautiful black eye. I said, "My what did you do to yourself." My man did it to me.

I deserved it. That's all the background I have, on why he set off to go to the military. She probably faked some kind of papers for him to report somewhere. And, he found out. I do not know what the story was, but he did not go into the army.

Q: AND THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT DRAFT HIM INTO THE ARMY?

A: No, no. Like I say, he was exempt because of the important work that he was doing.

Q: WHAT ABOUT DURING THIS WHOLE PERIOD, WHAT WERE YOU HEARING ABOUT, IF ANYTHING, ABOUT THE FINAL SOLUTION, THE CAMPS IN THE EAST?

A: We knew that Jews were disappearing. And we knew that where they were going was not going to be fun.

Q: HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?

A: Well, it was generally dreaded. For instance, the pediatrician that I had for my children, told me afterwards, that he personally had helped a Jewish family get across the French border, which was not far away. And, that a number of his friends had done the same.

Q: HOW WERE YOU HEARING WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITH THE JEWS? WERE PEOPLE TALKING?

A: No. People did not know. The general impression was they were shipped off to penitentiary type work camps. Now the work camp idea was an idea that had sprung up in the late twenties and early thirties. It was a rather constructive idea, get the young people working on something worthwhile in work camps. And the Nazis latched on to that, and the work camps were something that all the young people were forced to go into.

( Now for young women, for young girls, that evolved into the (Sp) (Flechtjar) or year of duty, in which they were apprenticed with a housewife to learn the household. And, I had the good luck of having a succession of those. They served with me for a year.

I'm on correspondence terms with two of those ladies, who now have families of their own. To this day, we send Christmas greetings, and we try to see each other any time I go to Germany. It's a nice warm thing. They felt their time with me was very worthwhile. They loved me, and they loved the children. This was fine.

Q: THIS WAS THAT THEY WERE TO DO A YEAR OF SERVICE FOR THEIR COUNTRY, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

( A: Well, it was a year of service, public service in that they were doing something useful, and learning housekeeping. They found that I was nice to work for, and so on.

One of them even,... We were sitting on the bench in the office where the assignments were made, and this gal and her mother were sitting across from me. They sort of eyed me, and they got to go into the office before me. It turned out they liked my looks, and wanted the daughter to come serve with me, which she did.

Q: IT SOUNDS LIKE IT TURNED OUT VERY WELL.

A: It did indeed. She got into a nice marriage, after which. And always appreciated her relationship. We correspond to this day.

( Q: SO, IT SOUNDS LIKE IT CERTAINLY TOOK A TURN WHEN IT GOT TO SLAVE CAMPS?

A: The worst it could happen, was that the boys who were in the construction crews, and mining things, and road building, that they would be overworked and underpaid. Generally subjected to all kinds of nasty stuff.

Q: BUT THESE ARE THE ARYAN BOYS, RIGHT?

A: Yeah. Well, when the Jews disappeared we of course didn't know that they were being killed. But, we certainly didn't think... Well, let's put it this way. We knew they were not going to be sent to recreation places. But, we did not know. Nobody that I ever spoke to in the German population realized that they were systematically being killed.

Q: DID YOU HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROGRESSIVE KILLINGS OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, MENTALLY-ILL PEOPLE?

A: That was rumored. They would disappear in somewhat the same way. Oh yes. Not only that, but the Communists and other undesirables including the homosexuals, they were treated in somewhat the same way. I'm not quite aware, whether they were killed or not. That maybe, that may have happened also, as far as I know, or don't know.

Q: WELL, AS YOU MENTIONED THE GROUPS WERE SENT TO CAMPS.

A: They were sent off. They disappeared.

Q: DID YOU KNOW ANYTHING SPECIFIC ABOUT CONCENTRATION CAMPS, SLAVE LABOR CAMPS, DEATH CAMPS?

A: I'm not about to tell you anything that I did not hear from a first hand participant. My landlord, when he went into the military, was a RNR officer who took care of one of these recreation places. He told about his experiences. And I was quite prepared to believe what he said, which was that he had a sort of a boarding house, sort of a camp, in the country,

( for officers that wanted to come and get out of the shooting and so on, and recover a bit. Where he was, there were very mistreated Jews, who he helped. And he was able to give them money, for pawning. They would pawn some of their things with him, their jewelry and so on. He would arrange to have them sold. They couldn't do this directly. These jewels would be in hiding, or whatever valuables they had. He would help them in any way he could. And, when that became known, he was penalized by being sent to the eastern front. That was punishment for somebody, who had had it a little bit cushy.

