

Small, Henry

1991 October 29

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HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW

of

HENRY SMALL

OCTOBER 29, 1991

by

Interviewer  
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Transcript services provided by:  
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1 MS. GORDON: Today is October 29, 1991 for the  
2 Holocaust Oral History Project. We are going to  
3 be interviewing Henry Helmut Small. S m a l l. My name is  
4 Rachel Gordon. We are with the producer John Grant .

5 Mr. Small, first, thank you for taking the  
6 time to talk to us today. What we would like to do  
7 is hear your life story a little bit, starting even when you  
8 were a little boy. If you can tell us where you were born,  
9 and some about your family to start off.

10 A. I was born March 1914 in Berlin Germany. I  
11 was what they called an exemption for my father because  
12 five months later the first world war started and my  
13 father would have to go into the Army, but he had to  
14 support me and my grandfather.

15 With four dependents he did not have to go in the  
16 Army. We went through the first world war. I can  
17 remember up to the age of 14. 1918 we had the revolution  
18 where there was shooting in front of our house. We lived  
19 in a big apartment house. We couldn't go on the street.

20 By the age of six I lost my mother. My mother, my  
21 grandmother were going over a big street in Berlin, called  
22 the Kauffersdamm. (Kurfurstendamm)

23 My aunt, my mother's sister, could not marry during  
24 the war so they postponed the wedding until after the war.  
25 My mother, my grandmother both crossed the street. There

1 was what they call a horse trail, horse path in the middle  
2 of the street and a drunken taxi driver drove on this  
3 horse path. He zig zagged. My mother, my grandmother  
4 both went under the car. My grandmother lived but my  
5 mother died the next day.

6 I went to school then when I was six years old.

7 My father remarried again. In 1923. I had a  
8 stepbrother, half brother in Australia. I haven't seen  
9 him. My father was divorced in 1927. Then he married  
10 again in 1933.

11 I went to school from 1920 to 1923 to a private  
12 school. From 1923 to 1929 to a higher school, what they  
13 called the Rauschuller. We had French and English. 1929  
14 I did not finish the full course. That would have been  
15 another three years. I went to work. In those days we  
16 had the depression and I had to go to work to support my  
17 father. I had an apprenticeship in furniture and clothing  
18 department store. I worked in the furniture department as  
19 my father was in the furniture business.

20 We did that originally as a wholesale business.  
21 Later my father became a manufacturer's representative in  
22 the furniture trade.

23 In 1933 I finished my apprenticeship and started  
24 for a better job in Cologne. I started on the 1st of  
25 April 1933. There was a boycott, the Nazi organized a

1 boycott against Jewish stores. I came to the store and I  
2 wanted to start my work; they didn't want me. They wanted  
3 to send me back.

4 I said I had a contract. They had to pay me at  
5 least a month and my expenses. They kept me until about  
6 in August of 1933 when the store changed hands and I had  
7 to leave.

8 I went to a furniture store in Essen, where we were  
9 selling out.

10 Finally in 1934 I came back to Berlin and I worked  
11 for my father, from 1934 to 1938 until I immigrated to the  
12 states.

13 My father was sick. He had pneumonia. In those  
14 days they didn't have the miracle drugs. It took almost a  
15 year. I had to do all the work by myself.

16 Then my father -- When I wanted to immigrate in  
17 1938, I tried before. It wasn't easy. I wanted to go to  
18 Canada first. I couldn't get the papers. But 1938  
19 finally through my stepmother I got the papers, the  
20 affidavits. But the consulate in Berlin was very  
21 difficult. They made it as tough as possible. The German  
22 quota at that time was about twenty-seven thousand per  
23 year.

24 I was lucky that my father's banker played golf  
25 with the Counsel General in Berlin. They played golf on

1 Sunday. Monday I went to the consulate. I was called in  
2 right away and received my visa, which helped. But it  
3 happened at that time that my father, my mother, they had  
4 a tailor, did ladies suits and also my father's suits.  
5 This tailor worked with somebody. We didn't know who was  
6 in cahoots with the Gestapo, the secret police.

7 They claimed they could take money out. But it was  
8 against the law to take German money out or whatever you  
9 had out of the country. So this man, somehow the Gestapo  
10 got hold of him and there were other people involved,  
11 including my father, my mother. My father was interred.  
12 So he didn't receive any bail. He was in jail for the  
13 time in prison and the Nazi killed him right there. Never  
14 came to the trial with him.

15 My mother went through the trial. She was, she  
16 received two or three years in the womens prison.

17 So I tried my best. I got here to get her out but  
18 I couldn't make it. I arrived it was May 28th and I  
19 couldn't find a job in New York City. It was a depression  
20 going on.

21 So I was lucky to, through a friend, who worked at  
22 the hotel San Moritz, right on Sixth Avenue at that time.  
23 The housekeeper got me a job in boys and girls camp for  
24 July and August in the Catskills. So I worked there as a  
25 laundryman.

1 I didn't know anything about machines. I had the  
2 iron machine. I managed to take all the buttons off the  
3 girls slacks or blouses or whatever I had. Machine was  
4 too hot. I couldn't handle that machine. So the season  
5 was over. I had to look for another job. I had relatives  
6 in Ithaca New York. I saw Cornell. I could have had a  
7 job there selling sandwiches to the students, but I  
8 declined.

9 I went back to New York. I went to the Committee.  
10 They sent me to Richmond Virginia. I came to Richmond  
11 Virginia. There was a furniture store. I think in those  
12 days I made \$8.00 a week. I lasted about three weeks  
13 because the lady told me she could have had a black guy  
14 who could have worked for five dollars a week.

15 During the third week we had our linoleum carpets  
16 outside. There was a rope around them. A big colored  
17 fellow came and he cut the rope and he took the biggest  
18 linoleum rug under an arm and he took off.

19 I went behind him. He wanted to pull a knife on  
20 me. I hollered help help. Luckily the police station was  
21 across the street. They looked out and they caught him.

22 She paid me off at midnight. In those days  
23 Saturday you had to work until midnight. I told her that  
24 that I didn't have a job. So Monday morning I started in  
25 the millinary factory. I worked there until 1941.

1           In 1940 we had the draft, universal draft. I  
2 registered. My number happened to be very low. So I  
3 figured I might as wet get it over with.

4           They called me for February, 1941 into the Army. I  
5 joined the Army in Richmond Vrginia. They sent me first  
6 to Fort Mead Maryland. From there I went to Fort Monmouth  
7 New Jersey. It was at that time the signal headquarters,  
8 where I received my basic training for 90 days.

9           After 90 days they asked me where I would like to  
10 go. I said I would like to go to the west coast. Instead  
11 they sent me to Washington, D. C., which wasn't bad. In  
12 those days you had ten girls to one fellow in Washington  
13 D.C.. So we looked for the girl who had either an  
14 apartment or house or a car. Because those things we  
15 didn't have.

16           I enjoyed Washington very much. There was so much  
17 going on culturally. Besides I could go to night school  
18 and learn typing, which I did then.

19           Then Pearl Harbor came. It was Sunday, December 7.  
20 I was at the USO, at reform temple. There was a Jewish  
21 USO at that time. I remember very well that the news of  
22 pearl Harbor came. It was already at night there or  
23 afternoon.

24           So that was the end. We could not go out anymore.  
25 We couldn't wear civilian clothes anymore. Everything was



1 now changed. I stayed there until 1942.

2 I was lucky that I did not go on the first  
3 shipment. The first two shipments went to China, Burma  
4 India. I went on the fourth shipment. The third shipment  
5 went to Charleston South Carolina, to Savannah Georgia, to  
6 Fort Dix and from Fort Dix we took the old Monteray. It  
7 was from the old Mattson Line, the steamer, and went from  
8 Brooklyn Navy yard all the way to York in Scotland. We  
9 landed after 12 days. It was a cold journey, all the way  
10 north through Iceland.

11 From Scotland we went by way of Cool to Highwickum.  
12 Highwickum we stayed in a grade school first and then they  
13 sent us to Wartford, another suburb. About 50 miles from  
14 London. In Wartford I stayed until November 1942. They  
15 took six of us fellows. We were radio operators. I  
16 received my training.

17 We were sent to work again, two, each us, two of  
18 them on British aircraft carrier. I was with a fellow  
19 from Iowa, tall fellow. We were on the HMS Dasher, which  
20 was a banana boat from Philadelphia. They converted it to  
21 an aircraft carrier. We went to Gibraltar. It took about  
22 a week in them days.

23 From Gibraltar we served in the African invasion.  
24 That was the biggest invasion I ever seen. Over eight  
25 hundred eighty ships. At that time that was a lot. They

1 were going to Oran, Algiers and Casablanca.

2 We came back after a week. It was my luck that  
3 they left us off at the Rock of Gibraltar. We stayed on  
4 the Rock of Gibraltar until the end of December, just  
5 before Christmas. Colonel in charge came to us and said  
6 you boys are going back to England, six of us.

7 I happened to come on the plane that came from here  
8 and had the Christmas present that Roosevelt gave to  
9 Churchill. It was a grope as big as a table, tremendous.

10 But on this plane, I still remember very well we  
11 had a pilot, co-pilot and crew chief. We had one machine  
12 gun in the plane. That's all we had.

13 We started to fly over the atlantic. All at once  
14 the crew chief mentioned two ME-109 there. I thought this  
15 is the end. In those days we didn't have radar. They  
16 could have gotten us easy. They didn't see us. The pilot  
17 banked the plane into a cloud and the cloud saved us.

18 I came back to England we landed at Lands end. I  
19 almost kissed the ground, I was so happy to be on land  
20 again. All we had on was a May West. Coming from nine  
21 thousand feet we would have all been dead there.

22 So from there I went to London. I went back to my  
23 outfit in Monforth and stayed there for another year.

24 Then I joined the third radio squadron mobile.  
25 This was a intelligence unit. We were all radio operator.

1           Most of them received the training in the States.  
2 I received my training at the RAF station, a local station  
3 there. That went on until July 4th. I missed out on June  
4 4th. They took our detachments out. All the others went.

5           We only had one casualty out of the whole squadron.  
6 We went to Normandy Beach, I think Utah Beach. We landed  
7 there just at the moment when the Luftwaffe came over and  
8 strafed us. But luckily we were saved by ditches.

9           We stayed at Normandy and I went from Normandy  
10 through the campaign up through Luxenborg. It was  
11 February. The war was going on. They sent me home. I  
12 had enough service overseas accumulated there. Sent me  
13 back here.

14           First I had leave. Then I ended up in Madison  
15 Wisconsin. When the war finished, it was 12th of  
16 September, 1945, I went first to New York, to Richmond  
17 Virginia, picked up my stuff and came to San Francisco.

18           My first job was for TWA at the airport in the  
19 commissary. One day Howard Hughes came in. I almost  
20 threw him out. I didn't know he was my boss. He looked  
21 like a beggar. Luckily I didn't do anything.

22           They kept me, I was there until the strike. We had  
23 a three month strike.

24           I went to Los Angeles. I worked for W. & J. Sloan.  
25 It was a tough job. Then I joined Almar Plastics, a

1 plastic company. I sold signs all over the United States  
2 until about 1953 when I met my wife in Kansas City. We  
3 got married in 1952. 1953 we got married in Kansas City  
4 and moved to San Francisco and I have been here ever  
5 since.

6 I worked for three companies. One in the button,  
7 one in lace and one in embroidery field. I travel from  
8 Fresno to the Oregon border and east to Reno and then  
9 back.

10 Q. A lot in one breath. Let's go back a  
11 little bit to growing up in Berlin and what that was like  
12 at the time.

13 First, if we can go through a little bit when you  
14 talk about your father and mother and his other wives, if  
15 you can give me their names as well.

16 A. My father is Seigfreid Small. My name  
17 originally was Henry Schmausch. S c h m a u s c h.  
18 Nobody could pronounce the name. My aunt, in San  
19 Francisco, when she saw me she said you change your name.  
20 You only can change your name through court. When I  
21 became a citizen prior to going overseas I changed my name  
22 to Small. My father was born in Berlin Seigfried  
23 Schhausch. His father was Himan Schausch. He came from  
24 Emil Schausch. How they got the name I don't know.  
25 Either they came from Samosch -- S a m o s c h. Or my

1 grandfather, great grandfather was a Samosch. Maybe they  
2 called it that way.

3 My mother came from Nakkel. N a k k e l.  
4 Nakkelnessa. Nessa was a river. At that time it was  
5 German. It was Polish and then German and now Polish  
6 again.

7 My father met my mother when he called on my  
8 grandfather who had a furniture store there, fell in love  
9 with my mother. He married her in Berlin. My grandfather  
10 came. He had the furniture factory in Berlin.

11 Q. What was your mother's name?

12 A. My mother's name was Lena, Lena Helen.

13 Q. Her maiden name?

14 A. Her maiden name was Heimann. But she died  
15 very young. She was born in 1892 and she died in 1920.

16 Q. Going back, you grew up in the heart of  
17 Berlin?

18 A. In the heart of Berlin, yes.

19 Q. Can you describe the neighborhood from  
20 what you remember?

21 A. Well, the neighborhood was close to the  
22 business where my father had the wholesale furniture  
23 business. I went to school there. We lived next to an  
24 amusement park. I remember that. The carousel was going  
25 all night, at least to ten o'clock. It was cold there.

1 We had very cold nights. I remember the winter of 29 when  
2 everything was frozen. We had the river in back of our  
3 place. It was an apartment house.

4 Q. Was it a Jewish neighborhood or mixed?

5 A. No, very mixed. The Jewish neighborhood  
6 were mostly in the west. We had our group there, Jewish  
7 students. They went to school with me. We had our group  
8 there where we played as kids. We went to school  
9 together.

10 Q. You stuck fairly close together as Jews or  
11 were you mixed?

12 A. Mostly we stuck together, that I must say.  
13 I belonged to this comrade group. It was a German Jewish  
14 group. Then times changed and we moved to the west later  
15 on. My father was divorced after that. We moved into a  
16 small apartment in the west. I join the Zionists. In  
17 fact, I was ready to go to Isreal at that time.

18 Q. What brought you to join the Zionists at  
19 that point?

20 A. Well, it was a very bad time. You had to  
21 get out. They went to a place where they were educated, a  
22 country place in agriculture, where you got your  
23 education.

24 I went first to a doctor, was examined by a doctor.  
25 I would have gone, but my father got sick so I had to

1 support my father.

2 Q. You stayed in the city?

3 A. Stayed in the city.

4 A. Luckily through my stepmother. My father  
5 had married again. Then I got away.

6 Q. Can you talk a little bit about the point  
7 you went from living freely in your neighborhood without  
8 being necessarily concerned where you are going to when  
9 the Nazi, you were first aware of the Nazi coming in?

10 A. It started in 1933. The Nazi came in  
11 January 33. I remember it was terrible at that time.

12 Q. Can you describe what was terrible? What  
13 was it like? What do you remember?

14 A. Because all the Nazi came out of the  
15 cockroaches, they came out of the corner into the open.  
16 Lot of people were denounced. Then they started the  
17 secret police and everything.

18 I remember when the Reichstag, the big parliament,  
19 when that burned. I joined the police, what they call the  
20 police support fire, like a police support troop. They  
21 were teaching stenography. I wanted to learn stenography.  
22 There was a certain system they gave there.

23 We had a lot of policemen. That night when the  
24 parliament burned they all got to go. I still remember  
25 that, 1933. At that time -- For a while it wasn't that

1 bad. But it came slow, very slow.

2 Q. What changes did you notice?

3 A. Well, April 33 when they started the  
4 boycott. I wasn't in Berlin at that time. I was in  
5 Cologne. Then when I came back I noticed slowly that it  
6 was -- We had to have a house employee, who had to be over  
7 65. Because we had somebody to help us. Cooking and  
8 cleaning. My stepmother. We had one that was 65. She  
9 couldn't work very much anymore. So gradually it got  
10 worse and worse. That I can say.

11 But the strangest thing is they started everybody  
12 over a certain age, like here with the draft, you  
13 registered. I had to go to what they call the mustering  
14 in the German Army. I had to parade there naked before a  
15 whole group of officers. Doctors and officers. They  
16 examined me.

17 They say you are fit for the infantry. They say  
18 you are Jewish, aren't you?

19 I said yes.

20 They said you are four group 4-F. Seemed like 4-A,  
21 4-F. You don't have to serve. They gave me a passport.  
22 I had a passport from the Army, my picture in there.

23 When I emigrated, I emigrated and I had to return  
24 the Nazi passport. The SS took it from me.

25 Q. Do you remember going back and reading



1 about Nazism in newspapers or hearing about it on radio or  
2 people talking about it on the streets at the time? How  
3 did you know the changes were happening?

4 A. Well, the Jewish people, like they have a  
5 Jewish bulletin here. They had a paper that came.

6 Q. Do you remember what the paper said?

7 A. Well, the paper give us all the details  
8 what was going on in Germany, all over, from the different  
9 cities, towns and villages and whatever happened. You  
10 could see the handwriting on the wall.

11 Q. Were you scared at the time?

12 A. Well, I belonged to a group what they call  
13 the Reichsbonnet. It was a democratic group. I was  
14 active in that. I was Marching in that. I figured  
15 somebody would denounce me. I had to get out. I was  
16 lucky I got out in time. If I waited another two weeks  
17 they would have arrested me too, the Nazi, and I wouldn't  
18 have been alive anymore.

19 Q. Can you tell me when you were in the  
20 democratic group and you were speaking, what were you  
21 talking about?

22 A. I wasn't speaking. We had our meetings on  
23 Sunday and Nazi tried to destroy us. Between the  
24 Communists on the left and Nazi on the right, we were  
25 right in the middle. Sometimes we had trouble with both

1 of them. It wasn't easy in those days.

2 Q. Were there certain ways the Nazi would try  
3 to destroy you? Did they come and break up meetings?

4 A. Oh, yeah. They came and broke up meetings  
5 but not by one. They came usually fifty to a hundred men.

6 Q. There were how many of you?

7 A. Well, our group I think we got together was  
8 a hundred, a hundred twenty-five. We usually went in  
9 trucks and went outside of Berlin to smaller places to  
10 give them support. We had meetings and speakers there.  
11 Gradually we stopped that.

12 Q. When the Nazi came in the big groups to  
13 break up the meetings was it violent?

14 A. Oh, yeah. They got violent. My father  
15 didn't allow me anymore to go there. It was pretty rough.

16 Q. Where were you, where were your sentiments?  
17 To stay with your father and take care of him or to go and  
18 fight the Nazi?

19 A. It was Sunday we had the outings mostly  
20 when we had the outings, not during the week. Week we  
21 didn't have time. We had to work. I worked six days a  
22 week. When I worked in the furniture store we worked from  
23 nine in the morning to six at night. Three Sundays before  
24 Christmas we were open. From two to six in the afternoon.

25 Q. Was your work interrupted by the Nazi at

1 all ever?

2 A. Well, my work wasn't interrupted. When I  
3 worked in the furniture, my father, we lost customers.  
4 Another Jewish store they closed up.

5 The others told us, you know, they have been after  
6 us not to buy from you. There was a boycott going on.  
7 That made it very tough for us so we had to get out.

8 My father was born in 1881. So at that time he was  
9 57 years old. So it's hard for him to get out.

10 Q. Did the customers talk to your father, long  
11 time customers who weren't Jewish?

12 A. Oh, yeah.

13 Q. Did they apologize? Were they angry?

14 A. They apologized. They say there is nothing  
15 we can do. They say they have been after us. They have  
16 been. It was something they gave to buy. They gave a  
17 certificate. That certificate I think was good for two  
18 hundred marks or something. That was a lot of money in  
19 those days.

20 When people bought furniture they could apply that  
21 towards it. So they said they would take it away from us  
22 if we buy from you.

23 So my father saw to it. All the firms with the  
24 exception of one were gentile. They were very nice to  
25 him. The Jewish firm went into bankruptcy. I don't know

1 what happened after that.

2 Q. The folks that weren't nice to him what  
3 happened with that?

4 A. Well, he just told them not to come anymore  
5 so he lost them. It made it tough with him. He was very  
6 nervous. It was very hard for him. He had high blood  
7 pressure.

8 Q. Was his business able to continue operating  
9 or did he have to shut it down because of that?

10 A. Well, he still worked with a few customers,  
11 but not very much anymore. I did the outside of Berlin.  
12 My father had Berlin the city. I had my customers outside  
13 of Berlin. It's a big surrounding area.

14 Q. When you were traveling around at that  
15 point was it difficult because you were Jewish to get  
16 customers? Was it more centered in Berlin with Nazism?

17 A. Well, five year wait. If you needed  
18 merchandise, they couldn't pay their bills, they were glad  
19 to buy from you. They didn't care, you know. So you had  
20 to go and collect afterwards. If they wouldn't pay their  
21 bills they wouldn't receive another shipment. I had to  
22 collect money. But we made a living, barely a living I  
23 should say from that time. Besides my father was sick a  
24 whole year. I had to take care of it myself.

25 Q. The time you were in Berlin and again the

1 Nazism was rising and becoming more and more pronounced in  
2 the city what did you notice around the city? Were there  
3 propaganda posters going up? Can you explain that?

4 A. There were posters all over. Every corner  
5 had a big poster, what they called litholyzer, which was a  
6 column. There were posters on it. Nazis put all the  
7 posters on it. People had Nazi flags all the time. The  
8 more you saw the more you could see it. I hated that  
9 swastica.

10 Q. How old were you when you first noticed the  
11 swastica?

12 A. That was long before. We had it already in  
13 1929.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. 1930 the Nazi gained one hundred six seats  
16 in the parliment. That was the beginning of Hitler  
17 actually. He started in 1923 in the putsch in Munich.  
18 They should have shot him then, shot him dead at that time  
19 and the whole thing wouldn't have happened. The Verallan  
20 government was in Bavaria, they let him grow. He went to  
21 prison for nine months and he came out and started the  
22 whole movement. He was a martyr for them.

23 Q. When you were looking at the posters what  
24 were the posters saying? What kind of messages were  
25 there?

1           A.           They had the newspaper their with boxes  
2 where they hung it out and showed all characteristics of  
3 Jews, which was very bad. They said "Defend yourself  
4 against the Jews." What the Jews are going to do to you I  
5 don't know what at that time.

6           Q.           When you saw those what did you do?

7           A.           Nothing you can do. You can't take them  
8 down. It's against the law. Just grin and bear it.

9           Q.           I wanted to ask you a little more about the  
10 Nazi boycott. From my understanding how did you know the  
11 boycott was on? Was it the customers? Was this official  
12 proclamations? How did it, work?

13          A.           They were picketing all the Jewish stores,  
14 throw in the windows, taking everything out of the  
15 windows, eating the stuff and didn't let any customer in  
16 the store. Some of them they burned even.

17          Q.           Did your father have a store?

18          A.           We didn't. My father at that time was  
19 manufacturer's representative already. We were in the  
20 wholesale business before. We worked from an office. Had  
21 a display of furniture. My father worked for different  
22 cabinetmakers that did the jobs.

23          Q.           Was that ever damaged?

24          A.           Well, my father moved out at that time  
25 because he had some setbacks. Somebody took off with a

1 warehouse full of furniture and he made debts in my  
2 father's name. My father was responsible for it. So he  
3 had to close his business and start as a manufacturer's  
4 representative. He had a nervous breakdown which lasted  
5 for a whole year after that.

6 Q. With a boycott and stores being vandalized  
7 and pickets, was that going on in your neighborhood at  
8 that time?

9 A. I was at that time in Cologne. I had a job  
10 that started the 1st of April in Cologne. That was the  
11 day they had the boycott and wanted to send me back. I  
12 insisted they to pay me back. They had to pay me off  
13 first because I had expenses.

14 Q. Your family was still there?

15 A. My father and second stepmother were still  
16 in Berlin at that time.

17 Q. Did you have any siblings who were there?

18 A. There was only one step-brother from my  
19 father's second marriage. They went to Australia. He  
20 lives in Sidney, but I haven't had any contact with him.

21 Q. You heard news when you were in Cologne  
22 what was going on in Berlin?

23 A. Well, we heard it and we saw the newsreel  
24 at that time in the movies. They show you what was going  
25 on. It was terrible.

1 Q. People started, Jews started leaving I  
2 guess around that time, right?

3 A. The smart people left there, like my uncle.  
4 He went to Isreal. He could take all his money out at  
5 that time.

6 Q. How did your uncle know at that point?

7 A. He was a Zionist. That was my mother's  
8 brother-in-law. He was a Zionist from way back. He  
9 wanted to go to Isreal. So he went to Telaviv.

10 My cousin went to the RAF at that time I remember.  
11 The other cousin, she worked in the Naffi. The Naffi is  
12 something like a canteen, like our px system, British.  
13 She worked there.

14 Q. When you were in Cologne were there any  
15 problems?

16 A. Cologne was pretty bad too. I could see it  
17 all over.

18 Q. Can you tell me what you saw?

19 A. The store was closed when I was there. I  
20 had to go to the Personnel Department. Everybody, they  
21 lost their head. The store was closed. Nobody could come  
22 in at that time. There was no business that particular  
23 day. But then the whole thing went over, everything was  
24 all right, except that the Nazi went after the owner. The  
25 owners had to change what they call alsean. Which means



1 the store had to go into gentile hands. So the elevator  
2 operator became the president at that time.

3 Q. Do you know what happened to the store?

4 A. He threw out the Jews and I went to a  
5 furniture, big furniture store in Cologne. He said he  
6 couldn't hire me for Cologne, but he would hire me for  
7 Essen, for Dortmund, two other big cities in the wood  
8 territory. We had a sale there. I did the sale in Essen.

9 Went to Dortmund and the manager took over. The  
10 manager didn't like us. He was a gentile manager. He  
11 took the store over finally. I went to Berlin and worked  
12 for my father.

13 Q. When you were in Cologne and the Jews were  
14 thrown out and told they couldn't work there any more, how  
15 was that done? Did a Nazi in uniform come in and say get  
16 out?

17 A. No. It was like the Personnel Department,  
18 like any business, that told you we are sorry, we can't  
19 have you anymore. They had to give you 30 days. See,  
20 there is a law over there they can't fire you right away.  
21 They have to give you 30 days. So they paid you 30 days.  
22 I worked there 30 days. Now it's on commission. Because  
23 on furniture you work on salary and commission.

24 Q. Do you know what happened to the owners  
25 before the elevator operator --

1           A.           I think they came here. One went to  
2 Berkeley. It was the Schlus family, the Bowmans. I think  
3 they all landed in Berkeley. I didn't have any contact.  
4 They must have died by now. They were pretty old.

5           Q.           Do you remember what was going through your  
6 mind at that point? Did you have any idea what was to  
7 come?

8           A.           Well, I could see my way clear. I wanted  
9 to go to Holland, immigrate to Holland. But that was very  
10 hard to even go there. They advised us not to come to  
11 Holland.

12          Q.           Who was they?

13          A.           The rabbis. I went to different a  
14 congregation. I got the answer from the rabbis. From  
15 Amsterdam, from Rotterdam. They said not to come. Then I  
16 tried through my mother's aunt in San Francisco. She was  
17 acquainted with the Canadian counsel.

18                 The Canadian counsel said we can only take people  
19 who have a craft, like any craft, artison. That's what  
20 they wanted. A cabinetmaker, a plumber, electrician,  
21 anything like that. But they were limited too. I knew  
22 somebody came to Toronto, wasn't Jewish. They got  
23 Canadian visas right away.

24          Q.           This is a simple question. How did you  
25 know that it was time to get out? Why did you start

1 writing to the rabbis?

2 A. Because you could see the handwriting on  
3 the wall. The Nazi were taking over.

4 Then in 1938, in March, I saw with the police went  
5 out of Berlin to Vienna. They wanted to takeover the  
6 whole Reisch, you know, the whole thing. Austria, which  
7 they did actually at that time. They wanted the Jews out  
8 gradually.

9 Not only that, two weeks, four weeks before I left  
10 I was called to the Gestapo secret police. The fellow  
11 there told me, he said "If you are smart you better get  
12 out as soon as you can. If you don't leave here, you come  
13 into education camp." That's how he described it.  
14 Exactly his words. Which was a concentration camp.

15 So I saw the handwriting. So I left on a German  
16 ship. It was easier for the money. You could deposit  
17 your money on the German ship. You couldn't take it out.  
18 At least you could pay so much per day on the ship, which  
19 I used up on the ship. It was a German ship. The ship  
20 left from Coxhofen. That's about 150 miles from Hamburg.

21 It was the Alber Berlin, which became the SS New  
22 York. It was the Hamburg American Line. I landed in New  
23 York, May 27, 1938.

24 Q. When you went to the Gestapo four weeks  
25 before you left was the person who told you it's time to

1 get out was he friendly or was he warning you?

2 A. He gave me a warning. He said "This is  
3 it," he said, "Take it or leave it. If you don't get out  
4 in a certain time", he said, "you will come into an  
5 education camp." They must have been after them to tell  
6 the people.

7 Q. What did you do in the four week period?  
8 What did you do to try to get out?

9 A. Actually I had a ship. I went right away  
10 to Hamburg American Line and I asked if I couldn't go to  
11 sea on one, if I couldn't go early to New York. They gave  
12 me a berth. It was an eight day trip from Hamburg to New  
13 York at that time.

14 Q. Did you have a business to take care of  
15 before the trip, loose ends, family to say goodbye to?

16 A. My father, my uncle, my aunt from my  
17 father's side, my father, I had to see them. My grand-  
18 mother. My mother's mother still lived at that time. Say  
19 goodbye to her. It was very heartbreaking.

20 I still remember seeing my father, my stepmother at  
21 the railroad station in Berlin when I left for Hamburg.  
22 My stepmother had relatives in Hamburg. I stayed with  
23 them when I went to the boat.

24 Q. When you left your father and stepmother at  
25 the station were they trying to get out as well? Were

1 they resigned to stay?

2 A. They wanted to get out, but the whole thing  
3 was so tough now. I would have had to send the visa. I  
4 got -- I mean affidavit. I got the affidavit of support.  
5 But my mother at that time was in prison. So she couldn't  
6 get out. The whole thing was, she was deported.

7 I had a letter here. In 1942 to Theresienstadt. I  
8 don't know if it's true or not. Anyhow from there they  
9 went somewhere else and were killed.

10 My mother, my grandmother were on the same tram.  
11 My stepmother --

12 Q. Can you tell me why your grandmother was  
13 jailed again?

14 A. My grandmother was.

15 Q. Your mother, I am sorry.

16 A. On account of this currency business here.

17 Also a friend of mine, his father was also involved  
18 in that. When he saw them coming to arrest him he jumped  
19 from a balcony from the third floor to the street.

20 Q. Your father, tell me what happened to him  
21 please?

22 A. Well, I can't say too much because the  
23 Rabbi who officiates -- I think later in Madison,  
24 Wisconsin. I was stationed in Madison Wisconsin. He said  
25 to me -- I asked him. He said there were so many at that

1 time, I went through the same routine, the coffins were  
2 locked. You couldn't even open the coffins. Didn't know  
3 what happened. They were buried at that time. So they  
4 got rid of them that way.

5 Q. Your father?

6 A. Somebody must have been there. They worked  
7 hand-in-hand with the Gestapo. I don't know who was  
8 behind the whole thing. This happened to be a tailor of  
9 my father's and my mother who was involved in that too.  
10 He got all these people. I don't know.

11 Q. Do you know how?

12 A. He told him I know somebody who works at  
13 the embassy and he can take it out through diplomatic  
14 pouch and you get it back in New York. But it never  
15 happened.

16 Q. So it went with him. They went to a camp  
17 then?

18 A. They went somewhere to the tailor to bring  
19 the money to the tailor and the tailor gave it to somebody  
20 else. I don't know. That guy gave a list, the names and  
21 everything. They got all the people involved. Must have  
22 been a hundred people involved in the whole thing. So  
23 there was a trial. My father was already dead. Never  
24 came to trial for him. But my stepmother.

25 Q. He died in jail?

1           A.       He died in jail because they didn't give  
2 any bail at that time.

3           Q.       Did they not give him bail because he was  
4 Jewish?

5           A.       That's what it was. They figured he would  
6 escape or something. That was the reason. They kept him  
7 in a very narrow cell. I tell you he got so worked up  
8 when you think of all that.

9           Q.       Did you ever hear from your father after  
10 you left?

11          A.       I sent a telegram when I landed in New  
12 York. Then he wrote a letter and that was the last letter  
13 I had. Everything I had was taken from me during the war.  
14 I left it with people and people moved and threw  
15 everything away, pictures and everything from my father.  
16 I have a few pictures, but not the good pictures.

17          Q.       Do you still have that letter from your  
18 father?

19          A.       No. That was all taken. I came back from  
20 the service, I left it with a family. That family moved  
21 to Washington, D. C. from Richmond. So they threw  
22 everything away, including my letter.

23          Q.       Back in Berlin before you came to the  
24 United States and Canada?

25          A.       I didn't go to Canada.

1 Q. You tried to get this?

2 A. Yeah, I couldn't make it.

3 Q. What else? Do you remember was it a  
4 frantic time? Did you feel under pressure to get out?

5 A. Well, I will tell you. we had our own  
6 Jewish artistic. We had our own Jewish theatre. You  
7 could go to the other theaters. In those days you didn't  
8 have the star yet. That came later when you had to wear  
9 the star. Normally they left you alone, the Nazi. But it  
10 became somehow, the courts and everything changed.

11 Q. At that point you were still able to live  
12 in a mixed neighborhood?

13 A. We lived in a mixed neighborhood with a big  
14 apartment building. I still remember we had a movie actor  
15 lived on top, Adolph Uhlbrich. He also left and went to  
16 London. None of our friends we saw in the beginning, they  
17 left and went to England, like my uncle, my father's  
18 brother. He went to London.

19 Q. Do you know what year that was?

20 A. They left after I left. It must have been  
21 39. When I came in 1942 to London I visited them. They  
22 had been there already since the war started.

23 Q. I guess I am going to try this again. When  
24 you had to go to your own theatres and pretty much stay  
25 with the Jewish community --



1           A.           You did not go too much on the street. You  
2 didn't show your face too much. You could go to movies,  
3 nobody bothered you, it was dark. But normally you didn't  
4 even enjoy it that much.

5           Q.           Were you scared or angry or both or none of  
6 those?

7           A.           Too young. I was young at that time. We  
8 had our Jewish dances. I went to dances. Had some dates.  
9 That's about all. You had to get over this because I  
10 worked for my father at that time and it was a Monday on  
11 the new job. It was bookkeeping, correspondence. I had  
12 to do the whole thing.

13          Q.           What about your friends, going back to the  
14 democratic group you were in. How did your friends fair  
15 after this?

16          A.           I lost touch with them. I dropped out of  
17 that when the Nazi came. They became too powerful and we  
18 couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't see any way. I would  
19 have ended up in a concentration camp much earlier. They  
20 knew, they had a list pretty well of the members. I  
21 figured it's better to go underground.

22                 Well, a few years, it was from 1934 to 38. That  
23 was four years. I worked at that time at a job in a  
24 furniture store where I did the bookkeeping for the man.  
25 We were close to the German general staff. We had all the

1 big shots there, the generals. They came and bought their  
2 furniture.

3 It was a Jewish store. See the Army they were not  
4 Nazi. They bought, they did what they wanted to do. The  
5 German national, they were different from the Nazi. They  
6 said "We do what we want to do." They bought the  
7 furniture there. It was a tremendous business.

8 Q. When you were selling to the German army  
9 people were you angry at them? Were they just customers?  
10 What was your feeling?

11 A. They were customers. You see a general in  
12 the store that means something, you know. Had a red  
13 stripe, that means he was general staff. They were all  
14 something there.

15 Q. At that time were you losing trust in  
16 people, neighbors or schoolmates, not knowing who you  
17 could trust?

18 A. I went to school in a different section of  
19 Berlin. We moved. We had some neighbors there. We  
20 talked to some of them. Some were very nice.

21 Strange, we had a couple downstairs. He was an  
22 electrician. He had his own business, with his wife.  
23 When I came back for the first time in 1961, I don't know,  
24 he was out on the job. She said.

25 "My God, you are still alive." It really struck

1 me. The house wasn't there any more where we lived. They  
2 were all bombed. These people moved opposite, across the  
3 street. I went there.

4 She said "My God, you are still alive." I came  
5 back in 84 they weren't there anymore. They must have  
6 moved or something.

7 Also people I went to school with, I looked through  
8 the telephone directory and I didn't see any of the names.  
9 Lot of them went to Russia. They died on the Russian  
10 front. The German Army. There were a lot of casualties.

11 Q. When you were drafted by the German Army  
12 and they gave you the 4-F?

13 A. Yeah. It was very funny. They wanted me  
14 to go into the infantry. I said that's about the last  
15 place I wanted to end up, being a foot soldier.

16 Q. How did they know at the time you were  
17 Jewish? You were naked?

18 A. That they see right away.

19 Besides you've -- They had something. It was a  
20 passport or something. I had to show it. A regular  
21 passport. Over there you have to register at the police  
22 station. Wherever somebody lives, when they move in they  
23 have to register. When you move away you have to register  
24 again.

25 Q. Whether you are Jewish or not?

1 A. That's there, sure, on the form, religion.

2 Q. Everyone that is?

3 A. Everybody has to do it. That's a general  
4 thing -- So they can get control of the people. It's not  
5 like here. Anybody can move away. You look through the  
6 telephone directory, no city directories. Over there you  
7 had to register. I don't know if it's still today.

8 Q. I guess I was surprised they already had  
9 information that you were Jewish that they called you in  
10 any way.

11 A. Well, they knew I wanted to immigrate. You  
12 had to go through what they called like I.R.S.. You had  
13 to show them you didn't owe any taxes. You had to pay a  
14 special tax for immigration. They knew right away. They  
15 got that paper right from there.

16 Q. During this whole period of trying to  
17 immigrate, were you acting on your own? Did you have a  
18 friend you were doing this with?

19 A. I had a friend who went to Suo Paulo in  
20 Brazil. He wanted me to go to Brazil. But at that time I  
21 couldn't leave my father, so I couldn't go. About sixty  
22 percent, seventy percent, they all went to Sao Paulo.  
23 They all went first class. That's how they got in, by  
24 boat, first class. They stayed there.

25 Q. When you had to stay behind to take care of

1 your father were you getting scared at all about having to  
2 stay longer? Were you torn at all between staying with  
3 your father and moving on to a different country?

4 A. I didn't think much at that time. I was  
5 kept pretty busy. It did not occur to me. Gradually in  
6 1938 when I immigrated and it came to me. It came to a  
7 point.

8 Q. What was that?

9 A. I came to the consulate and they made so  
10 many difficulties. Like for instance, they can ask what  
11 do you want to do when you get there?

12 If I told them I want to work. Sorry, you can't  
13 work. We have enough unemployed here. We don't need  
14 anymore. So you say you want to study.

15 Who is going to pay for your study? I say my  
16 cousin. My cousin will pay for it.

17 They said you have to show us they are going to  
18 pay for your study.

19 After all that luckily my mother had a banker.  
20 This banker made a call to the counsel general. The  
21 counsel general's name was Messerschmidt. I still  
22 remember. Monday morning I got my Visa. Was I happy when  
23 I got my Visa.

24 Q. Why do you think the banker helped you out?

25 A. Well, my mother was a favorite customer of

1 his. My mother was married. Her first marriage was to an  
2 antiquities dealer. They a lot of antiques there, a lot  
3 of money there. He passed away.

4 She got a lot, inherited a lot, the store and  
5 everything. So she was a good customer of this banker,  
6 private bank, Jewish bank. He helped her.

7 I had a commissioner, a Jewish commissioner for the  
8 State of Virginia in Richmond. He worked on the  
9 affidavit. I had the president of the British American  
10 Tobacco Company as guarantor. Still couldn't get out.  
11 She was in jail.

12 Q. What is the commissioner?

13 A. Commissioner is the one that sets the bail  
14 for the federal. I don't know if they have it. At that  
15 time anybody accused of federal crime, the commissioner  
16 sets the bail. Maybe they still have it in federal court.  
17 That was his job. He was a very nice fellow. His name  
18 was Neidenheimer.

19 Q. Do you feel you had good luck on your side  
20 to have these people writing to get you out?

21 A. Well, through this commissioner I got -- He  
22 helped a lot of people. When we came to Richmond, I came  
23 to Richmond Virginia, I must say that the temple was a  
24 reform temple. They helped us tremendously. Through the  
25 temple I got a job.

1           After this job that I couldn't stay in the  
2 furniture job. I got a job in the millinary factory. I  
3 filled orders for ladies hats. I worked there until I  
4 went into the service.

5           Q.           Once you got your visa on that Monday  
6 morning what happened next? Tell me your route.

7           A.           From the visa I had to go back to the  
8 shipping company. At that time I must have gotten already  
9 the earlier ship. I wanted to make sure. So I went two  
10 weeks after I had my visa and left and came here. But  
11 there was a lot of work there too. I had to bring all  
12 these papers and passport, the Army passport. I had to  
13 have all that.

14           I went to Hamburg. My mother's brother, step-  
15 mother's brother lived in Hamburg. I stayed with him and  
16 I went on the train to the ship. The ship was a German  
17 ship. They were all Nazi. But Nazi and I came to New  
18 York and they put the uniforms away and went into civilian  
19 clothes and here they got leave. That really hurt me at  
20 that time.

21           At that time we landed on the pier 83. Pier 83 was  
22 Hamburg American Line on one side and North German Line on  
23 the other side.

24           Here was the Bremen. At that time there was a big  
25 fire on the Bremen. I still remember. Germans were

1 involved. Hairdresser from the Bremen and some other  
2 people and F.B.I. was after them. I still remember that.  
3 It was a big scandle in New York. They arrested them all.  
4 They were spies from Germany.

5 Q. With the Nazi on the ship did you have  
6 anything, were you separated from them on the ship or play  
7 shuffle board?

8 A. I knew they were all false. Only took the  
9 money. That's all they were after, like the waiters, head  
10 steward and all this.

11 Q. Do you feel when you were at the consulate  
12 in Berlin trying to get to the United States that they  
13 gave you a harder time at all because you were Jewish or  
14 do you think they were doing it to anyone who was German?

15 A. Well, it came from the State Department.  
16 They did whatever the State Department tells them. At  
17 that time Cordell Hull was Secretary of State. He didn't  
18 want too many Jews in.

19 After Morgenthau, he was Secretary of Finance or  
20 something he was at that time. He was a good friend of  
21 Roosevelt. But it didn't help any either. Just made it  
22 as tough as they could at that time. Because the quota  
23 was for twenty-seven thousand. So they didn't let  
24 everybody in.

25 Q. That's twenty-seven thousand Germans?



1           A.       German, Jews, everything. You had German  
2 citizenship. I was born in Berlin I had a German  
3 citizenship. My father was born in Berlin and he had  
4 German citizenship.

5           Q.       Pretty soon I want to get what it was like  
6 once you were here, but before going back to Berlin and  
7 with the store boycotts, so I have an understanding, and  
8 before you left, you said it was kind of hard. You could  
9 go out at night. You could go to movies?

10          A.       Yes, to movies, you could go to restaurant  
11 maybe.

12          Q.       You were working during the day?

13          A.       During the day I was working.

14          Q.       Did you have any problems at all walking  
15 down the street? Did people ever taunt you or throw  
16 things at you?

17          A.       No. Nobody ever bothered me. Berlin was a  
18 city. We had a lot of Poles, French people. Like New  
19 York, a very international city. They didn't bother us as  
20 much as other cities, smaller cities, which were tougher,  
21 where people knew you. Berlin, nobody knew you. They  
22 couldn't.

23          Q.       When you stayed with your uncle was it in  
24 Hamburg?

25          A.       On the way to the States.

1 Q. What was Hamburg like?

2 A. As a child it was a beautiful city, before  
3 it was bombed in World War II. It was beautiful city.  
4 St. Pauli is where the amusement is for sailors. It's a  
5 sailors town, like San Francisco. It was quite a place  
6 there.

7 Hamburg was a very nice cultural city. In fact,  
8 they talked German almost like English. A different  
9 dialogue. Very high class German.

10 Q. What was going on in Hamburg at that time?  
11 Were the Nazi there too?

12 A. Oh, sure, they had Nazi too. I didn't know  
13 too much about Hamburg at that time.

14 Q. Your uncle didn't talk to you about that?

15 A. Didn't tell us very much. Later on, he was  
16 married to a gentile woman I think. I don't know what  
17 happened afterwards. Lost all contact with these people.

18 Q. I find it interesting you came to the  
19 United States and you went back to Europe to fight for the  
20 U.S. Army.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. What was that like? What was going through  
23 your mind?

24 A. It was strange. Being in England was  
25 entirely different. When we came to France and came to

1 Alsace Lorraine and every store the owner wasn't there and  
2 it said widow on and so. All the husband's had died in  
3 Russia. Well, that is what happens.

4 We saw a lot of German prisoners of war. I had to  
5 comment at that time I felt so damn mad I felt like  
6 shooting them right from the truck. But it wouldn't help  
7 anymore either. I was pretty angry.

8 But it was funny, I was in Gibraltar for the  
9 African invasion. We stayed about 16 days on the Rock.  
10 We had the Germans right across from us. We said all the  
11 cuss words over to them and they didn't know what it was.  
12 They sent us I M I, which is a question mark. They  
13 couldn't understand. We sent all the words to them. I  
14 could see the Gestapo. It was strange. Right at the  
15 border. There was a gate on the border.

16 Gibraltar was British, Spain was neutral. But  
17 there were a lot of Germans. The Gestapo was there. You  
18 could recognize them with the leather coat and green hat.  
19 You knew right away.

20 Q. You never came face-to-face with them for  
21 words?

22 A. No, there was a gate between. I wouldn't  
23 start anything. I was in Gibraltar. Gibraltar was a  
24 British base. But we had a lot of Spanish woman coming  
25 over there. That I remember. They were selling oranges.

1 They went right in the barracks. They didn't care. I had  
2 night duty. I was asleep during the day. They woke you  
3 up. Oranges.

4 Well, I was in Gibraltar 17 days. I opened the  
5 door. A colonel stepped out, took a look at the Rock. He  
6 said this is just like Prudential Insurance Company, the  
7 company for which I work.

8 I was stationed in Washington, D.C. I remember I  
9 had to register as an enemy alien in American uniform at  
10 the main Post Office. They came out that all enemy aliens  
11 after December 7, 1941 had to register. All Germans,  
12 Italians and Japanese had to register as enemy alien. I  
13 registered as an enemy alien. It was kind of funny, you  
14 know.

15 Q. The other people you were in the Army with,  
16 did they give you trouble at all because you were German?

17 A. No. We were scattered all over.

18 Q. There were a lot of Germans?

19 A. Had a lot of Pennsylvania Dutch and  
20 Pennsylvania Dutch is very much like German. Besides I  
21 wanted to learn English. I could have had a job as a  
22 typist in the orderly room, but my English wasn't that  
23 good. So I felt I better wait.

24 Q. When you were in Germany you knew German  
25 and French?

1           A.           I had six years of French basic in the high  
2 school. We had three years of English. We had what we  
3 call the King's English. I had to go to Berlitz school.  
4 I got my American training more at the Berlitz school and  
5 in the movies. Clark Gable, Merna Loy, all these actors  
6 at that time. Broadway Melodies and all these, you know.  
7 It was quite interesting.

8           Q.           When you are back in Europe for the brief  
9 period in the Army did you have any desire at that point  
10 to go back to Berlin, desire to fight the Nazi there?

11          A.           Well, they sent me on R & R, which means  
12 rest and recuperation. I had two years nine months  
13 overseas leave. I thought when we leave Calais,  
14 Eisenhower came to us and he gave us a speech and said  
15 when you boys come back everything will look much better  
16 to you.

17                 I wondered if they were going to send us back. I  
18 applied for a job in UNRA, United Nations Relief  
19 organization, to feed the people. Or go to the Army of  
20 occupation, military government. For military government  
21 you had to be screened. We had people who went to camp  
22 Richie. A lot of them went to military government. They  
23 had the course there. They were prepared for it to work  
24 in military government.

25                 But I was happy to get out finally because I had

1       been there since February 41 to September 45. That was  
2       enough for me. To get out of uniform. We had an English  
3       uniform. I have a picture of it there. That wool smelled  
4       terrible.

5               Q.        You said you went to the Committee in New  
6       York City. What is the committee?

7               A.        They had a committee for refugees. I can't  
8       remember. Somebody had it set up. All the people who  
9       came went to that committee. That committee didn't want  
10      to keep you in New York.

11              They asked you first if you have a place to stay,  
12      if you have enough to eat, if you need food or anything,  
13      if you need a job. But they didn't have any jobs at the  
14      time. They said you go to the agency. I couldn't get a  
15      job as a dishwasher.

16              Q.        The agency was what?

17              A.        Private agencies that referred you.

18              Q.        Jewish refugees?

19              A.        Jewish refugees. They could not supply  
20      that many jobs. They didn't have any at that time. It  
21      was a depression, 1938.

22              Finally I got a job through a friend actually who  
23      was acquainted. He worked in the hotel San Moritz. He  
24      was a desk clerk. He knew the housekeeper. Housekeeper  
25      was a German woman. She had friends who owned the

1 delicatessen, Nate's Delicatessen. Nate Hotske, two  
2 brothers. I think it was on 44th Street.

3 Through them I got to the camp. They owned the  
4 boys and girls camp, kosher camp for July and August. In  
5 those days the parents paid five dollars a day, which was  
6 a lot of money. On weekends the parents came in there  
7 Cadillacs and Dusenbergs, all the fancy cars.

8 I still remember one came in a big car and had a  
9 Jewish chauffeur. Sharipo. That really impressed me. He  
10 had a Jewish chauffeur. So I emptied the ashtrays and  
11 brought them cards and they gave us tips. I had three  
12 meals. I slept with the kids. It was pretty nice.

13 Then I went to Ithaca from there, from the Cat  
14 skills to Ithaca New York. My grandfather had a half  
15 brother who went to Ithaca in New York in 1970. He did  
16 not want to serve in the German Army. So he came to  
17 Ithaca. His son -- He wasn't alive anymore. His son had  
18 a clothing store on Seneca Street. So I went there.

19 He said "I am sorry, I can't employ you in my store  
20 but I will see what I can do for you." So he wanted me to  
21 get a job making sandwiches for students. But I had to  
22 sleep on the table. I didn't care for that that much.

23 Q. When you were in the Army and also in the  
24 United States when you first came here were you keeping up  
25 on the news of what was going on in Berlin?

1           A.       Oh, yes. Well, as far as you could. I had  
2 a radio. First thing I bought with my money was a radio,  
3 little handmade radio. I listened to the radio a lot  
4 those days. This was before television. Saturday nights  
5 you had The Hit Parade. That was most exciting. As much  
6 as you could. And you went to the movies. That was about  
7 the best.

8           In those days you could go to the movies for  
9 twenty-five, thirty-five cents. I remember in New York  
10 when I got to work I paid twenty-five cents and they had  
11 bingo night. My number won. I went up to the stage.  
12 They had a a little girls purses. You had to pick a  
13 purse. There was money in there. I picked the purse with  
14 \$10.00. My God, I was the happiest guy. That was a lot  
15 of money in those days.

16          Q.       Going back, seeing you kept up on things at  
17 least with the newsreels and posters, even back in Germany  
18 the time before you came, was there -- You said there was  
19 writing on the wall. Was there any other signs?

20                   MR. GRANT: Indications of what was to  
21 come?

22          A.       They convince the Jews, it come up every  
23 week. Just looking in the paper was all the Nazi places  
24 they had pages, you know, outside for glass you could see  
25 it. It was terrible. It was all over. Just rape our



1 women and all that stuff.

2 Q. It seemed like you were close with your  
3 father, kept in close contact with him. What was his idea  
4 towards this? Was it to keep cool or what was his mind?

5 A. Not to open his mouth too much. If he  
6 opened his mouth he wouldn't have been alive. Just keep  
7 it quiet and we will see if we get out. But it got to the  
8 point -- When he married my stepmother she was pretty  
9 wealthy. She practically supported him at that time.

10 Q. She was the one whose husband had an  
11 antique store?

12 A. Had the antique store, yeah.

13 Q. I want to jump ahead a little more. You  
14 said the first time you went back to Berlin after that was  
15 1961?

16 A. With my wife.

17 Q. What was that like for you to go back?

18 A. It was a strange feeling to go back to  
19 Berlin. It was like going to a different world. I knew  
20 Berlin, I lived there 24 years. Everything was still  
21 there, but the houses weren't there any more.

22 I remember that our tour, we went to a tour, we  
23 went outside of Berlin and there was a Russian monument.  
24 Tremendous monument there for all the Russian soldiers who  
25 fell in the invasion of Berlin. They were buried there.

1 Tremendous monument there.

2 They took that from the stones of the Chancery  
3 where Hitler use to be. Took all the stones out and made  
4 a big monument. It was a different city.

5 At that time I could go to the cemetery and I  
6 visited the graves of my father and mother. My father  
7 wasn't buried next to my mother. My father was buried  
8 somewhere else because my stepmother wasn't dead at the  
9 time. She was in jail. Somebody else had to go to it.

10 Q. Was this a Jewish cemetery?

11 A. Yeah. Tremendous big cemetery.

12 Q. That wasn't hurt in the war?

13 A. Apparently it wasn't hurt, no. Everything  
14 was so desolate there. Nobody took care of it. It was  
15 overgrown. Here we paid money. I sent money over there  
16 to have it taken care of. Now I don't know what they are  
17 going to do. They may raze it and build a shopping  
18 center. I don't know. You can only have the cemetery for  
19 so long. I don't know.

20 It was a different city. Berliners, once you live  
21 here, it's a different way of life. Over there they are  
22 so mean, so I don't know. Not polite. That's one thing  
23 in Berlin especially.

24 Q. Did you feel when you were there in 61 that  
25 they treated you poorly because you were Jewish?

1           A.           No. It was a general attitude. There  
2 weren't that many Jews anymore. In fact, the last time I  
3 was invited to the City of Berlin from the mayor and the  
4 city hall, we went all over, which I saw more that time.  
5 They were very nice to us. I didn't go to the cemetery  
6 because it was too late. It was already snowing. Could  
7 have slipped there and broke your legs in the cemetery,  
8 it's all cobblestones. We didn't go anymore there. 84 I  
9 saw more of Berlin. We went to see where the synagog use  
10 to be, Rabbi Stein. He came to us. Jewish community.

11                   They gave us a reception, like they give to all  
12 that came back to Berlin. He spoke there. We went the  
13 next day to the synagog, which was very much like  
14 conservator. They had no choir in those days. It was  
15 quite interesting.

16                   There were a lot of gentile people that come to the  
17 services too. I had a fellow next to me that asked me  
18 questions that I had to explain everything to him.

19           Q.           How do you like explaining things to  
20 people? Not only in services but also speaking here?

21           A.           Well, I like it very much. In fact, when I  
22 first came to Richmond Virginia, I earned my supper that  
23 way. I had to speak before church groups. They invited  
24 me to the First Baptist church, Second Baptist church,  
25 Methodist church and I went to all the churches. They had

1 supper there.

2 Q. What did you talk about?

3 A. About my father in Germany, about what I  
4 found in Germany, what was going on at that time. I was  
5 young. I just came. They wanted to know. I told them  
6 what was going on.

7 Q. I haven't heard of people doing that  
8 before. Who hooked you up to that?

9 A. Some of us did. Especially I worked in a  
10 firm. We had a lot of gentile employees. Jewish firm.  
11 We had gentile employees who went to different churches.  
12 They asked if I wanted to come to their church. Usually  
13 Sunday they had Sunday supper, some group, and had  
14 speakers there so I went there. Sometimes even during the  
15 week they asked me.

16 Q. Was their response this isn't really  
17 happening?

18 A. No, no. They understood it very well.  
19 They asked me how I could explain that. It's very hard to  
20 explain it, things happen like this. To find a reason for  
21 everything is very hard.

22 Q. I am going to jump ahead even more from  
23 1961 to almost 30 years later with the Berlin wall coming  
24 down finally. Did that affect you in any certain way?

25 A. No. Up until then the Russians were still

1 there. It was a Russian monument like on the western  
2 side, a little bit from the Brandenburg Gate. The  
3 Russians were still there. It starts again like in the  
4 thirties when you read the paper. Only now they have a  
5 lot of foreign workers.

6 In the neighborhood where I grew up and went to  
7 school, they were all Turks now. The whole thing was  
8 Turkish. Those kids were born in Berlin and spoke the  
9 same German the kids in Berlin spoke.

10 It's strange. At the moment they have a lot of  
11 unemployed. The unemployed will start anything so they  
12 can get their jobs. That's all it is. It's repetition of  
13 the 1920's and thirties, the way it is now. That is why  
14 they have to do something.

15 In fact, I was in Berkeley a few weeks ago when  
16 Chancellor Kohl was there. It was quite interesting to  
17 listen to him. He gave a lecture there at Berkeley in the  
18 big theater.

19 Q. You said something has to be done. What do  
20 you think?

21 A. Well, they need jobs. Jobs have to be  
22 provided. Industry. See they work for the government.  
23 When you work for the government you don't work that much.  
24 It's different if you work for private industry. You work  
25 much harder. You have more interests, more incentives.

1           That's something they didn't have. Same in  
2 Russian. It was carbon copy of Russia. I remember the  
3 first time I went to Berlin and what impressed me I saw  
4 how they built a house. They slapped the front on. Over  
5 that came another front. Another front. All the way to  
6 the house. These houses crack. They don't stand up.  
7 It's not the way we built apartment houses at least. They  
8 were steel or concrete foundations. They were stuck  
9 there. They just crack after awhile. They have no earth  
10 quakes.

11           Q.           Can you show me some of the photos you  
12 brought and documents?

13           A.           I probably -- This is my birth  
14 certificate, copy of it at least. So you know I was born,  
15 when I was born. This is when I emigrated. My admission  
16 card to the United States. That's how I got here in those  
17 days.

18           Q.           Very dashing.

19           A.           I will tell you, 24 years that's a life.  
20 The Life of Riley. This is my picture when they shaved  
21 me. I came into the service.

22           Q.           This was from?

23           A.           That was the U.S. Army, identification with  
24 fingerprints. This is copy of my discharge.

25           Q.           How were you able to hold on to your birth

1 certificate through everything?

2 A. This was a copy made. I didn't have my  
3 birth certificate. This is a copy. I had to have it. I  
4 had to show them when I retired. I paid into the  
5 insurance over there when I was a kid.

6 Q. Over in Germany?

7 A. Over in Germany.

8 Q. You are receiving a pension?

9 A. Not very much, but it helps a little bit,  
10 with Social Security. I was low budget in those days.

11 This is a letter that shows where my stepmother was  
12 deported to. I don't know if you speak German.

13 Q. No.

14 A. That doesn't mean anything. This is my  
15 mother and me when I must have been three years old or  
16 four at the time. During the war.

17 Q. Underneath it's me. First day going to  
18 school in 1920.

19 A. It was full of candy, chocolate, candy.  
20 Six years when you start school. This one I was four  
21 years old.

22 Q. Tell us about this please?

23 A. This is mother and me. Must have been the  
24 same time. About three years old.

25 Q. Tell us about this please.

1           A.           That must have been before my mother got  
2 married. Twenty-one years old, with the lace collar  
3 there.

4           Q.           Tell us about the picture on the right.

5           A.           Picture on the right is my father and  
6 mother on honeymoon in Venice. On the Piazza San Marco.

7           Q.           What year was that?

8           A.           That was 1913.

9           Q.           On the left?

10          A.           On the left is my mother as a young girl.  
11 How old she was I wouldn't know. She was a young girl  
12 before her marriage.

13          Q.           Please tell us about this picture.

14          A.           My uncle, my father and is his sister next  
15 to him. He went every year to lose weight. They ate so  
16 much there they hardly lost any. They enjoyed the place  
17 so much. It was a nice health resort.

18          Q.           Are you in the photograph?

19          A.           No. My cousin. He passed away. The girl  
20 next to my uncle she lives in New York.

21          Q.           What year do you think this photo was  
22 taken?

23          A.           That was after my father's divorce. It  
24 would have been around 1928, 29, around that time.

25          Q.           Tell us about this picture please.



1           A.       This is my mother's grave, my grandfather  
2 is buried next to her and my great grandmother is on the  
3 other side. My great grandma was 99 years old when she  
4 passed away.

5           Q.       This is in Berlin?

6           A.       In Berlin. That's the Jewish cemetery.

7           Q.       Does this cemetery exist?

8           A.       The cemetery exists. It's in east Berlin.  
9 It's a tremendous big cemetery.

10          Q.       Do you know the name of it offhand?

11          A.       It's called the cemetery of the Jewish  
12 Gemina, the Jewish community cemetery. It's the old new  
13 part and new part. This happens to be the new part. At  
14 that time they dedicated that one.

15          Q.       Tell us about this picture.

16          A.       That was taken in 1941, approximately in  
17 April. That was life in the barracks.

18          Q.       Can you point to yourself please?

19          A.       I am right here.

20          Q.       Where were you located? What town were you  
21 in when this picture was taken?

22          A.       We were located near Etontown New Jersey.  
23 Fort Monmouth is big center for headquarters. Near Long  
24 Bran. I remember we went to Atlantic City.

25          We were located near Etontown New Jersey. Fort

1 Monmouth New Jersey big signal corps headquarters. I  
2 remember we went to Atlantic City, and Lakewood New  
3 Jersey, which isn't far on the beach, on the Atlantic  
4 Ocean. That was card games there.

5 Q. Tell us about this please?

6 A. This was taken also at Fort Monmouth.  
7 Saturday after inspection. We all had to be clean and  
8 good uniform, clean uniform and everything.

9 Q. Would you point where you are in that lower  
10 picture there?

11 A. Here.

12 Q. Top row, second from the left?

13 A. Top, second from the left. That was Fort  
14 Monmouth New Jersey.

15 Q. Tell us about that.

16 A. This was when the Red Cross wagon came  
17 along with the donut. I was sitting there eating a donut  
18 on a fence in Gibraltar.

19 Q. That was what year?

20 A. 1942.

21 Q. Tell us about this?

22 A. I am not on this picture. This was taken  
23 in Monfort out of my outfit. At that time I was in the  
24 signals company. I am not in this picture, no.

25 Q. Tell us about this picture please.

1           A.           This was a victory march parade on the  
2 Trafalgar Square. That was about 1943 when my outfit  
3 marched there. I took it in.

4           Q.           The war was still on?

5           A.           The war was still on. They were selling  
6 bonds. That was a big bond at that time.

7           Q.           Tell us about this.

8           A.           This was our group. I am the one on the  
9 left, extreme left. The one on the right, I saw him again  
10 in Chicago. His name was Hamaddi. He worked for the  
11 I.R.S. in Chicago. What happened to him I don't know.

12          Q.           What year was this?

13          A.           That was in 1944.

14          Q.           The town?

15          A.           It could have been in France. We were in  
16 in St. Mare Eligise, in Normandy. This is where this was  
17 taken.

18          Q.           Over here, what were you telling us about  
19 this picture?

20          A.           At that time prior to the invasion I was  
21 billeted in -- I went to school in Sutton Valley, RAF. I  
22 stayed with them for about three months. The gentleman on  
23 the right. He was the house there. During the weekend  
24 you had to go for home guards exercise.

25          Q.           You are on the left?

1           A.        I am on the left. I was a technician  
2 corporal.

3           Q.        Tell us about this.

4           A.        This was a Red Cross wagon. I am sitting  
5 there eating a donut from the Red Cross and coffee. That  
6 was in France in 1943, 44. Invasion was 44. It would  
7 have been about August, something in July.

8           Q.        The photo early near Gibraltar you said you  
9 were eating donuts?

10          A.        I mixed that up.

11          Q.        The earlier photo was Gibraltar? Okay.

12          A.        The fellows I said goodbye was in charge.  
13 She was a master sargeant. I was staff Sergeant at that  
14 time. The first sergeant is right between us behind.

15          Q.        You are shaking hands?

16          A.        I am shaking hands. I have a cap on. From  
17 there I went to Paris and from Paris to LeHarve and from  
18 LeHarve to home on the Queen Mary.

19          Q.        Tell us about this please.

20          A.        This is my last picture in uniform, before  
21 I was discharged.

22          Q.        What town did you have the photograph  
23 taken?

24          A.        I had the photograph taken in Richmond  
25 Virginia. I had friends who took it there. I got all my

1 ribbons there, combat ribbons.

2 Q. Tell us about this please?

3 A. This was taken here at the civic  
4 auditorium. There was a tradeshow going on for plastic  
5 signs, window displays especially when my firm  
6 participated and we sold plastic signs. For every  
7 business we had signs, plastic signs and three dimensional  
8 that could go into the window.

9 Q. Tell us about this please.

10 A. This was December 17, 1953 when we got  
11 married in Kansas City Missouri. I met my wife in Kansas  
12 City. I had to come back and get married there. We were  
13 married in the temple there. Temple Desure. I still  
14 remember that. I moved to San Francisco.

15 Q. You want to talk more about the present and  
16 what happened?

17 A. Well, since 1965 I have been involved in  
18 B'nai Brith. First I was working so much out of town I  
19 couldn't attend any meetings. Then I joined B'nai Birth  
20 and I have been active there. I have been financial  
21 secretary the last eleven years. I am just starting my  
22 twelfth year term now in a few weeks.

23 My father was with B'nai Brith, so I am trying to  
24 keep up the tradition, as my grandfather on my mother's  
25 side was on B'nai Brith.

1           Also we have a group in Germany. When we went to  
2 Berlin we visited the Leo Berk Lodge in Berlin. Leo Berk  
3 was a very well known Rabbi in Berlin so they named the  
4 lodge after him. It's nice to see it continues. Of  
5 course, most of the people gradually will die out. Came  
6 over there to retire. They will die out. The younger  
7 people. There aren't that many young people. There are a  
8 lot of Russians. Russians just came to Berlin. There is  
9 a new lodge, Johanus Kulchick lodge. When I was there in  
10 84 they had about four lodges. I don't know how many they  
11 have now. I think they have three lodges in Berlin.  
12 Population of about six thousand.

13           Q.       What do the lodges do?

14           A.       The lodges, not only socially, but they do  
15 a lot for welfare. It's a Jewish old age home in Berlin,  
16 a Jewish hospital in Berlin. These people do a lot of  
17 volunteer work. Also they come together and especially  
18 during the cold winter months where they invite people,  
19 other people, Jewish people, gentile people and serve them  
20 coffee, cake and entertain them, which is very nice too.  
21 They have their social life there.

22           Q.       It's the same in the states.

23           A.       Yeah. Of course here it's much bigger. It  
24 comes from Washington, D.C. I have been to conventions  
25 here, being active in the lodge and now past president.

1           You do the job for ten years you become past  
2 president. So I joined the past presidents.

3           In San Francisco we have three lodges. I went to  
4 school. What interests me is for seniors. The senior  
5 worlds affairs class, which was founded by a lawyer by the  
6 name of Hartz. Originally they wanted men. Now you have  
7 to have women. I am glad to see that we have women. It  
8 makes it more interesting. We use to be at the community  
9 college. Now we are at the community college on Fourth  
10 and Mission. Every Monday we have world affairs class,  
11 current events mostly. Very good speakers, very  
12 stimulating.

13           That's how we get together there, Jewish,  
14 gentiles. Anybody can come. Free admission. Doesn't  
15 cost anything. Two hours.

16           Q.       From your experience in going through  
17 Berlin and going to the war, coming to the United States  
18 and traveling all over the country now is your chance to  
19 give folks a message. Is this one? It seems you have  
20 kept history alive.

21           A.       Well, you know, like I have been in London,  
22 I go many more times to London. London it's entirely  
23 different. I feel more at home in London than I would  
24 feel at home in Berlin. Berlin to me is a strange city.

25           Jews in Berlin are dying out slowly, as all over

1 Germany. Berlin is a beautiful city. It has culture, has  
2 very beautiful museums and surrounding area and nature is  
3 beautiful. That part is nice.

4 I also have been in Vienna. My wife is from  
5 Vienna. I must say Vienna is a beautiful city. One time  
6 I drove there, I drove in Berlin. It's the only way to  
7 get around. Now you can go anywhere you want to, which is  
8 nice again. You can rent a car in Frankfurt and tour the  
9 country. German landscape is beautiful.

10 You cannot look at every man over 70 and think he  
11 was a Nazi, which probably he was. You have to forget it.  
12 The past will remember the past. We have to live in the  
13 future. That's the way I see it. What has happened has  
14 happened. Germany has been trying very much, you know, to  
15 do good things, to try to make good the things that  
16 happened. These are different generations. Two, three  
17 generations after all this happened. They are coming up.  
18 You can't blame anybody.

19 But it was just a crazy time and everybody jumped  
20 on the Nazi bandwagon. People were against them, they  
21 were just killed unfortunately. I don't want to see that  
22 again in my lifetime. I am sure I won't. We just have to  
23 look at nature, have to look at beautiful things in life  
24 and remember our past.

25 Sure, remember our family and all that. That's all



1 you can do. It's a different world. That's all I have to  
2 say when you come from Berlin.

3 Q. Did you have family members lost to the  
4 Nazi who went to the camps?

5 A. Well, my father's brother was killed, but I  
6 never found out when, where or what. There is nothing  
7 about him. Only maybe a way to find out would be through  
8 the Red Cross or something. I don't know. He was married  
9 to a gentile woman that saved him for a long time. They  
10 would have gotten him. She passed away. She had cancer.  
11 She passed away and they came for him unfortunately.

12 Q. Where were they living?

13 A. They were living in Berlin. In the suburb  
14 of Berlin called Templehof. It was close to the airport.  
15 They had the airport at Templehof. Last time I saw it it  
16 was an Air Force base at Templehof. The new one is out  
17 further. Now they have jets. They are enlarging it.  
18 They want the jumbo jets in. But otherwise, it's a  
19 beautiful city. I still would like to go and see the  
20 country, drive it as long as I am able to.

21 Q. Is there anything else you would like to  
22 tell us?

23 A. Well, what would you like to know? My life  
24 is not as interesting as some of the other people like  
25 what is his name? Eli Stein. He went to Shanghai. He

1 was a roofer in the concentration camps. He could tell  
2 you more than I could.

3 Q. We have interviewed him. You have told us  
4 a lot too.

5 A. It was different. I got out in time. I  
6 was lucky to get out. I have an aunt, my mother's aunt  
7 lived in San Francisco. She said I am too old. I can't  
8 give you an affidavit of support. She wouldn't give it.  
9 She got me together with the Canadian consulate and he  
10 couldn't do anything for me. Many of them went to Canada  
11 too.

12 Q. You didn't have any desire to go to Isreal  
13 then?

14 A. After all this happened I couldn't anymore.  
15 It was very difficult to get to Isreal. Because there  
16 weren't certificates. Only so many could go during that  
17 time. They took only those they could smuggle in or  
18 something. They couldn't have taken anymore. Once you  
19 come to the States you are out. They drop you right from  
20 the roll. Before I tried to, but it just didn't work out.  
21 I couldn't even get away to support my father. My father  
22 was sick. I couldn't go. My friends went to Sao Paulo.  
23 All you had to have was a ticket on a first class ship.  
24 Shanghai came later. Shanghai came when the war started.  
25 The war started in 1939. August or September. September

1 it started. It was a Sunday. I remember when the war  
2 started I was in Richmond Virginia at that time. We were  
3 all invited and we heard on the radio then when Edward R.  
4 Murrow broadcast from London. I still remember that.  
5 Radio was pretty big. I liked Richmond too. It's a very  
6 nice city. But it's too small. If you went with a girl  
7 on Saturday night and Sunday morning everybody knew you  
8 went out on a date.

9 Ms. GORDON: I think that's it then. Thank  
10 you very much.

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Small, Henry

1991 October 29

Version 2

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW

of

HENRY SMALL

OCTOBER 29, 1991

by

Interviewer  
Ms. Rachel Gordon

Executive Director  
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Producer/Director  
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1 MS. GORDON: Today is October 29, 1991 for the  
2 Holocaust Oral History Project. We are going to be interview-  
3 ing Henry Helmut Small. My name is Rachel Gordon. We are with  
4 the producer John Grant.

5 Mr. Small, first, thank you for taking the  
6 time to talk to us today. What we would like to do  
7 is hear your life story a little bit, starting even when you  
8 were a little boy. If you can tell us where you were born,  
9 and something about your family to start off.

10 A. I was born March 1914 in Berlin Germany. I  
11 was what they called an exemption for my father because  
12 five months later the first world war started and my  
13 father would have to go into the Army, but he had to  
14 support me and my grandmother.

15 With four dependents he did not have to go in the  
16 Army. We went through the 1st World War. I can remember  
17 up to the age of four. 1918 we had the revolution where  
18 there was shooting in front of our house. We lived in a  
19 big apartment house. We couldn't go on the street.

20 By the age of six I lost my mother. My mother, my  
21 grandmother were going over a big street in Berlin, called  
22 the Kurfuerstendamm.

23 My aunt, my mother's sister, could not marry during  
24 the war so they postponed the wedding until after the war.  
25 My mother, my grandmother both crossed the street. There

1 was what they call a horse trail, horse path in the middle  
2 of the street and a drunken taxi driver drove on this  
3 horse path. He zig zagged. My mother, my grandmother  
4 both went under the car. My grandmother lived but my  
5 mother died the next day.

6 I went to school then when I was six years old.

7 My father remarried again in 1923. I had a  
8 stepbrother, half-brother in Australia. I haven't seen  
9 him. My father was divorced in 1927. Then he married  
10 again in 1933.

11 I went to school from 1920 to 1923 to a private  
12 school. From 1923 to 1929 to a higher school, what they  
13 called the Oberrealschule. We had French and English.  
14 1929 I did not finish the full course. That would have  
15 been another three years. I went to work. In those days  
16 we had the depression and I had to go to work to support  
17 my father. I had an apprenticeship in furniture and  
18 clothing department store. I worked in the furniture  
19 department as my father was in the furniture business.

20 We did that originally as a wholesale business.  
21 Later my father became a manufacturer's representative in  
22 the furniture trade.

23 In 1933 I finished my apprenticeship and started  
24 for a better job in Cologne. I started on the 1st of  
25 April 1933. There was a boycott, the Nazis organized a

1 boycott against Jewish stores. I came to the store and I  
2 wanted to start my work; they didn't want me. They wanted  
3 to send me back.

4 I said I had a contract. They had to pay me at  
5 least a month and my expenses. They kept me until about  
6 in August of 1933 when the store changed hands and I had  
7 to leave.

8 I went to a furniture store in Essen, where we were  
9 selling out.

10 Finally in 1934 I came back to Berlin and I worked  
11 for my father, from 1934 to 1938, until I immigrated to  
12 the states.

13 My father was sick. He had pneumonia. In those  
14 days they didn't have the miracle drugs. It took almost a  
15 year. I had to do all the work by myself.

16 Then my father -- When I wanted to immigrate in  
17 1938, I tried before. It wasn't easy. I wanted to go to  
18 Canada first. I couldn't get the papers. But 1938  
19 finally through my stepmother I got the papers, the  
20 affidavits. But the U.S. Consulate in Berlin was very  
21 difficult. They made it as tough as possible. The German  
22 quota at that time was about twenty-seven thousand per  
23 year.

24 I was lucky that my father's banker played golf  
25 with the Consul General in Berlin. They played golf on



1 Sunday. Monday I went to the consulate. I was called in  
2 right away and received my visa, which helped. But it  
3 happened at that time that my father, my mother, they had  
4 a tailor, did ladies suits and also my father's suits.  
5 This tailor worked with somebody. We didn't know who was  
6 in cahoots with the Gestapo, the secret police.

7 They claimed they could take money out. But it was  
8 against the law to take German money out or whatever you  
9 had out of the country. So this man, somehow the Gestapo  
10 got hold of him and there were other people involved,  
11 including my father, my mother. My father was interned.  
12 So he didn't receive any bail. He was in jail for the  
13 time in prison and the Nazis killed him right there.  
14 Never came to the trial with him.

15 My mother went through the trial. She was, she  
16 received two or three years in the womens prison.

17 So I tried my best. I got here to get her out but  
18 I couldn't make it. I arrived it was May 28th and I  
19 couldn't find a job in New York City. It was a depression  
20 going on.

21 So I was lucky to, through a friend, who worked at  
22 the hotel St. Moritz, right on Sixth Avenue at that time.  
23 The housekeeper got me a job in boys and girls camp for  
24 July and August in the Catskills. So I worked there as a  
25 laundryman.

1 I didn't know anything about machines. I had the  
2 iron machine. I managed to take all the buttons off the  
3 girls slacks or blouses or whatever I had. Machine was  
4 too hot. I couldn't handle that machine. So the season  
5 was over. I had to look for another job. I had relatives  
6 in Ithaca New York. I saw Cornell. I could have had a  
7 job there selling sandwiches to the students, but I  
8 declined.

9 I went back to New York. I went to the Committee.  
10 They sent me to Richmond Virginia. I came to Richmond  
11 Virginia. There was a furniture store. I think in those  
12 days I made \$8.00 a week. I lasted about three weeks  
13 because the lady told me she could have had a black guy  
14 who could have worked for five dollars a week.

15 During the third week we had our linoleum carpets  
16 outside. There was a rope around them. A big colored  
17 fellow came and he cut the rope and he took the biggest  
18 linoleum rug under an arm and he took off.

19 I went behind him. He wanted to pull a knife on  
20 me. I hollered help help. Luckily the police station was  
21 across the street. They looked out and they caught him.

22 She paid me off at midnight. In those days  
23, Saturday you had to work until midnight. I told her that  
24 I didn't have a job. So Monday morning I started in the  
25 millinary factory. I worked there until 1941.

1 In 1940 we had the draft, universal draft. I  
2 registered. My number happened to be very low. So I  
3 figured I might as well get it over with.

4 They called me for February, 1941 into the Army. I  
5 joined the Army in Richmond Virginia. They sent me first  
6 to Fort Meade Maryland. From there I went to Fort  
7 Monmouth New Jersey. It was at that time the Signal head-  
8 quarters, where I received my basic training for 90 days.

9 After 90 days they asked me where I would like to  
10 go. I said I would like to go to the west coast. Instead  
11 they sent me to Washington, D. C., which wasn't bad. In  
12 those days you had ten girls to one fellow in Washington  
13 D.C.. So we looked for the girl who had either an  
14 apartment or house or a car, because those things we  
15 didn't have.

16 I enjoyed Washington very much. There was so much  
17 going on culturally. Besides I could go to night school  
18 and learn typing, which I did then.

19 Then Pearl Harbor came. It was Sunday, December 7.  
20 I was at the USO, at reform temple. There was a Jewish  
21 USO at that time. I remember very well that the news of  
22 Pearl Harbor came. It was already at night there or  
23, afternoon.

24 So that was the end. We could not go out anymore.  
25 We couldn't wear civilian clothes anymore. Everything was

1 now changed. I stayed there until 1942.

2 I was lucky that I did not go on the first  
3 shipment. The first two shipments went to China, Burma  
4 India. I went on the third shipment. The third shipment  
5 went to Charleston South Carolina, to Savannah Georgia, to  
6 Fort Dix and from Fort Dix we took the old Monteray. It  
7 was from the old Mattson Line, the steamer, and went from  
8 Brooklyn Navy yard all the way to Greenock in Scotland.  
9 We landed after 12 days. It was a cold journey, all the  
10 way north through Iceland.

11 From Scotland we went by way of Credwe to  
12 Highwickum. Highwickum we stayed in a grade school first  
13 and then they sent us to Watford, another suburb, about 50  
14 miles from London. In Watford I stayed until November  
15 1942. They took six of us fellows. We were radio  
16 operators. I received my training.

17 We were sent to work again, two, each us, two of  
18 them on British aircraft carrier. I was with a fellow  
19 from Iowa, tall fellow. We were on the HMS Dasher, which  
20 was a banana boat from Philadelphia. They converted it to  
21 an aircraft carrier. We went to Gibraltar. It took about  
22 a week in those days.

23 From Gibraltar we served in the African invasion.  
24 That was the biggest invasion I have ever seen. Over  
25 eight hundred eighty ships. At that time that was a lot.

1 They were going to Oran, Algiers and Casablanca.

2 We came back after a week. It was my luck that  
3 they left us off at the Rock of Gibraltar. We stayed on  
4 the Rock of Gibraltar until the end of December, just  
5 before Christmas. Colonel in charge came to us and said  
6 you boys are going back to England, six of us.

7 I happened to come on the plane that came from the  
8 U.S. and had the Christmas present that Roosevelt gave to  
9 Churchill. It was a globe as big as a table, tremendous.

10 But on this plane, I still remember very well we  
11 had a pilot, co-pilot and crew chief. We had one machine  
12 gun in the plane. That's all we had.

13 We started to fly over the atlantic. All at once  
14 the crew chief mentioned two ME-109 there. I thought this  
15 is the end. In those days we didn't have radar. They  
16 could have gotten us easy. They didn't see us. The pilot  
17 banked the plane into a cloud and the cloud saved us.

18 I came back to England we landed at Lands End. I  
19 almost kissed the ground, I was so happy to be on land  
20 again. All we had on was a May West lifesaver. Coming  
21 from nine thousand feet we would have all been dead there.

22 So from there I went to London. I went back to my  
23 outfit in Watford and stayed there for another year.

24 Then I joined the Third Radio Squadron Mobile.

25 This was an intelligence unit. We were all radio

1 operators.

2 Most of them received the training in the States.  
3 I received my training at the RAF station, a local station  
4 there. That went on until July 4th. I missed out on June  
5 4th. They took our detachments out. All the others went.

6 We only had one casualty out of the whole squadron.  
7 We went to Normandy Beach, I think Utah Beach. We landed  
8 there just at the moment when the Luftwaffe came over and  
9 strafed us. But luckily we were saved by ditches.

10 We stayed at Normandy and I went from Normandy  
11 through the campaign up through Luxembourg. It was  
12 February. The war was going on. They sent me home. I  
13 had enough service overseas accumulated there. Sent me  
14 back here.

15 First I had leave. Then I ended up in Madison  
16 Wisconsin. When the war finished, it was 12th of  
17 September, 1945. I went first to New York, to Richmond  
18 Virginia, picked up my stuff and came to San Francisco.

19 My first job was for TWA at the airport in the  
20 commissary. One day Howard Hughes came in. I almost  
21 threw him out. I didn't know he was my boss. He looked  
22 like a beggar. Luckily I didn't do anything.

23 They kept me. I was there until the strike. We  
24 had a three month strike.

25 I went to Los Angeles. I worked for W. & J. Sloan.

1 It was a tough job. Then I joined Orna Plastics, a  
2 plastic company. I sold signs all over the United States  
3 until about 1953 when I met my wife in Kansas City. We  
4 got married in 1953. 1953 we got married in Kansas City  
5 and moved to San Francisco and I have been here ever  
6 since.

7 I worked for three companies. One in the button,  
8 one in lace and one in embroidery field. I traveled from  
9 Fresno to the Oregon border and east to Reno and then  
10 back.

11 Q. A lot in one breath. Let's go back a  
12 little bit to growing up in Berlin and what that was like  
13 at the time.

14 First, if we can go through a little bit when you  
15 talk about your father and mother and his other wives, if  
16 you can give me their names as well.

17 A. My father is Siegfried Small. My name  
18 originally was Helmut Schmausch. S c h m a u s c h.  
19 Nobody could pronounce the name. My aunt, in San  
20 Francisco, when she saw me she said you change your name.  
21 You only can change your name through court. When I  
22 became a citizen prior to going overseas I changed my name  
23 to Small. My father was born in Berlin Seigfried  
24 Schhausch. His father was Heiman Schmausch. He came from  
25 Hohensalza, Germany. How they got the name I don't know.

1 Either they came from Samosch -- S a m o s c h. Or my  
2 grandfather, great-grandfather was a Schammes. Maybe they  
3 called it that way.

4 My mother came from Nakel. N a k e l. On the  
5 river Netze. Netze was a river. At that time it was  
6 German. It was Polish and then German and now Polish  
7 again.

8 My father met my mother when he called on my  
9 grandfather who had a furniture store there, fell in love  
10 with my mother. He married her in Berlin. My grandfather  
11 came. He had the furniture factory in Berlin.

12 Q. What was your mother's name?

13 A. My mother's name was Lena, Lena Helen.

14 Q. Her maiden name?

15 A. Her maiden name was Heimann. But she died  
16 very young. She was born in 1892 and she died in 1920.

17 Q. Going back, you grew up in the heart of  
18 Berlin?

19 A. In the heart of Berlin, yes.

20 Q. Can you describe the neighborhood from  
21 what you remember?

22 A. Well, the neighborhood was close to the  
23 business where my father had the wholesale furniture  
24 business. I went to school there. We lived next to an  
25 amusement park. I remember that. The carousel was going



all night, at least to ten o'clock. It was cold there.  
We had very cold nights. I remember the winter of 29 when  
everything was frozen. We had the river in back of our  
place. It was an apartment house.

Q. Was it a Jewish neighborhood or mixed?

A. No, very mixed. The Jewish neighborhood  
was mostly in the west. We had our group there, Jewish  
students. They went to school with me. We had our group  
there where we played as kids. We went to school  
together.

Q. You stuck fairly close together as Jews or  
were you mixed?

A. Mostly we stuck together, that I must say.  
I belonged to this comrade group. It was a German Jewish  
group. Then times changed and we moved to the west later  
on. My father was divorced after that. We moved into a  
small apartment in the west. I join the Zionists. In  
fact, I was ready to go to Israel at that time.

Q. What brought you to join the Zionists at  
that point?

A. Well, it was a very bad time. You had to  
get out. They went to a place where they were educated, a  
country place in agriculture, where you got your  
education.

I went first to a doctor, was examined by a doctor.

1 I would have gone, but my father got sick so I had to  
2 support my father.

3 Q. You stayed in the city?

4 A. Stayed in the city.

5 A. Luckily through my stepmother. My father  
6 had married again. Then I got away.

7 Q. Can you talk a little bit about the point  
8 you went from living freely in your neighborhood without  
9 being necessarily concerned where you are going to when  
10 the Nazis, you were first aware of the Nazis coming in?

11 A. It started in 1933. The Nazis came in  
12 January 33. I remember it was terrible at that time.

13 Q. Can you describe what was terrible? What  
14 was it like? What do you remember?

15 A. Because all the Nazis came out of like  
16 cockroaches, they came out of the corner into the open.  
17 Lot of people were denounced. Then they started the  
18 secret police and everything.

19 I remember when the Reichstag, the big parliament,  
20 when that burned. I joined the police, sport union, what  
21 they call the police support fire, like a police support  
22 troop. They were teaching stenography. I wanted to learn  
23 stenography. There was a certain system they gave there.

24 We had a lot of policemen. That night when the  
25 parliament burned they all had to go. I still remember

1 that, 1933. At that time -- For a while it wasn't that  
2 bad. But it came slow, very slow.

3 Q. What changes did you notice?

4 A. Well, April 33 when they started the  
5 boycott. I wasn't in Berlin at that time. I was in  
6 Cologne. Then when I came back I noticed slowly that it  
7 was -- We had to have a house employee, who had to be over  
8 65. Because we had somebody to help us. Cooking and  
9 cleaning. My stepmother. We had one that was 65. She  
10 couldn't work very much anymore. So gradually it got  
11 worse and worse. That I can say.

12 But the strangest thing is they started everybody  
13 over a certain age, like here with the draft, you  
14 registered. I had to go to what they call the mustering  
15 in the German Army. I had to parade there naked before a  
16 whole group of officers. Doctors and officers. They  
17 examined me.

18 They say you are fit for the infantry. They say  
19 you are Jewish, aren't you?

20 I said yes.

21 They said you are four group 4-F. Seemed like 4-A,  
22 4-F. You don't have to serve. They gave me a passport.  
23 I had a passport from the Army, my picture in there.

24 When I emigrated, I emigrated and I had to return  
25 the Nazi passport. The SS took it from me.

1 Q. Do you remember going back and reading  
2 about Nazism in newspapers or hearing about it on radio or  
3 people talking about it on the streets at the time? How  
4 did you know the changes were happening?

5 A. Well, the Jewish people, like they have a  
6 Jewish bulletin here. They had a paper that came.

7 Q. Do you remember what the paper said?

8 A. Well, the paper give us all the details  
9 what was going on in Germany, all over, from the different  
10 cities, towns and villages and whatever happened. You  
11 could see the handwriting on the wall.

12 Q. Were you scared at the time?

13 A. Well, I belonged to a group what they call  
14 the Reichsbanner. It was a democratic group. I was  
15 active in that. I was marching in that. I figured  
16 somebody would denounce me. I had to get out. I was  
17 lucky I got out in time. If I waited another two weeks  
18 they would have arrested me too, the Nazis, and I wouldn't  
19 have been alive anymore.

20 Q. Can you tell me when you were in the  
21 democratic group and you were speaking, what were you  
22 talking about?

23 A. I wasn't speaking. We had our meetings on  
24 Sunday and Nazis tried to destroy us. Between the  
25 Communists on the left and Nazis on the right, we were

1 right in the middle. Sometimes we had trouble with both  
2 of them. It wasn't easy in those days.

3 Q. Were there certain ways the Nazis would try  
4 to destroy you? Did they come and break up meetings?

5 A. Oh, yeah. They came and broke up meetings  
6 but not by one. They came usually fifty to a hundred men.

7 Q. There were how many of you?

8 A. Well, our group I think we got together was  
9 a hundred, a hundred twenty-five. We usually went in  
10 trucks and went outside of Berlin to smaller places to  
11 give them support. We had meetings and speakers there.  
12 Gradually we stopped that.

13 Q. When the Nazis came in the big groups to  
14 break up the meetings was it violent?

15 A. Oh, yeah. They got violent. My father  
16 didn't allow me anymore to go there. It was pretty rough.

17 Q. Where were you, where were your sentiments?  
18 To stay with your father and take care of him or to go and  
19 fight the Nazis?

20 A. It was Sunday we had the outtings mostly  
21 when we had the outtings, not during the week. Week we  
22 didn't have time. We had to work. I worked six days a  
23 week. When I worked in the furniture store we worked from  
24 nine in the morning to six at night. Three Sundays before  
25 Christmas we were open. From two to six in the afternoon.

1 Q. Was your work interrupted by the Nazis at  
2 all ever?

3 A. Well, my work wasn't interrupted. When I  
4 worked in the furniture, my father, we lost customers.  
5 Another Jewish store they closed up.

6 The others told us, you know, they have been after  
7 us not to buy from you. There was a boycott going on.  
8 That made it very tough for us so we had to get out.

9 My father was born in 1881. So at that time he was  
10 57 years old. So it's hard for him to get out.

11 Q. Did the customers talk to your father, long  
12 time customers who weren't Jewish?

13 A. Oh, yeah.

14 Q. Did they apologize? Were they angry?

15 A. They apologized. They say there is nothing  
16 we can do. They say they have been after us. They have  
17 been. It was something they gave to buy. They gave a  
18 certificate. That certificate I think was good for two  
19 hundred marks or something. That was a lot of money in  
20 those days.

21 When people bought furniture they could apply that  
22 towards it. So they said they would take it away from us  
23 if we buy from you.

24 So my father saw to it. All the firms with the  
25 exception of one were gentile. They were very nice to

him. The Jewish firm went into bankruptcy. I don't know what happened after that.

Q. The folks that weren't nice to him what happened with that?

A. Well, he just told them not to come anymore so he lost them. It made it tough with him. He was very nervous. It was very hard for him. He had high blood pressure.

Q. Was his business able to continue operating or did he have to shut it down because of that?

A. Well, he still worked with a few customers, but not very much anymore. I did the outside of Berlin. My father had Berlin the city. I had my customers outside of Berlin. It's a big surrounding area.

Q. When you were traveling around at that point was it difficult because you were Jewish to get customers? Was it more centered in Berlin with Nazism?

A. Well, five year wait. If you needed merchandise, they couldn't pay their bills, they were glad to buy from you. They didn't care, you know. So you had to go and collect afterwards. If they wouldn't pay their bills they wouldn't receive another shipment. I had to collect money. But we made a living, barely a living I should say from that time. Besides my father was sick a whole year. I had to take care of it myself.

1 Q. The time you were in Berlin and again the  
2 Nazism was rising and becoming more and more pronounced in  
3 the city what did you notice around the city? Were there  
4 propaganda posters going up? Can you explain that?

5 A. There were posters all over. Every corner  
6 had a big poster, what they called littfass saeule, which  
7 was a column. There were posters on it. Nazis put all  
8 the posters on it. People had Nazis flags all the time.  
9 The more you saw the more you could see it. I hated that  
10 swastica.

11 Q. How old were you when you first noticed the  
12 swastica?

13 A. That was long before. We had it already in  
14 1929.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. 1930 the Nazis gained one hundred six seats  
17 in the parliament. That was the beginning of Hitler  
18 actually. He started in 1923 in the putsch in Munich.  
19 They should have shot him then, shot him dead at that time  
20 and the whole thing wouldn't have happened. The Verdahlen  
21 government was in Bavaria, they let him grow. He went to  
22 prison for nine months and he came out and started the  
23 whole movement. He was a martyr for them.

24 Q. When you were looking at the posters what  
25 were the posters saying? What kind of messages were



1 there?

2 A. They had the newspaper there with boxes  
3 where they hung it out and showed all characteristics of  
4 Jews, which was very bad. They said "Defend yourself  
5 against the Jews." What the Jews are going to do to you I  
6 don't know what at that time.

7 Q. When you saw those what did you do?

8 A. Nothing you can do. You can't take them  
9 down. It's against the law. Just grin and bear it.

10 Q. I wanted to ask you a little more about the  
11 Nazi boycott. From my understanding how did you know the  
12 boycott was on? Was it the customers? Was this official  
13 proclamations? How did it work?

14 A. They were picketing all the Jewish stores,  
15 throw in the windows, taking everything out of the  
16 windows, eating the stuff and didn't let any customer in  
17 the store. Some of them they burned even.

18 Q. Did your father have a store?

19 A. We didn't. My father at that time was a  
20 manufacturer's representative already. We were in the  
21 wholesale business before. We worked from an office. Had  
22 a display of furniture. My father worked for different  
23 cabinetmakers that did the jobs.

24 Q. Was that ever damaged?

25 A. Well, my father moved out at that time

1 because he had some setbacks. Somebody took off with a  
2 warehouse full of furniture and he made debts in my  
3 father's name. My father was responsible for it. So he  
4 had to close his business and start as a manufacturer's  
5 representative. He had a nervous breakdown which lasted  
6 for a whole year after that.

7 Q. With a boycott and stores being vandalized  
8 and pickets, was that going on in your neighborhood at  
9 that time?

10 A. I was at that time in Cologne. I had a job  
11 that started the 1st of April in Cologne. That was the  
12 day they had the boycott and wanted to send me back. I  
13 insisted they to pay me back. They had to pay me off  
14 first because I had expenses.

15 Q. Your family was still there?

16 A. My father and second stepmother were still  
17 in Berlin at that time.

18 Q. Did you have any siblings who were there?

19 A. There was only one step-brother from my  
20 father's second marriage. They went to Australia. He  
21 lives in Sidney, but I haven't had any contact with him.

22 Q. You heard news when you were in Cologne  
23 what was going on in Berlin?

24 A. Well, we heard it and we saw the newsreel  
25 at that time in the movies. They show you what was going

1 on. It was terrible.

2 Q. People started, Jews started leaving I  
3 guess around that time, right?

4 A. The smart people left there, like my uncle.  
5 He went to Israel. He could take all his money out at  
6 that time.

7 Q. How did your uncle know at that point?

8 A. He was a Zionist. That was my mother's  
9 brother-in-law. He was a Zionist from way back. He  
10 wanted to go to Israel. So he went to TeleViv.

11 My cousin went to the RAF at that time I remember.  
12 The other cousin, she worked in the Naffi. The Naffi is  
13 something like a canteen, like our px system, British.  
14 She worked there.

15 Q. When you were in Cologne were there any  
16 problems?

17 A. Cologne was pretty bad too. I could see it  
18 all over.

19 Q. Can you tell me what you saw?

20 A. The store was closed when I was there. I  
21 had to go to the Personnel Department. Everybody, they  
22 lost their head. The store was closed. Nobody could come  
23 in at that time. There was no business that particular  
24 day. But then the whole thing went over, everything was  
25 all right, except that the Nazis went after the owner.

1 The owners had to change what they call to aryan, which  
2 means the store had to go into gentile hands. So the  
3 elevator operator became the president at that time.

4 Q. Do you know what happened to the store?

5 A. He threw out the Jews and I went to a  
6 furniture, big furniture store in Cologne. The owner said  
7 he couldn't hire me for Cologne, but he would hire me for  
8 Essen, for Dortmund, two other big cities in the wood  
9 territory. We had a sale there. I did the sale in Essen.

10 Went to Dortmund and the manager took over. The  
11 manager didn't like us. He was a gentile manager. He  
12 took the store over finally. I went to Berlin and worked  
13 for my father.

14 Q. When you were in Cologne and the Jews were  
15 thrown out and told they couldn't work there any more, how  
16 was that done? Did a Nazi in uniform come in and say get  
17 out?

18 A. No. It was like the Personnel Department,  
19 like any business, that told you we are sorry, we can't  
20 have you anymore. They had to give you 30 days. See,  
21 there is a law over there they can't fire you right away.  
22 They have to give you 30 days. So they paid you 30 days.  
23 I worked there 30 days. Now it's on commission. Because  
24 on furniture you work on salary and commission.

25 Q. Do you know what happened to the owners

before the elevator operator --

2           A.           I think they came here. One went to  
3 Berkeley. It was the Schloss family, the Baumanns. I  
4 think they all landed in Berkeley. I didn't have any  
5 contact. They must have died by now. They were pretty  
6 old.

7           Q.           Do you remember what was going through your  
8 mind at that point? Did you have any idea what was to  
9 come?

10          A.           Well, I could see my way clear. I wanted  
11 to go to Holland, immigrate to Holland. But that was very  
12 hard to even go there. They advised us not to come to  
13 Holland.

14          Q.           Who was they?

15          A.           The rabbis. I went to different a  
16 congregation. I got the answer from the rabbis. From  
17 Amsterdam, from Rotterdam. They said not to come. Then I  
18 tried through my mother's aunt in San Francisco. She was  
19 acquainted with the Canadian Consul.

20                The Canadian Consul said we can only take people  
21 who have a craft, like any craft, artisans. That's what  
22 they wanted. A cabinetmaker, a plumber, electrician,  
23 anything like that. But they were limited too. I knew  
24 somebody came to Toronto, wasn't Jewish. They got  
25 Canadian visas right away.

1 Q. This is a simple question. How did you  
2 know that it was time to get out? Why did you start  
3 writing to the rabbis?

4 A. Because you could see the handwriting on  
5 the wall. The Nazis were taking over.

6 Then in 1938, in March, I saw how the police went  
7 out of Berlin to Vienna. They wanted to take over the  
8 whole Reich, you know, the whole thing. Austria, which  
9 they did actually at that time. They wanted the Jews out  
10 gradually.

11 Not only that, two weeks or four weeks before I  
12 left I was called to the Gestapo secret police. The  
13 fellow there told me, he said "If you are smart you better  
14 get out as soon as you can. If you don't leave here, you  
15 come into an education camp." That's how he described it.  
16 Exactly his words. Which was a concentration camp.

17 So I saw the handwriting. So I left on a German  
18 ship. It was easier for the German money. You could  
19 deposit your German money on the German ship. You  
20 couldn't take it out. At least you could pay so much per  
21 day on the ship, which I used up on the ship. It was a  
22 German ship. The ship left from Cuxhafen. That's about  
23 150 miles from Hamburg.

24 It was the Albert Ballin, which became the SS New  
25 York. It was the Hamburg American Line. I landed in New

1 York, May 27, 1938.

2 Q. When you went to the Gestapo four weeks  
3 before you left was the person who told you it's time to  
4 get out was he friendly or was he warning you?

5 A. He gave me a warning. He said "This is  
6 it," he said, "Take it or leave it. If you don't get out  
7 in a certain time", he said, "you will come into an  
8 education camp." They must have been after them to tell  
9 the people.

10 Q. What did you do in the four week period?  
11 What did you do to try to get out?

12 A. Actually I had a ship. I went right away  
13 to Hamburg American Line and I asked if I couldn't go to  
14 sea on one, if I couldn't go on an earlier ship to New  
15 York. They gave me a berth. It was an eight day trip  
16 from Hamburg to New York at that time.

17 Q. Did you have a business to take care of  
18 before the trip, loose ends, family to say goodbye to?

19 A. My father, my uncle, my aunt from my  
20 father's side, my father, I had to see them. My grand-  
21 mother. My mother's mother still lived at that time. Say  
22 goodbye to her. It was very heartbreaking.

23 I still remember seeing my father, my stepmother at  
24 the railroad station in Berlin when I left for Hamburg.  
25 My stepmother had relatives in Hamburg. I stayed with

1 them when I went to the boat.

2 Q. When you left your father and stepmother at  
3 the station were they trying to get out as well? Were  
4 they resigned to stay?

5 A. They wanted to get out, but the whole thing  
6 was so tough now. I would have had to send the visa. I  
7 got -- I mean affidavit. I got the affidavit of support.  
8 But my mother at that time was in prison. So she couldn't  
9 get out. The whole thing was -- She was deported. I had  
10 a letter here. In 1942 to Theresienstadt. I don't know  
11 if it's true or not. Anyhow from there they went  
12 somewhere else and were killed.

13 My mother, my grandmother were on the same  
14 transport with my stepmother.

15 Q. Can you tell me why your grandmother was  
16 jailed again?

17 A. My grandmother was?

18 Q. Your mother, I am sorry.

19 A. On account of this currency business here.

20 Also a friend of mine, his father was also involved  
21 in that. When he saw them coming to arrest him he jumped  
22 from a balcony from the third floor to the street.

23 Q. Your father, tell me what happened to him  
24 please?

25 A. Well, I can't say too much because the



1 Rabbi who officiated -- I think later in Madison,  
2 Wisconsin. I was stationed in Madison Wisconsin. He said  
3 to me -- I asked him. He said there were so many at that  
4 time, I went through the same routine, the coffins were  
5 locked. You couldn't even open the coffins. Didn't know  
6 what happened. They were buried at that time. So they  
7 got rid of them that way.

8 Q. Your father?

9 A. Somebody must have been there. They worked  
10 hand-in-hand with the Gestapo. I don't know who was  
11 behind the whole thing. This happened to be a tailor of  
12 my father's and my mother who was involved in that too.  
13 He got all these people. I don't know.

14 Q. Do you know how?

15 A. He told him "I know somebody who works at  
16 the embassy and he can take it out through diplomatic  
17 pouch and you get it back in New York." But it never  
18 happened.

19 Q. So it went with him. They went to a camp  
20 then?

21 A. They went somewhere to the tailor, to bring  
22 the money to the tailor, and the tailor gave it to  
23 somebody else. I don't know. That guy gave a list, the  
24 names and everything. They got all the people involved.  
25 Must have been a hundred people involved in the whole

1 thing. So there was a trial. My father was already dead.  
2 Never came to trial for him. But my stepmother.

3 Q. He died in jail?

4 A. He died in jail because they didn't give  
5 any bail at that time.

6 Q. Did they not give him bail because he was  
7 Jewish?

8 A. That's what it was. They figured he would  
9 escape or something. That was the reason. They kept him  
10 in a very narrow cell. I tell you he got so worked up  
11 when you think of all that.

12 Q. Did you ever hear from your father after  
13 you left?

14 A. I sent a telegram when I landed in New  
15 York. Then he wrote a letter and that was the last letter  
16 I had. Everything I had was taken from me during the war.  
17 I left it with people and people moved and threw  
18 everything away, pictures and everything from my father.  
19 I have a few pictures, but not the good pictures.

20 Q. Do you still have that letter from your  
21 father?

22 A. No. That was all taken. I came back from  
23 the service. I left it with a family. That family moved  
24 to Washington, D. C. from Richmond. So they threw  
25 everything away, including my letter.

1 Q. Back in Berlin before you came to the  
2 United States and Canada --

3 A. I didn't go to Canada.

4 Q. You tried to get there?

5 A. Yeah; I couldn't make it.

6 Q. What else? Do you remember was it a  
7 frantic time? Did you feel under pressure to get out?

8 A. Well, I will tell you. We had our own  
9 Jewish artists. We had our own Jewish theatre. You could  
10 go to the other theaters. In those days you didn't have  
11 the star yet. That came later when you had to wear the  
12 star. Normally they left you alone, the Nazis. But it  
13 became somehow, the courts and everything changed.

14 Q. At that point you were still able to live  
15 in a mixed neighborhood?

16 A. We lived in a mixed neighborhood in a big  
17 apartment building. I still remember we had a movie actor  
18 lived on top, Adolph Wohlbrueck. He also left and went to  
19 London. None of our friends we saw in the beginning, they  
20 left and went to England, like my uncle, my father's  
21 brother-in-law. He went to London.

22 Q. Do you know what year that was?

23 A. They left after I left. It must have been  
24 1939. When I came in 1942 to London I visited them. They  
25 had been there already since the war started.

1 Q. I guess I am going to try this again. When  
2 you had to go to your own theatres and pretty much stay  
3 with the Jewish community --

4 A. You did not go too much on the street. You  
5 didn't show your face too much. You could go to movies,  
6 nobody bothered you, it was dark. But normally you didn't  
7 even enjoy it that much.

8 Q. Were you scared or angry or both or none of  
9 those?

10 A. Too young. I was young at that time. We  
11 had our Jewish dances. I went to dances. Had some dates.  
12 That's about all. You had to get over this because I  
13 worked for my father at that time. It was bookkeeping,  
14 correspondence. I had to do the whole thing.

15 Q. What about your friends, going back to the  
16 democratic group you were in. How did your friends fare  
17 after this?

18 A. I lost touch with them. I dropped out of  
19 that when the Nazis came. They became too powerful and we  
20 couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't see any way. I would  
21 have ended up in a concentration camp much earlier. They  
22 knew, they had a list pretty well of the members. I  
23 figured it's better to go underground.

24 Well, a few years, it was from 1934 to 38. That  
25 was four years. I worked at that time at a job in a

1 furniture store where I did the bookkeeping for the man.  
2 We were close to the German general staff. We had all the  
3 big shots there, the generals. They came and bought their  
4 furniture.

5 It was a Jewish store. See the Army they were not  
6 Nazis. They bought, they did what they wanted to do. The  
7 German nationals, they were different from the Nazis.  
8 They said "We do what we want to do." They bought the  
9 furniture there. It was a tremendous business.

10 Q. When you were selling to the German army  
11 people were you angry at them? Were they just customers?  
12 What was your feeling?

13 A. They were customers. You see a general in  
14 the store that means something, you know. Had a red  
15 stripe, that means he was general staff. They were all  
16 something there.

17 Q. At that time were you losing trust in  
18 people, neighbors or schoolmates, not knowing who you  
19 could trust?

20 A. I went to school in a different section of  
21 Berlin. We moved. We had some neighbors there. We  
22 talked to some of them. Some were very nice.

23 Strange, we had a couple downstairs. He was an  
24 electrician. He had his own business, with his wife.  
25 When I came back for the first time in 1961, I don't know,

1 he was out on his job. She said. "My God, you are still  
2 alive." It really struck me. The house wasn't there any  
3 more where we lived. They were all bombed. These people  
4 moved opposite, across the street. I went there.

5 She said "My God, you are still alive." I came  
6 back in 84 they weren't there anymore. They must have  
7 moved or something.

8 Also people I went to school with, I looked through  
9 the telephone directory and I didn't see any of the names.  
10 Lot of them went to Russia. They died on the Russian  
11 front. The German Army. There were a lot of casualties.

12 Q. When you were drafted by the German Army  
13 and they gave you the 4-F?

14 A. Yeah. It was very funny. They wanted me  
15 to go into the infantry. I said that's about the last  
16 place I wanted to end up, being a foot soldier.

17 Q. How did they know at the time you were  
18 Jewish? You were naked?

19 A. That they see right away.

20 Besides you've -- They had something. It was a  
21 passport or something. I had to show it. A regular  
22 passport. Over there you have to register at the police  
23 station. Wherever somebody lives, when they move in they  
24 have to register. When you move away you have to register  
25 again.

1 Q. Whether you are Jewish or not?

2 A. That's there, sure, on the form, religion.

3 Q. Everyone that is?

4 A. Everybody has to do it. That's a general  
5 thing -- So they can get control of the people. It's not  
6 like here. Anybody can move away. You look through the  
7 telephone directory, no city directories. Over there you  
8 had to register. I don't know if it's still today.

9 Q. I guess I was surprised they already had  
10 information that you were Jewish that they called you in  
11 any way.

12 A. Well, they knew I wanted to immigrate. You  
13 had to go through what they called like I.R.S.. You had  
14 to show them you didn't owe any taxes. You had to pay a  
15 special tax for immigration. They knew right away. They  
16 got that paper right from there.

17 Q. During this whole period of trying to  
18 immigrate, were you acting on your own? Did you have a  
19 friend you were doing this with?

20 A. I had a friend who went to Swo Paulo in  
21 Brazil. He wanted me to go to Brazil. But at that time I  
22 couldn't leave my father, so I couldn't go. About sixty  
23 percent, seventy percent, they all went to Sao Paulo.  
24 They all went first class. That's how they got in, by  
25 boat, first class. They stayed there.

1 Q. When you had to stay behind to take care of  
2 your father were you getting scared at all about having to  
3 stay longer? Were you torn at all between staying with  
4 your father and moving on to a different country?

5 A. I didn't think much at that time. I was  
6 kept pretty busy. It did not occur to me. Gradually in  
7 1938 when I immigrated and it came to me. It came to a  
8 point.

9 Q. What was that?

10 A. I came to the consulate and they made so  
11 many difficulties. Like for instance, they can ask what  
12 do you want to do when you get there to the U.S.?

13 If I told them I want to work. Sorry, you can't  
14 work. We have enough unemployed here. We don't need  
15 anymore. So you say you want to study.

16 "Who is going to pay for your study?" I say "My  
17 cousin. My cousin will pay for it."

18 They said "You have to show us they are going to  
19 pay for your study."

20 After all that luckily my mother had a banker.  
21 This banker made a call to the Consul General. The Consul  
22 General's name was Messerschmidt. I still remember.  
23 Monday morning I got my visa. Was I happy when I got my  
24 visa.

25 Q. Why do you think the banker helped you out?



1           A.       Well, my mother was a favorite customer of  
2 his. My mother was married before. Her first marriage  
3 was to an antiques dealer. They had a lot of antiques  
4 there, a lot of money there. He passed away.

5           She got a lot, inherited a lot, the store and  
6 everything. So she was a good customer of this banker,  
7 private bank, Jewish bank. He helped her.

8           I had a commissioner, a Jewish commissioner for the  
9 State of Virginia in Richmond. He worked on the  
10 affidavit. I had the president of the British American  
11 Tobacco Company as guarantor. Still couldn't get out.  
12 She was in jail.

13          Q.       What is the commissioner?

14          A.       Commissioner is the one that sets the bail  
15 for the federal court. I don't know if they still have  
16 it. At that time if anybody is accused of a federal crime  
17 the commissioner sets the bail. Maybe they still have it  
18 in federal court. That was his job. He was a very nice  
19 fellow. His name was Neidenheimer.

20          Q.       Do you feel you had good luck on your side  
21 to have these people writing to get you out?

22          A.       Well, through this commissioner I got -- He  
23 , helped a lot of people. When I came to Richmond Virginia,  
24 I must say that the temple was a reform temple. They, the  
25 congregation, helped us tremendously. Through the temple

1 I got a job.

2 After this job that I couldn't stay in the  
3 furniture job. I got a job in the millinery factory. I  
4 filled orders for ladies hats. I worked there until I  
5 went into the service.

6 Q. Once you got your visa on that Monday  
7 morning what happened next? Tell me your route.

8 A. From the visa I had to go back to the  
9 shipping company. At that time I must have gotten already  
10 the earlier ship. I wanted to make sure. So I went two  
11 weeks after I had my visa and left and came here. But  
12 there was a lot of work there too. I had to bring all  
13 these papers and passport, the Army passport. I had to  
14 have all that.

15 I went to Hamburg. My mother's brother, step-  
16 mother's brother lived in Hamburg. I stayed with him and  
17 I went on the train to the ship. The ship was a German  
18 ship. They were all Nazis. But Nazis and I came to New  
19 York and they put the uniforms away and went into civilian  
20 clothes and here they got their leave. That really hurt  
21 me at that time.

22 At that time we landed on the pier 83. Pier 83 was  
23 Hamburg American Line on one side and North German Line on  
24 the other side.

25 Here was the Bremen. At that time there was a big

1 spy activity on the Bremen. I still remember. Germans  
2 were involved. Hairdresser from the Bremen and some other  
3 people and F.B.I. was after them. I still remember that.  
4 It was a big scandal in New York. They arrested them all.  
5 They were spies from Germany.

6 Q. With the Nazis on the ship did you have  
7 anything, were you separated from them on the ship or play  
8 shuffle board?

9 A. I knew they were all false. Only took the  
10 money. That's all they were after, like the waiters, head  
11 steward and all this.

12 Q. Do you feel when you were at the consulate  
13 in Berlin trying to get to the United States that they  
14 gave you a harder time at all because you were Jewish or  
15 do you think they were doing it to anyone who was German?

16 A. Well, it came from the State Department.  
17 They did whatever the State Department tells them. At  
18 that time Cordell Hull was Secretary of State. He didn't  
19 want too many Jews in.

20 After Morgenthau, he was Secretary of Finance or  
21 something he was at that time. He was a good friend of  
22 Roosevelt. But it didn't help any either. Just made it  
23 as tough as they could at that time. Because the quota  
24 was for twenty-seven thousand. So they didn't let  
25 everybody in.

1 Q. That's twenty-seven thousand Germans?

2 A. German, Jews, everything. You had German  
3 citizenship. I was born in Berlin I had a German  
4 citizenship. My father was born in Berlin and he had  
5 German citizenship.

6 Q. Pretty soon I want to get what it was like  
7 once you were here, but before going back to Berlin and  
8 with the store boycotts, so I have an understanding, and  
9 before you left, you said it was kind of hard. You could  
10 go out at night. You could go to movies?

11 A. Yes, to movies, you could go to restaurant  
12 maybe.

13 Q. You were working during the day?

14 A. During the day I was working.

15 Q. Did you have any problems at all walking  
16 down the street? Did people ever taunt you or throw  
17 things at you?

18 A. No. Nobody ever bothered me. Berlin was a  
19 city. We had a lot of Poles, French people. Like New  
20 York, a very international city. They didn't bother us as  
21 much as other cities, smaller cities, which were tougher,  
22 where people knew you. Berlin, nobody knew you. They  
23 couldn't.

24 Q. When you stayed with your uncle was it in  
25 Hamburg?

1 A. On the way to the States.

2 Q. What was Hamburg like?

3 A. As a child it was a beautiful city, before  
4 it was bombed in World War II. It was beautiful city.  
5 St. Pauli is where the amusement is for sailors. It's a  
6 sailor's town, like San Francisco. It was quite a place  
7 there.

8 Hamburg was a very nice cultural city. In fact,  
9 they talked a German accent almost like English. A  
10 different dialogue. Very high class German.

11 Q. What was going on in Hamburg at that time?  
12 Were the Nazis there too?

13 A. Oh, sure, they had Nazis too. I didn't  
14 know too much about Hamburg at that time.

15 Q. Your uncle didn't talk to you about that?

16 A. Didn't tell us very much. He was married  
17 to a gentile woman, I think. I don't know what happened  
18 afterwards. Lost all contact with these people.

19 Q. I find it interesting you came to the  
20 United States and you went back to Europe to fight for the  
21 U.S. Army.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. What was that like? What was going through  
24 your mind?

25 A. It was strange. Being in England was

1 entirely different. When we came to France and came to  
2 Alsace Lorraine and every store the owner wasn't there and  
3 it said widow so and so. All the husband's had died in  
4 Russia. Well, that is what happens.

5 We saw a lot of German prisoners of war. I had to  
6 comment at that time I felt so damn mad I felt like  
7 shooting them right from the truck. But, it wouldn't help  
8 anymore either. I was pretty angry.

9 But it was funny, I was in Gibraltar for the  
10 African invasion. We stayed about 16 days on the Rock.  
11 We had the Germans right across from us in Spain. We sent  
12 all the cuss words over to them and they didn't know what  
13 it was. They sent us I M I, which is a question mark.  
14 They couldn't understand. We sent all the words to them.  
15 I could see the Gestapo. It was strange. Right at the  
16 border. There was a gate on the border Algeciras.

17 Gibraltar was British, Spain was neutral. But  
18 there were a lot of Germans. The Gestapo was there. You  
19 could recognize them with the leather coat and green hat.  
20 You knew right away.

21 Q. You never came face-to-face with them for  
22 words?

23 A. No, there was a gate between. I wouldn't  
24 start anything. I was in Gibraltar. Gibraltar was a  
25 British base. But we had a lot of Spanish women coming

1 over there. That I remember. They were selling oranges.  
2 They went right into the barracks. They didn't care. I  
3 had night duty. I was asleep during the day. They woke  
4 you up calling oranges.

5 Well, I was in Gibraltar 17 days. I opened the  
6 door of a B-17 bomber. A colonel stepped out, took a look  
7 at the Rock. He said "This is just like Prudential  
8 Insurance Company, the company for which I work".

9 I was stationed in Washington, D.C. I remember I  
10 had to register as an enemy alien in American uniform at  
11 the main Post Office. They came out that all enemy aliens  
12 after December 7, 1941 had to register. All Germans,  
13 Italians and Japanese had to register as enemy alien. I  
14 registered as an enemy alien. It was kind of funny, you  
15 know.

16 Q. The other people you were in the Army with,  
17 did they give you trouble at all because you were German?

18 A. No. We were scattered all over.

19 Q. There were a lot of Germans?

20 A. We had a lot of Pennsylvania Dutch and  
21 Pennsylvania Dutch language is very much like German.  
22 Besides I wanted to learn English. I could have had a job  
23 as a typist in the orderly room, but my English wasn't  
24 that good. So I felt I better wait.

25 Q. When you were in Germany you knew German

1 and French?

2 A. I had six years of French basic in the high  
3 school. We had three years of English. We had what we  
4 call the King's English. I had to go to Berlitz school.  
5 I got my American training more at the Berlitz school and  
6 in the movies. Clark Gable, Merna Loy, all these actors  
7 at that time. Broadway Melodies and all these, you know.  
8 It was quite interesting.

9 Q. When you are back in Europe for the brief  
10 period in the Army did you have any desire at that point  
11 to go back to Berlin, desire to fight the Nazis there?

12 A. Well, they sent me on R & R, which means  
13 rest and recuperation. I had after two years nine months  
14 service overseas leave. I thought when we leave Calais,  
15 Eisenhower came to us and he gave us a speech and said  
16 "When you boys come back everything will look much better  
17 to you."

18 I wondered if they were going to send us back. I  
19 applied for a job in UNRA, United Nations Relief  
20 Organization, to feed the people. Or go to the Army of  
21 Occupation, military government. For military government  
22 you had to be screened. We had people who went to camp  
23, Richie. A lot of them went to military government. They  
24 had the course there. They were prepared for it to work  
25 in military government.



1 But I was happy to get out finally because I had  
2 been there since February 41 to September 45. That was  
3 enough for me. To get out of uniform. We had an English  
4 uniform. I have a picture of it there. That wool smelled  
5 terrible.

6 Q. You said you went to the Committee in New  
7 York City. What is the committee?

8 A. They had a joint distribution committee for  
9 refugees. I can't remember. Somebody had it set up. All  
10 the people who came went to that committee. That  
11 committee didn't want to keep you in New York.

12 They asked you first if you have a place to stay,  
13 if you have enough to eat, if you need food or anything,  
14 if you need a job. But they didn't have any jobs at the  
15 time. They said you go to the agency. I couldn't get a  
16 job as a dishwasher.

17 Q. The agency was what?

18 A. Private agencies that referred you.

19 Q. Jewish refugees?

20 A. Jewish refugees. They could not supply  
21 that many jobs. They didn't have any at that time. It  
22 was a depression, 1938.

23 Finally I got a job through a friend actually who  
24 was acquainted with people. He worked in the hotel St.  
25 Moritz. He was a desk clerk. He knew the housekeeper.

1 The housekeeper was a German woman. She had friends who  
2 owned the delicatessen, Nate's Delicatessen. Nate  
3 Trotzky, two brothers. I think it was on 44th Street.

4 Through them I got to the camp. They owned the  
5 boys and girls camp, kosher camp, for July and August. In  
6 those days the parents paid five dollars a day, which was  
7 a lot of money. On weekends the parents came in there  
8 with Cadillacs and Dusenbergs, all the fancy cars.

9 I still remember one came in a big car and had a  
10 Jewish chauffeur. Shapiro. That really impressed me. He  
11 had a Jewish chauffeur. So I emptied the ashtrays and  
12 brought them cards and they gave me tips. I had three  
13 meals. I slept with the kids. It was pretty nice.

14 Then I went to Ithaca from there, from the Cat-  
15 skills to Ithaca New York. My grandfather had a half  
16 brother who went to Ithaca in New York in 1870. He did  
17 not want to serve in the German Army. So he came to  
18 Ithaca. His son -- He is not alive anymore. His son had  
19 a clothing store on Seneca Street. So I went there.

20 He said "I am sorry, I can't employ you in my store  
21 but I will see what I can do for you." So he wanted me to  
22 get a job making sandwiches for students. But I had to  
23 sleep on the table. I didn't care for that that much.

24 Q. When you were in the Army and also in the  
25 United States when you first came here were you keeping up

1 on the news of what was going on in Berlin?

2 A. Oh, yes. Well, as far as you could. I had  
3 a radio. First thing I bought with my money was a radio,  
4 little handmade radio. I listened to the radio a lot in  
5 those days. This was before television. Saturday nights  
6 you had The Hit Parade. That was most exciting. As much  
7 as you could. And you went to the movies. That was about  
8 the best.

9 In those days you could go to the movies for  
10 twenty-five, thirty-five cents. I remember in New York  
11 when I arrived I paid twenty-five cents and they had bingo  
12 night. My number won. I went up to the stage. They had  
13 all little girls purses. You had to pick a purse. There  
14 was money in there. I picked the purse with \$10.00. My  
15 God, I was the happiest guy. That was a lot of money in  
16 those days.

17 Q. Going back, seeing you kept up on things at  
18 least with the newsreels and posters, even back in Germany  
19 the time before you came, was there -- You said there was  
20 writing on the wall. Was there any other signs?

21 MR. GRANT: Indications of what was to  
22 come?

23 A. They convinced the Jews, it come up every  
24 week. Just looking in the paper was all the Nazi places  
25 they had pages, you know, outside for glass you could see

1 it. It was terrible. It was all over. Just rape our  
2 women and all that stuff.

3 Q. It seemed like you were close with your  
4 father, kept in close contact with him. What was his idea  
5 towards this? Was it to keep cool or what was his mind?

6 A. Not to open his mouth too much. If he  
7 opened his mouth he wouldn't have been alive. Just keep  
8 it quiet and we will see if we get out. But it got to the  
9 point -- When he married my stepmother she was pretty  
10 wealthy. She practically supported him at that time.

11 Q. She was the one whose husband had an  
12 antique store?

13 A. Had the antique store, yes.

14 Q. I want to jump ahead a little more. You  
15 said the first time you went back to Berlin after that was  
16 1961?

17 A. With my wife.

18 Q. What was that like for you to go back?

19 A. It was a strange feeling to go back to  
20 Berlin. It was like going to a different world. I knew  
21 Berlin, I lived there 24 years. Everything was still  
22 there, but the houses weren't there any more.

23 I remember that our tour, we went on a tour, we  
24 went outside of Berlin and there was a Russian monument.  
25 Tremendous monument there for all the Russian soldiers who

1 fell in the invasion of Berlin. They were buried there.  
2 Tremendous monument there.

3 They took that from the stones of the Chancellery  
4 where Hitler use to be. Took all the stones out and made  
5 a big monument. It was a different city.

6 At that time I could go to the cemetery and I  
7 visited the graves of my father and mother. My father  
8 wasn't buried next to my mother. My father was buried  
9 somewhere else because my stepmother wasn't dead at the  
10 time. She was in jail. Somebody else had to do it.

11 Q. Was this a Jewish cemetery?

12 A. Yeah. Tremendous big cemetery.

13 Q. That wasn't hurt in the war?

14 A. Apparently it wasn't hurt, no. Everything  
15 was so desolate there. Nobody took care of it. It was  
16 overgrown. Here we paid money. I sent money over there  
17 to have it taken care of. Now I don't know what they are  
18 going to do. They may raze it and build a shopping  
19 center. I don't know. You can only have the cemetery for  
20 so long. I don't know.

21 It was a different city. Berliners, once you live  
22 here, it's a different way of life. Over there they are  
23 so mean, so I don't know. Not polite. That's one thing  
24 in Berlin especially.

25 Q. Did you feel when you were there in 61 that

1 they treated you poorly because you were Jewish?

2 A. No. It was a general attitude. There  
3 weren't that many Jews anymore. In fact, the last time I  
4 was invited to the City of Berlin from the mayor and the  
5 city hall, we went all over, of which I saw more at that  
6 time. They were very nice to us. I didn't go to the  
7 cemetery because it was too late. It was already snowing.  
8 Could have slipped there and broken my legs in the  
9 cemetery, it's all cobblestones. We didn't go anymore  
10 there. 1984 I saw more of Berlin. We went to see where  
11 the synagoge use to be, Rabbi Stein. He came to us.  
12 Jewish community.

13 They gave us a reception, like they give to all  
14 those that came back to Berlin. Rabbi Stein spoke there.  
15 We went the next day to the synagoge, which was very much  
16 like conservative. They had no choir in those days. It  
17 was quite interesting.

18 There were a lot of gentile people there who come  
19 to the services too. I had a fellow next to me who asked  
20 me questions that I had to explain everything to him.

21 Q. How do you like explaining things to  
22 people? Not only in services but also speaking here?

23 A. Well, I like it very much. In fact, when I  
24 first came to Richmond Virginia, I earned my supper that  
25 way. I had to speak before church groups. They invited

1 me to the First Baptist church, Second Baptist church,  
2 Methodist church and I went to all the churches. They had  
3 Sunday supper there.

4 Q. What did you talk about?

5 A. About my father in Germany, about what I  
6 found in Germany, what was going on at that time. I was  
7 young. I just came. They wanted to know. I told them  
8 what was going on.

9 Q. I haven't heard of people doing that  
10 before. Who hooked you up to that?

11 A. Some of us did. Especially I worked in a  
12 firm. We had a lot of gentile employees. Jewish firm.  
13 We had gentile employees who went to different churches.  
14 They asked if I wanted to come to their church. Usually  
15 Sunday they had Sunday supper, some group, and had  
16 speakers there so I went there. Sometimes even during the  
17 week they asked me.

18 Q. Was their response this isn't really  
19 happening?

20 A. No, no. They understood it very well.  
21 They asked me how I could explain that. It's very hard to  
22 explain it, things happen like this. To find a reason for  
23 everything is very hard.

24 Q. I am going to jump ahead even more from  
25 1961 to almost 30 years later with the Berlin wall coming

1 down finally. Did that affect you in any certain way?

2 A. No. Up until then the Russians were still  
3 there. It was a Russian monument like on the western  
4 side, a little bit from the Brandenburg Gate. The  
5 Russians were still there. It starts again like in the  
6 thirties when you read the paper. Only now they have a  
7 lot of foreign workers.

8 In the neighborhood where I grew up and went to  
9 school, all Turks live there now. The whole thing was  
10 Turkish. Those kids were born in Berlin and spoke the  
11 same German as the kids in Berlin spoke.

12 It's strange. At the moment they have a lot of  
13 unemployed. The unemployed will start anything so they  
14 can get their jobs. That's all it is. It's a repetition  
15 of the 1920's and thirties, the way it is now. That is  
16 why they have to do something.

17 In fact, I was in Berkeley a few weeks ago when  
18 Chancellor Kohl was there. It was quite interesting to  
19 listen to him. He gave a lecture there at Berkeley in the  
20 big theater.

21 Q. You said something has to be done. What do  
22 you think?

23 A. Well, they need jobs. Jobs have to be  
24 provided. Industry. See they work for the government.  
25 When you work for the government you don't work that much.



1 It's different if you work for private industry. You work  
2 much harder. You have more interests, more incentives.

3 That's something they didn't have. Same in  
4 Russian. It was a carbon copy of Russia. I remember the  
5 first time I went to Berlin and what impressed me I saw  
6 how they built a house. They slapped the front on. Over  
7 that came another front. Another front. All the way to  
8 the top. These houses crack. They don't stand up. It's  
9 not the way we built apartment houses at least. Here they  
10 are steel or concrete foundations. They were stuck there.  
11 They just crack after awhile. They have no earth quakes.

12 Q. Can you show me some of the photos you  
13 brought and documents?

14 A. I probably -- This is my birth  
15 certificate, copy of it at least. So you know I was born,  
16 when I was born. This is when I emigrated. My admission  
17 card to the United States. That's how I got here in those  
18 days.

19 Q. Very dashing.

20 A. I will tell you, 24 years that's a life.  
21 The Life of Riley. This is my picture when they shaved  
22 me. I came into the service.

23 Q. This was from?

24 A. That was the U.S. Army, identification with  
25 fingerprints. This is copy of my discharge.

Q. How were you able to hold on to your birth certificate through everything?

A. This was a made copy. I didn't have my birth certificate. This is a copy. I had to have it. I had to show them when I retired. I paid into the insurance over there when I was a kid.

Q. Over in Germany?

A. Over in Germany.

Q. You are receiving a pension?

A. Not very much, but it helps a little bit, with Social Security. I was low budget in those days.

This is a letter that shows where my stepmother was deported to. I don't know if you speak German.

Q. No.

A. That doesn't mean anything. This is my mother and me when I must have been three years old or four at the time. During the war.

Q. Underneath it's me. First day going to school in 1920.

A. It was full of candy, chocolate, candy. Six years when you start school. This one I was four years old.

Q. Tell us about this please?

A. This is mother and me. Must have been the same time. About three years old.

1 Q. Tell us about this please.

2 A. That must have been before my mother got  
3 married. Twenty-one years old, with the lace collar  
4 there.

5 Q. Tell us about the picture on the right.

6 A. Picture on the right is my father and  
7 mother on honeymoon in Venice. On the Piazza San Marco.

8 Q. What year was that?

9 A. That was 1913.

10 Q. On the left?

11 A. On the left is my mother as a young girl.  
12 How old she was I wouldn't know. She was a young girl  
before her marriage.

14 Q. Please tell us about this picture.

15 A. My uncle, my father and his sister next to  
16 him. He went every year to Marienbad, Bohemia to lose  
17 weight. They ate so much there they hardly lost any.  
18 They enjoyed the place so much. It was a nice health  
19 resort.

20 Q. Are you in the photograph?

21 A. No. My cousin. He passed away. The girl  
22 next to my uncle she lives in New York.

23 Q. What year do you think this photo was  
24 taken?

25 A. That was after my father's divorce. It

1 would have been around 1928, 29, around that time.

2 Q. Tell us about this picture please.

3 A. This is my mother's grave, my grandfather  
4 is buried next to her and my great grandmother is on the  
5 other side. My great grandma was 99 years old when she  
6 passed away.

7 Q. This is in Berlin?

8 A. In Berlin. That's the Jewish cemetery.

9 Q. Does this cemetery exist?

10 A. The cemetery exists. It's in east Berlin.  
11 It's a tremendous big cemetery.

12 Q. Do you know the name of it offhand?

13 A. It's called the cemetery of the Jewish  
14 Gemeinde, the Jewish community cemetery. It's the old  
15 part and new part. This happens to be the new part. At  
16 that time they dedicated that one.

17 Q. Tell us about this picture.

18 A. That was taken in 1941, approximately in  
19 April. That was life in the barracks.

20 Q. Can you point to yourself, please?

21 A. I am right here.

22 Q. Where were you located? What town were you  
23 in when this picture was taken?

24 A. We were located near Etontown New Jersey.  
25 Fort Monmouth is a big center for Signal Training

1 headquarters. Near Long Branch. I remember we went to  
2 Atlantic City.

3 I remember we went to Atlantic City, and Lakewood  
4 New Jersey, which isn't far on the beach, on the Atlantic  
5 Ocean. That was card games there.

6 Q. Tell us about this please?

7 A. This was taken also at Fort Monmouth.  
8 Saturday after inspection. We all had to be clean and a  
9 good uniform, clean uniform and everything.

10 Q. Would you point where you are in that lower  
11 picture there?

12 A. Here.

13 Q. Top row, second from the left?

14 A. Top, second from the left. That was Fort  
15 Monmouth New Jersey.

16 Q. Tell us about that.

17 A. This was when the Red Cross wagon came  
18 along with the donut. I was sitting there eating a donut  
19 on a fence in Gibraltar.

20 Q. That was what year?

21 A. 1942.

22 Q. Tell us about this?

23 A. I am not on this picture. This was taken  
24 in Fort Monmouth out of my outfit. At that time I was in  
25 the Signals Company. I am not in this picture, no.

1 Q. Tell us about this picture please.

2 A. This was a victory march parade on the  
3 Trafalgar Square, London, England. That was about 1943  
4 when my outfit marched there. I took it in.

5 Q. The war was still on?

6 A. The war was still on. They were selling  
7 war bonds. That was a big bond at that time.

8 Q. Tell us about this.

9 A. This was our group. I am the one on the  
10 left, extreme left. The one on the right, I saw him again  
11 in Chicago. His name was Sawady. He worked for the  
12 I.R.S. in Chicago. What happened to him I don't know.

13 Q. What year was this?

14 A. That was in 1944.

15 Q. The town?

16 A. It could have been in France. We were in  
17 in St. Mere Eglise, in Normandy. This is where this was  
18 taken.

19 Q. Over here, what were you telling us about  
20 this picture?

21 A. At that time prior to the invasion I was  
22 billeted in Maidstone. I went to school in Sutton Valley,  
23 , RAF. I stayed with them for about three months. The  
24 gentleman on the right. He was the house owner there.  
25 During the weekend you had to go for home guards

1 exercise.

2 Q. You are on the left?

3 A. I am on the left. I was a technician  
4 corporal.

5 Q. Tell us about this.

6 A. This was a Red Cross wagon. I am sitting  
7 there eating a donut from the Red Cross and coffee. That  
8 was in France in 1943, 44. Invasion was 44. It would  
9 have been about August, something in July.

10 Q. The photo early near Gibraltar you said you  
11 were eating donuts?

12 A. I mixed that up.

13 Q. The earlier photo was Gibraltar? Okay.

14 A. The fellows I said goodbye was in charge.  
15 He was a master sargeant. I was staff sergeant at that  
16 time. The first sergeant is right between us behind.

17 Q. You are shaking hands?

18 A. I am shaking hands. I have a cap on. From  
19 there I went to Paris and from Paris to LeHarve and from  
20 LeHarve to Scotland and home on the Queen Mary.

21 Q. Tell us about this, please.

22 A. This is my last picture in uniform, before  
23 I was discharged.

24 Q. What town did you have the photograph  
25 taken?

1 A. I had the photograph taken in Richmond  
2 Virginia. I had friends who took it there. I got all my  
3 ribbons there, combat ribbons.

4 Q. Tell us about this, please?

5 A. This was taken here at the Civic  
6 Auditorium. There was a tradeshow going on for plastic  
7 signs, window displays especially when my firm Orna  
8 Plastics participated and we sold plastic signs. For  
9 every business we had signs, plastic signs and three  
10 dimensional that could go into the window.

11 Q. Tell us about this, please.

12 A. This was December 17, 1953 when we got  
13 married in Kansas City Missouri. I met my wife in Kansas  
14 City. I had to come back and get married there. We were  
15 married in the temple there. Temple Jeshurun. I still  
16 remember that. I moved my wife to San Francisco.

17 Q. You want to talk more about the present and  
18 what happened?

19 A. Well, since 1965 I have been involved in  
20 B'nai Brith. First I was working so much out of town I  
21 couldn't attend any meetings. Then I joined B'nai Brith  
22 and I have been active there. I have been financial  
23 secretary for the last eleven years. I am just starting  
24 my twelfth year term now in a few weeks.

25 My father was with B'nai Brith, so I am trying to



1 keep up the tradition, as my grandfather on my mother's  
2 side was on B'nai Brith.

3 Also we have a group in Germany. When we went to  
4 Berlin we visited the Leo Baeck Lodge in Berlin. Leo  
5 Baeck was a very well known Rabbi in Berlin so they named  
6 the lodge after him. It's nice to see that it continues.  
7 Of course, most of the people gradually will die out.  
8 Came over there to retire. They will die out. The  
9 younger people. There aren't that many young people.  
10 There are a lot of Russians. Russians just came to  
11 Berlin. There is a new lodge, Janus Korchak lodge. When  
12 I was there in 84 they had about four lodges. I don't  
13 know how many they have now. I think they have three  
14 lodges in Berlin. Population of about six thousand.

15 Q. What do the lodges do?

16 A. The lodges, not only socially, but they do  
17 a lot for welfare. There is a Jewish old age home in  
18 Berlin, a Jewish hospital in Berlin. These people do a  
19 lot of volunteer work. Also they come together and  
20 especially during the cold winter months where they invite  
21 people, other people, Jewish people, gentile people and  
22 serve them coffee, cake and entertain them, which is very  
23 nice too. They have their social life there.

24 Q. It's the same in the states.

25 A. Yeah. Of course here it's much bigger. It

1 comes from Washington, D.C. I have been to conventions  
2 here, being active in the lodge and now past president.

3 You do the job for ten years you become a past  
4 president. So I joined the past presidents.

5 In San Francisco we have three lodges. I went to  
6 school. What interests me is for seniors. The Senior  
7 Worlds Affairs Class, which was founded by a lawyer by the  
8 name of Haas. Originally they wanted men. Now you have  
9 to have women. I am glad to see that we have women. It  
10 makes it more interesting. We use to be at the community  
11 college on Grough Street. Now we are at the community  
12 college on Fourth Street and Mission. Every Monday we  
13 have world affairs class, current events mostly. Very  
14 good speakers, very stimulating.

15 That's how we get together there, Jewish,  
16 gentiles. Anybody can come. Free admission. Doesn't  
17 cost anything. Two hours.

18 Q. From your experience in going through  
19 Berlin and going to the war, coming to the United States  
20 and traveling all over the country now is your chance to  
21 give folks a message. Is this one? It seems you have  
22 kept history alive.

23 A. Well, you know, like I have been in London,  
24 I go many more times to London. London it's entirely  
25 different. I feel more at home in London than I would

1 feel at home in Berlin. Berlin to me is a strange city.

2 Jews in Berlin are dying out slowly, as all over  
3 Germany. Berlin is a beautiful city. It has culture, has  
4 very beautiful museums and surrounding area and nature is  
5 beautiful. That part is nice.

6 I also have been in Vienna. My wife is from  
7 Vienna. I must say Vienna is a beautiful city. One time  
8 I drove there, I drove in Berlin also. It's the only way  
9 to get around. Now you can go anywhere you want to, which  
10 is nice again. You can rent a car in Frankfurt and tour  
11 the country. German landscape is beautiful.

12 You cannot look at every man over 70 and think he  
13 was a Nazi, which probably he was. You have to forget it.  
14 The past will remember the past. We have to live in the  
15 future. That's the way I see it. What has happened has  
16 happened. Germany has been trying very much, you know, to  
17 do good things, to try to make good the bad things that  
18 happened. These are different generations. Two, three  
19 generations after all this happened. They are coming up.  
20 You can't blame anybody now.

21 But it was just a crazy time and everybody jumped  
22 on the Nazis bandwagon. People were against them, they  
23 were just killed unfortunately. I don't want to see that  
24 again in my lifetime. I am sure I won't. We just have to  
25 look at nature, have to look at beautiful things in life

1 and remember our past.

2 Sure, remember our family and all that. That's all  
3 you can do. It's a different world. That's all I have to  
4 say when you come from Berlin.

5 Q. Did you have family members lost to the  
6 Nazis who went to the camps?

7 A. Well, my father's brother was killed, but I  
8 never found out when, where or what. There is nothing  
9 about him. Only maybe a way to find out would be through  
10 the Red Cross or something. I don't know. He was married  
11 to a gentile woman that saved him for a long time. They  
12 would have gotten him. She passed away. She had cancer.  
13 She passed away and they came for him unfortunately.

14 Q. Where were they living?

15 A. They were living in Berlin. In the suburb  
16 of Berlin called Tempelhof. It was close to the airport.  
17 They had the old airport at Tempelhof. Last time I saw it  
18 it was an Air Force base at Tempelhof. The new one is out  
19 further. Now they have jets. They are enlarging it.

20 They want the jumbo jets in. But otherwise, it's a  
21 beautiful city. I still would like to go and see the  
22 country, drive it as long as I am able to.

23 Q. Is there anything else you would like to  
24 tell us?

25 A. Well, what would you like to know? My life

1 is not as interesting as some of the other people like  
2 what is his name? Herman Shine. He went to Shanghai. He  
3 was a roofer in the concentration camps. He could tell  
4 you more than I could.

5 Q. We have interviewed him. You have told us  
6 a lot too.

7 A. It was different. I got out in time. I  
8 was lucky to get out. I have an aunt, my mother's aunt  
9 lived in San Francisco. She said I am too old. I can't  
10 give you an affidavit of support. She wouldn't give it.  
11 She got me together with the Canadian consulate and he  
12 couldn't do anything for me. Many of them went to Canada  
13 too.

14 Q. You didn't have any desire to go to Israel  
15 then?

16 A. After all this happened I couldn't anymore.  
17 It was very difficult to get to Israel. Because there  
18 weren't certificates. Only so many could go during that  
19 time. They took only those they could smuggle in or  
20 something. They couldn't have taken anymore. Once you  
21 come to the States you are out. They drop you right from  
22 the roll. Before I tried to, but it just didn't work out.  
23 I couldn't even get away to support my father. My father  
24 was sick. I couldn't go. My friends went to Sao Paulo.  
25 All you had to have was a ticket on a first class ship.

1 Shanghai came later. Shanghai came when the war started.  
2 The war started in 1939. August or September. September  
3 it started. It was a Sunday. I remember when the war  
4 started I was in Richmond Virginia at that time. We were  
5 all invited and we heard on the radio then when Edward R.  
6 Murrow broadcast from London. I still remember that.  
7 Radio was pretty big. I liked Richmond too. It's a very  
8 nice city. But it's too small. If you went with a girl  
9 on Saturday night on Sunday morning everybody knew you  
10 went out on a date.

11 Ms. GORDON: I think that's it then. Thank  
12 you very much.