Q: ACROSS THE LINE.

( A: So, he was sent to the front, and was at the front in that horrible winter of 1941. And in the ensuing months his leg was shot off. And, of course that got him out of the war, as a survivor without his leg. He was back home, doing real well. But, this is just a little sidelight. That's the only thing that I heard directly.

A: OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE JEWS WERE HAVING THEN?

Q: Well, I didn't really have any Jewish friends. The only friends that I already mentioned were the  $\frac{1}{4}$  Jews who were also (Sp) working at the (Ruhr-Haus) company, and were experiencing psychological difficulties, let's put it. You see their work was just as essential as my husbands. And they were in the same kind of predicament he was, namely having a half-Jewish wife.

( Well, naturally there was dread. The screws kept being tightened all the time. And we were quite aware of that. I couldn't know the day or hour when they would disappear me.

Q: IN WHAT WAY WERE THE SCREWS TIGHTENED?

A: Well, more and more people would disappear. And, regulations would tighten, and rations would worsen, things would just generally become more difficult. As the war went on of course, more and more of Germany became devastated. There were no vehicles being produced, as you can very well imagine. So, the vehicles were all put into the military service.

Q: WERE YOU GETTING MEDICAL CARE AS NECESSARY?

A: That was difficult too. The obstretician and gynecologist that I had been in touch with, I had had prenatal care very capably before my first child, and that was in 1937.

The waiting room would be completely filled up with people who had been there the day before yesterday and had numbers. Dear help you if you had a number and didn't show up when it was called. Well, I was not suffering any particular pain, when my second pregnancy happened. And I was busy for heavens sake, taking care of this country place and my child. So, I didn't even go to Dr. (Schiller). He showed up when I was there with my little boy, and said, "What are you doing here?" Well, what do you think? Well, that was one of those things. But, see I had had a mid-wife taking care of me. That's another story that might interest you, but perhaps not on this tape.

Q: JUST FOR THE RECORDS, WE'D LIKE TO HAVE THE NAME OF YOUR BROTHER?

A: Well, I have two brothers. My sister, whom I already mentioned died back in 1981, but my two brothers are still very much alive.

( One of them is a famous Dr. named Dr. Joseph Hollander, who is an arthritis specialist of considerable reputation. He wrote the book, which all the medical students are exposed to when they're learning about arthritis.

The other one was an executive, in what later became the Eastman Dillon Company. Anyway he was an insurance executive in New York. He has been retired for many years, lives in Connecticut. That's my younger brother. He's seven years younger than me. My older young brother is four years younger than me, and lives in Havertown, Pennsylvania.

Q: AND THE NAME OF YOUR SON IN VIENNA?

( Sp) A: My son in Vienna is Dr. (Ekhart Kohler) and his job at the University of Vienna, is teaching the budding computer experts to access their software in colloquial English.

Q: AND YOUR DAUGHTER IN MUNICH?

A: The daughter in Munich, she specialized in history of art. She has a law degree, but she specialized in history of art, within the business of art for quite awhile. But her health is very poor. In fact she's in a lot of trouble and needs some help. I'm going there myself in late May, and counsel with her on how to arrange her affairs, so as to manage better than she's been able to. She's over fifty now, and finds it very hard to get along. She's had trouble with her feet, heart problems, having trouble.

Q: I HAD A QUESTION FOR PEOPLE NOT FAMILIAR WITH DARMSTADT, JUST WHERE IS IT LOCATED IN PROXIMITY TO ANOTHER MAJOR CITY?

( A: Darmstadt is on the railroad line between Frankfurt and Heidelberg about halfway, a little more than halfway. In other words in south western Germany.

( Darmstadt is sort of on the plain of the Rhine river. Although it's not on the Rhine. The edge of the Oldenwald. The hills on one side, the ones in Germany are the Oldenwald, and very (sp) beautiful countryside. A lot of people vacation there. (Nan) has been there and remembers it, loved it. On the other side, way, way, across the Rhine valley is the French border, and the Vosges hills, which you see in the distance, when you get a good view.

Q: YOU MENTIONED THAT THE PERSECUTION, THAT TOOK PLACE ON KRYSTALLNACHT IN ALSBACH WAS SORT OF ONE LIMITED EVENT.

A: So far as I know, I wasn't living in Alsbach at that time. I was living in the city of Darmstadt, but on the outskirts where I didn't hear anything but rumors. All the crashing went on in the center city and I heard descriptions later of these guys under orders, going by with axes, smashing in windows without looking at what they were doing. Ugly scenes, and of course, when we heard about it, it was utterly devastating.

Q: MY QUESTION WAS, IF THERE WERE ANY REPERCUSSIONS FOR JEWISH BUSINESSES IN DARMSTADT?

A: Oh, yes indeed there were. People were urged to boycott Jewish businesses and a number of them perished along with their proprietors. The people would disappear and the businesses would get bought up. And of course it was a big opportunity for nasty people, who wanted to take advantage of it, to get a hold of property. They could get houses. They could smear the owners of the house they wanted, and have them sent off. ( And businesses went that way. It was a gruesome scene.

(sp) I told you about the painting of Dr. (Reiller's) house. But, they didn't dare do anything to his business.



( Just make him pretty miserable. And fortunately his poor wife was no longer living at that time. The son and daughter encountered difficulties, in that they were forbidden to attend German Universities. And what they did was go to Switzerland. The son, the younger generation, I met these people. He told me that he had been in a concentration camp, this was probably Dachau, and not really all that terrible. He managed to buy his way out, bribing the guards. They let him go. I didn't ask really where he went, but presumably to Switzerland. Dr.

( sp/ (Ruhn) had a country home in Switzerland in the mountains.

Q: THE LAST QUESTION I HAD WAS, CONCERNING WHEN YOU FIRST MET YOUR HUSBAND. I WAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT YOUR FATHER CONVERTED OR BECAME A LUTHERAN, AS YOU SAID.

( A: That was back in 1903.

Q: SO, YOU AND YOUR SIBLINGS WERE NOT RAISED WITH ANY REAL JEWISH IDENTITY.

A: Not really at all. We surmised that we were part Jewish.

Like I say, dimly surmising it, but not asking any questions. In fact, my late sister denied the ancestry to the extent that she invented a high sounding name for her grandmother. My

grandmother's maiden name was Emilia Hollander. Her maiden name

( sp) was (Hershstein,) which naturally sounds Jewish. My sister didn't tell her daughter, Barbara, the older, that at all. I was the one who told Barbara that her grandfather, whom she adored was Jewish. Well, it didn't exactly alienate her, but she was very surprised and shocked, because her mother had not told her that. And she hadn't asked any questions. This is how it went, in a lot of families. My sister was a bit on the social climber side. She wanted to have things socially correct, upwardly mobile

Q: MY QUESTION IS GETTING AT: HOW, YOU SAID, THAT EVEN AS EARLY AS 1935, WHEN YOU GOT TO HEIDELBERG THAT THERE WAS TROUBLE FOR YOU AS A HALF-JEW. MY QUESTION WAS, HOW PEOPLE KNEW? HOW YOUR HUSBAND KNEW? AND HOW IT GOT AROUND THAT YOU WERE?

A: Keep in mind, that my father had studied in Munich, around the turn of the century. He did his work in Munich in the nineties. And everybody knew that he was Jewish. That is the people in the academic world of then. And you know this kind of thing gets around on the grapevine.

So, I never said I was not half-Jewish. And there were people who didn't ask, and we were friends anyway. And then there were people who found out somehow or other. Don't ask how. And they would drop me. I knew exactly when it happened. That was the least of my worries.

It was much more painful, that my then husband couldn't get into the academic world. He had wanted to be in the academic field. What he did instead was go into industrial chemistry, which he could very well do with shall we say, my father having been an executive in the (Ruhn-Haus) company in Philadelphia. It was quite natural that my husband made connections in Darmstadt to the parent company. He did very well at it too.

Business went very much downhill after the war, and he lost his job. Especially after their divorce. He set up his own business. They had a lot of struggles, which my successor lady started to tell me about. She sensed that I was not really all that sympathetic.

Q: THAT'S ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAD.