

Interview with NAN KOEHLER SOLOMON
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Q: I AM SONDR A BENDAYON, I'M HERE WITH NAN KOEHLER AT THE HOLOCAUST LIBRARY IN SAN FRANCISCO WE'RE DOING AN INTERVIEW FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT AND TODAY IS THE 12TH OF JULY, 1990. NAN WOULD YOU PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH YOUR BIRTH NAME AND TELL WHERE AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

A: I'm going to start crying already. My name is Nan Orickae Koehler and I was born in Darmstadt near Frankfurt Germany, West Germany in 1941. And I haven't done very much personal recall of this so whenever I do it brings up a lot. I don't know why I'm crying. I'm on my moon. So I'm kind of weepy. And hearing my mother talking also it brings up a lot. It did for me last time and coming here is reinforcing.

Q: WE'LL MAKE NOTE WE HAVE JUST FINISHED INTERVIEWING HER MOTHER. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST MEMORIES?

A: Well we lived in the country and I was born in the near city, but we didn't live in the city we lived in the country so my earliest childhood memories are of the countryside where I grew up and the garden, as my mother talked about earlier because and - - we lived in a little rural village with right across the street the bakery right across the

street and the mayor lived right across the street and my very earliest childhood memory was we were 7 - we had a nursery where there were three cribs lined on the wall and I was in my crib a lot in a cage and that's what I experienced and I remember my very first memory was I couldn't climb over the bars yet. Everyone was outside and I was in my cage and very upset.

Q: HOW OLD DO YOU THINK YOU WERE THERE?

A: Well, I must have been pretty small because I couldn't walk my mother thinks I can't remember but I think because of the break of going from Germany to American and learning a different language I have a very clear memory of my childhood. I think because of that.

Q: WHAT WERE YOUR PARENTS NAMES?

A: Leanore, my mother and my father's name is Franz.

Q: KOEHLER?

A: Koehler, yeah.

Q: I KNOW YOUR MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME WAS HOLLANDER.

A: Hollander, right.

Q: AND YOU HAVE A BROTHER AND SISTER?

A: Brother Kye, his name is Eckhart is but Kye was his nickname. That's how I know him. My sister was Gerda and my mother had - - when by the time she had me and she had (Healthmagian), helping girls, that I think, I was very close to these German girls. I was really brought up by them more than by my mother.

Q: I PRESUME THE OTHER TWO CRIBS WERE YOUR SISTER AND

BROTHER'S?

A: Right.

Q AND ON FROM THERE WHAT MEMORIES DO YOU HAVE?

A: Of the house you mean?

Q: YES, THE HOUSE.

A: I don't remember the kinds of depravation that my mother talked about if that's what you mean. Except that there never was a problem at meal time of us eating and I remember, the food that we ate was very plain, like just any broth was fantastic. Special Sunday dinner meat broth soup and eating vegetables from the garden, wild things and I continued that interest today. I still maintain quite a big garden. I teach people how to eat wild edible things and survival. I'm very interest in survival skills.

Q: IT HAD A DEEP IMPRESSION ON YOU?

A: Yes, indeed. And the hunger deprivation which for me from there birthing experience which started in psychotherapy, started in utero, -- they say that I'm a classic placental insufficiency case, that's what the physiotherapist say. I don't know.

Q: DO YOU FEEL THAT, ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY SAY?

A: Well, I know that I have something around pregnancy and birth because that has become my profession in adult life. Wasn't my chosen career when I went to school. I studied

biology but as I became a mother myself and have my own children I have become involved in child birth and they say that when you have an interest like that there's usually some driving force behind you to push you into it. I always assumed it has to do with my- - well I'm very interest in new age consciousness and trying to make concrete abstract philosophical principles live it in my life, for me that's child rearing and that focus a lot on child rearing and that's the part where I wanted my mother to leave because she raised me, she was brought up by aristocratic mother, displaced in America, a German woman who was brought up with servants. Never had any down home domestic skills so whey my grandmother set up her kitchen household she did it in this very elaborate way. I'm sure she had household help too but not to the extent like in Germany and then my mother consequently never learned household skills easily either so she had this I do know remember my childhood memories my mother had a very difficult time maintaining the farm and living the simple life. Because she wasn't brought up in the farm family and she had a lot of trouble coping with that. She didn't know how to raise us at all. She didn't have a normal instinctive mothering skill so she did exactly what the doctor told her and by the books and I feel very damaged

from that myself and reacting so I had to learn from scratch how to be a mother and mothering skills and I've made quite an art of it and I teach the other women I've become kind of an expert on conscious will. I'm kind of an expert on how contact your instinctive being that's why I'm supposed to be an expert at home birth, natural childbirth.

Q: COULD YOU TALK MORE ABOUT THOSE GERMANIC CHILD RAISING PRACTICES?

A: Well it has a historical root, you know. Talking earlier about the witch burning which to me a lot of the naziism, the fascist bigotry people or what people call patriotic quotes what that going on now in the middle east with Israel there its the same type of thing where the women's ways were degradated to such a low level that they to me mean my mother's the end result of women who did exactly as she was told, And there is a process that happens to all women in giving birth a natural empowerment where if your instincts are strong you take care of your children and don't let nothing harm them like sending them to war or doing things that are destructive like that well when the natural process is broken down the whole social fabric deteriorates and this started in Germany in the historical roots with the inquisition ending in the 18th and 19th century where they just systematically bump off older wise

and widows any independent women at all and with them was lost, a lot of knowledge about how to take care of the child problem children all the little intricacies of parenting. So there rose these experts in child rearing and in the 1700's manuals were written that began to show these manuals on how to raise them in those days they thought that children were adding to the work force and how to especially raise up your child so you have no troubles, no trouble they to behave, mind be seen and not heard and Germany is expert. They're experts at raising good little boys and girls that behave really well. And - -

Q: RESPOND TO AUTHORITY?

A: Yeah.

Q: AND HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT MANIFESTED IN YOUR FAMILY?
WHAT SPECIFICALLY DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT?

A: Well, the way that I could make it concrete was that my father was very powerful authority figure in the family. Supported by the women, his authority was created in fostered by her words and deeds. For me as a young child I was completely afraid of him, and no relationship with him at all. As to human beings for nurturing figures, that's for sure. Since my parents were divorced when I was quite young I consider myself fatherless, although I did have a relationship with him as a young adult and I probably was

his favorite child, and into adulthood I'm his parent I'm my mother's mother. It was very, I don't know how to put it in words. I'm sure what I've experienced is not unique to most people where there parents' interest and their energy focus on material, very materialistic.

Q: AS YOU'RE GETTING OLDER THERE DURING THE WAR YEARS- -

A: I remember the most frightening thing for me, of course, was the bombing that constant interruption in like we were sitting here doing some interview, the siren go and you have to run to the bomb shelter. And it's different seeing the movie than experiencing it. Especially in childhood I couldn't rationalize here comes the planes you know is abstract kind of fear that's very alienating, isolating makes kind a driving tension in your life. I remember having to go up to the bomb shelter and it was always very dark and stuffy and very scary all the other people in the house were there, strangers people who you didn't- - They all think your a cute little girl but I didn't have anybody that could I could sit in their lap where I would feel safe with and I was, for me it was I wanted to get out really bad and never knew when I could get out of there when we got out my mother said we had to be careful walking around. We lived right on the slope of a mountain where there was a German anti-aircraft installation up in the big castle on

top of the hill so there was a lot of activity up there all the time, up on (Melebocos) that was the mountain, that was when Darmstadt was burned, the fire. Going there shortly afterwards seeing the houses crumble down and people living in buildings that were half demolished and still they had curtains in the windows and picking our way through the streets. My mother took us to a puppet show after the bombing and burning of Darmstadt. I couldn't, it was just amazing to see like the after quake of an earthquake, or something, the smell of it. By and large though, I was pretty sheltered from that living in the country. I have a really- - the most interesting memory that I have, I think, was as a child there was a lot of fear of the Americans coming when the Americans were going to come because I could here the adults talking about it what was going to happen with Germany was losing the war. The American they were like bogeyman, monsters in my mind and then the first, when they drove into our little village the children were shrieking up and down the street, " here they come, the Americans." We hid in the bushes and looked at them and they came up in there in jeeps in camouflage paint they had camouflage painted hats and outfits and sticks coming out of them. That's why we thought they were really scary and they were also. My mother didn't mention it they lived in a

house that was built by an American. It was on the nicer houses in our little village so it was used by the Germans and then also used by the Americans and their headquarter in our local district. The soldiers were in our house all the time in the living room, used the desks and telephone was there and stuff like that. So we would get to see the soldiers and I remember them walking up the walk, talking and acting normal they held our hands and they weren't scary. They were very nice to us. They gave us chocolate, the first time we ever had candy. It was quite a big deal for a little kid. They gave us little, first time I had ever seen a push button toy, it was Pluto. I didn't know about cartoons or anything. I have they weren't as scary as German soldiers, the German soldiers of course it was the end of the war by the time I can remember anything and they were pretty scary and I just stayed away. I never had any contact with them at all.

Q: SO YOU HAD, I PRESUME, SOME CONTACT WITH THEM TO KNOW, FEEL THEY WERE SCARY?

A: Oh, yeah. You weren't allowed in the room, you weren't supposed to talk to them. Where the Americans were very friendly they would pick you up, and give you clothes, and candy, very generous like Santa Claus coming every day.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORY OF THE DAILY LIFE WAS LIKE IN DARMSTADT BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR?

A: Well, it was for me as a child, it was hard for me to know if it's just my personality type or was very confusing never knowing what was going to happen. Things always happened unexpectedly for me because my mother has this philosophy that she and my father made an agreement that they would shelter us children from anything negative so consequently they didn't talk to us about anything that was going on including their divorce or the war really and they, you know, so you have this dizzy, having childhood experiences all of a sudden negative things happening that are like nightmarish quality so I didn't know I was very confused and I have- - I couldn't speak very well I know I had a lot of trouble communicating my feelings and thoughts when I was little I still do. Then we spent quite a while, we had to I don't know exactly what point we moved from this house in (Offenbach) because my mother doesn't quite *apell...* remember. She mixes up the times and we moved to Darmstadt. We moved several times. Everyone was moving around all the time then we went to a displaced persons camp up in the (Hamog). We slowly made our way through the German Countryside constantly meeting new people. We did sleep together my brother mother and I slept together that was so

comforting. My mother was very sick during that time. She was upset a lot and then in the midst of all this turmoil my father with the agreement of my mother kept trying to maintain these German rituals that just amplified my fear like in Germany. I have a very vivid memory because we weren't living in the home where I grew up as a baby. We were living in someone else's house and it was St. Nicholas Day where you get the coal in your shoes or candies if you had been good but there they really make a big deal of it and they really give you coals if you had been naughty. I remember my sister got the coals in her shoes at some point or my brother, one of us did. It was traumatic for us children to have that experience among everything else that was going on. Another thing that happened to me. I couldn't- - when I was child there weren't any cars on the road it was very quiet so after the war was over all of a sudden there were jeeps everywhere noises, the only noises, the mechanical noises, that I heard were the airplanes. So it's interesting as an adult now as when I hear a airplanes my deeper self thinks, Oh, the bombing is coming, it's not comfortable. I'm now living in a situation in Northern California where the planes come to spy on the people, who are the marijuana growers. So I'm reliving this whole think that 's what I'm talking really real to me because now

planes flying all around my community low to the ground, helicopters and I have the same feeling that people probably do in Central America being under the threat, the farm where I live did get raided by the camp raiders with camouflage suits on. It was just incredible experience for me. Interesting day they came I was sick I had a fever, my last child had just been born, she was only a month old and I had mastoiditis, these guys came to the door, I couldn't - - anyway that's another story. But we were living, on our way trying to get back to America and I remember trying to cross the road and I didn't know about the cars, that they could hurt me, or the distance that they could hurt me, my eyes didn't work somehow. And a car hit me and ran over my foot and nothing, no lasting injury or anything but it was definitely awakening. I was about four years old.

Q: WERE YOU PLAYING WITH OTHER GERMAN CHILDREN IN THE TOWN DURING THOSE YEARS THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER?

A: I'm sure I was. I remember mainly with my brother and sister and my sister was a really feisty little girl and she was a very difficult child. So that's why my father took her when they broke up. My brother and I were always together. I did everything with my brother.

Q: DID YOUR MOTHER TALK TO YOU ABOUT BEING PARTLY JEWISH?

A: NO. I don't remember, not as a child. I remember when we came to America. Those memories are being on the boat is quite clear to me. Arriving there, her family meeting us all, a warehouse of luggage and people around. When she was talking about the reporter who came to take our picture. The fatigue, anxiety of new things not being able to understand anyone or it took me a long time to understand english. I was five years old then. In the neighborhood we moved to, my grandparents home they owned the home next door to them in Philadelphia, my cousins lived there and all cousins and the neighbors were very mean to my brother and I, teased us unmercifully about being German not nothing to do with being Jewish and I even changed my name. My German name is Nana. They called me Nanny goat, I cried, my mother said, okay your name is Nan. I felt pretty lonely.

Q: SO WHEN WAS IT THAT YOU FOUND OUT THAT YOUR GRANDPARENTS WERE JEWISH?

A: As long as I've know my grandfather I've known he's Jewish. He's talked about it, he's very open about his- - My mother was close to his mother. She visited his mother a lot. She was very culturally identified as a Jewish women, my grandfather's mother. And she was dead by the time I was born. But my mother said that my grandfather converted to Christianity but I new him as a child he was an Atheist

that's what he was. We had religious discussions about spirituality. My grandmother was supposed to be Presbyterian or Episcopalian, whatever you're supposed to be, she would go to church but he never did. I was aware of it because he looked Jewish so did my mother she looks Jewish pretty hook nose black hair so did my grandfather very large ears he looks just like one of the Jewish men in the pictures.

Q DID THIS MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOU TO THINK YOU TOO WERE PART JEWISH?

A I'm not really sure if it did or not, negative feelings, I feel very pride of having that as part of my ancestry because I have positive feelings towards the Jewish culture and Jewish people. I don't - - I never felt any discrimination personally as a child because I was a blond. I feel discriminated against as a hippie. You know which is a kind of morpheus thing, characteristic, nothing really but I feel discriminated against in that way now as an adult but nothing to do with Judaism in anyway.

Q WERE YOU SENT TO CHURCH IN GERMANY WHEN YOU WERE THERE?

A No, my mother had joined the Friend's meeting in college, Quaker Society of Friends, the Quakers, and I don't think she went to any. She might have gone to some friends organization in Germany but they weren't functioning at that

time and then as soon as we came to American she reunited with the friends community in Philadelphia and I grew up the Quaker meetings and I didn't experience anything but support in the Quaker Community and I joined the meeting when I was quite young and I became a very devote Quaker girl.

Q SO YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANY PRESSURES FROM THE CHURCH WHEN YOU WERE IN GERMANY?

A No, to become a Christian you mean?

Q OR PRACTICE?

A My father is totally Atheist, agnostic, I'm not really sure what my father is really intellectual, new intellectual and his family were rich peasants in czechoslovakia and he was the first to go to the university but he had quite a big library and I know that he secretly saved Nazi documents, books and papers that he wasn't supposed to because the Nazi's had their book burning and the American's came and had their book burning. So he saved - - but I don't know he never- - was in the Church of Vogner, he always went to listen to Vogner every year.

Q WHAT DID HE SAVE THESE DOCUMENTS FOR?

A I don't know why, I never talked to him about any, my brother know about it. He's taken and interest in it.

Q SO WHEN YOU CAME BACK TO THE UNITED STATES YOU UNITED WITH YOU MOTHER'S FAMILY AND, I GUESS, IT TOOK YOU A WHILE TO LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH?

A Yeah, quite a while. I didn't really well my whole first year of school was a blur. The most notable thing that happened to me in first grade, I sat in the very back corner of the classroom. I didn't know a thing that was going on at all and I had to, didn't know how to ask to go to the bathroom. Finally I couldn't hold it in any longer so I urinated in my seat, which to my chagrin of course, too they had to call my mother to bring me clean pants. I don't remember after that the school year was a real blur, I was humiliated. And then we moved. And I went to first grade in Philadelphia. We were in Washington D.C. before then. I went to kindergarten then. I don't remember that we were there very long, my mother said two years I don't think i was more than a year. We moved to Bethlehem which is also a rural setting. A lot of the anti-german sentiment wasn't there in Pennsylvania, dutch country there are a lot of Germans there. I was pretty safe and I went to the rural school and the second grade teacher was very nice to me and she put my desk right next to hers and - -

Q FELT A LITTLE BIT MORE AT HOME.

A I don't think I learned the alphabet until fifth grade.

Q SO IT SOUNDS LIKE ALL YOUR EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, THE WAR AND EVERYTHING HAD A REAL LONG LASTING IMPACT ON YOU.

A Yeah.

Q DID YOU EVER TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH YOUR MOTHER WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD?

A When I talk to her about it she glosses over. She doesn't really want to take about it in any depth. We can't sit down and cry about it together or anything like that.

Q SO IT'S OBVIOUSLY IT'S STILL A LIVING THING WITH YOU?

A Yeah. I guess because when I was little she grew up with a pretty nice childhood where her father particularly was really a great guy. He did a lot for his children for her. He has had a garden, chicken, she had nice clothes they were materially well off. I think, her war experience was more the break up of her marriage and her self-image of a women like that deteriorating. I personally think she's a little crazy from it. I experiences her being. For example she lives alone . She can't live with me. I can't even be in her home with my children for more than an hour at a time. She panics, she can't tolerate any other person around her for any length of time. She can't have her material space disrupted. I think that's pretty sad. I except that in her and we cope. I try to help her as much

as I can. Be happy.

Q DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF ANY OTHER AFFECTS OF THOSE WAR EXPERIENCES YOU HAD IN YOUR LIFE AS AN ADULT?

A I'm going to backtrack a little in your what one of the things that happened to me as a child from living in the bombing. I don't experience this fear so much any more with thunder storms, I guess being in California we don't have that may thunder storms. When I was a child, when thunder came I would scream and hide under the bed and be petrified thinking it was the bombs. I couldn't in my rational mind extinguish that it was mother nature's doing. It especially when we came to America. I don't remember screaming or crying that much when I was really little in Germany all together in bomb shelters but I remember when we came to America the first few years that I would carry on and disturb the family, upset everybody they didn't know how to deal with my fright.

Q DID YOU FIND ANY COMFORT IN YOUR MOTHER'S HELPERS PEOPLE THAT YOUR MOTHER HAD TO HELP RAISE YOU?

A Yeah, I think, the woman that women I remember most, Analisa was her name, she was a very nice girl, took good care of me and I feel fortunate to have had her mothering care loving care, I was little but it wasn't very long just a few years.

Q AND SHE WASN'T ACTING OUT THESE GERMAN CHILD RAISING THINGS?

A No, when was a very, not everyone in Germany is like that lots of nice people there, you know, who are not so controlling. She was a country girl, very nice.

Q DID YOU HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH YOUR FATHER'S FAMILY?

A No.

Q OR ANY OTHER RELATIVES?

A Not his family. I never, I might have met the woman I was named after Orickae, an aunt, his sister. I might have met her as a child but I have no memory at all. The only contact I have is with my mother's family. I don't know if they're anti-semantic element it was from his family. I'm sure he felt the sting of my mother being half Jewish and my mother denies it but I know that it is true. My sister talks about it and I've talked to other family members who talk about it. Part of his rejection of her as a wife was the Nazi influence that came on stronger and stronger during the war and she was an unacceptable partner.

Q SO IT PLAYED A ROLL?

A Oh, yes. I'm sure it did.

Q BESIDES THE ROLL OF HIS NOT GETTING THE ACADEMIC POSITION?

A Yeah. And then how it affects me today I'm not really sure. I'm trying to understand it now. Part of it is being brought up in constant malnourishment and starvation. My teeth are a wreck. I don't want to lose my teeth like my mother. My mother really is addicted to candy and chocolate. I tease her about it a lot. She doesn't even care. I don't eat that at all. I want to keep my body together better than she's done hers. She is pretty good though for 83 she's doing pretty well. But I do have trouble communicating. I always think it's because of German being my first language. I can speak English well I don't have a German accent but in my mind I mix words up and I often don't say exactly what I mean when people quote me back or I hear it and I'm not sure if I'm dyslexic or something but I might have a learning handicap like that also, who knows. My eyes aren't very good. I can't see very well.

Q YOU ATTRIBUTE THAT TO THE FORM OF MALNUTRITION?

A Yes, lack of vitamin C, stress.

Q I REMEMBER YOU SAID BROTH WAS VERY SPECIAL.

A Yes.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER YOU DAILY FOOD?

A Carrots, bread, potatoes, that's about it.

Q DID YOU GET ENOUGH?

A Never.

Q NEVER.

A My mother makes it sound like it was okay but it wasn't okay. But it was happening to everyone so I can't see it wasn't my problem. It was everybody's problem. It still going on around the world.

Q WERE YOU CLOSE WITH YOUR BROTHER?

A Oh, yes.

Q DID THE TWO OF YOU COMFORT EACH OTHER?

A Yes. We were Hansel and Gretel. It was such a strong bond with my brother the when my first husband died in a motorcycle accident when our son was two years old, I said, no way, I'm not going to have an only child. If I had been an only child I would have been really hard time so I got fool-headedly, jumped into another relationship with another man who was interested in me sexually. I was had my mind I wanted another child really bad so I lived with this man for about four years. I have two children with him. Dumb thing to do. It was partly because I was so close to my brother . I have five children now. I divorced him, my second husband then remarried the man I'm with now.

Q YOU HAVE TWO CHILDREN WITH HIM?

A Right. I have two with him.

Q HOW OLD IS YOUR ELDEST?

A Twenty-two. He's almost twenty-three.

Q OH, MY GROWN.

A He's in Los Angeles trying to be a photographer.

Q DO YOU TALK WITH HIM ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

A I have, I think he would like it if I talked more. It's been hard to talk about it. It's easy to talk to you about it because I feel like you kind of know what I'm talking about when I talk to my children or someone else I'm not very good about talking about it. I don't know what to say. I'm trying to - - I have been trying for the last well, almost seven years, eight years be stronger and stronger to be a (Sadoo), have a spiritual practice and part of that discipline is to train your mind to not carry things from the past or imagine things that might happen in the future on a day to day basis. That's how I live pretty much each day, here now as much as I can. In doing this type of thing makes me feel kind of funny dredging up old things.

Q THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

A I know it has benefit.

Q YOU REFERRED TO THE FACT THAT YOU WENT TO THERAPY FOR WHAT I PRESUME - -

A I hurt my back, I broke my back when I was 40. They say you break when your 40. I had from carrying children being a midwife going to births, sleep deprivation and stress and just the unconsciousness in general. I had an

athletic injury. I fell when I was jogging. I dislocated my hip and my sacrum and then ignored it for half a year. I have very high pain tolerance the discomfort doesn't bother me at all. Then I ruptured my disk. I couldn't do anything and I was wearing a back brace for three years. I couldn't drive a car. I laid on the floor. I was in agony. So then I started doing psychotherapy and I've been of course being a midwife the rebirthers grabbed me because of the importance in raising my consciousness, my own experience of births. To understand what I'm doing to other people and helping babies come. So over the years I've been having a lot of rebirthing experience and had contact with many rebirthers and on going I still do workshops a lot with William Everson from Petaluma and other rebirthers who come to give workshops, new age stuff. I do a lot of that it's interesting so I feel like I've connected pretty strongly with my early childhood, emotionally I don't know how accurate it is.

Q IT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE.

A That's right.

Q DO YOU TALK WITH YOUR HUSBAND ABOUT YOUR WAR EXPERIENCE'S

A Well, he came, when I first got together he came with me to Germany to meet my father and to see - - he wanted to

see where I was from. I showed him the house where I grew up, the mountain that had been bombed, the village. He knows what happened to me. He doesn't like to talk to me. He's not a very talkative. He's unusual. He's not very interest in sharing emotional feelings. He falls asleep and is bored. He is not a companion to me in that way but he is pretty stable. He's more emotionally more stable than I am. Consequently we have been able to stay married for about 14 years which is pretty good.

Q YEAH, LET ME ASK YOU IF YOU MIGHT BE TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN AS THEY GET OLDER?

A I would like to more because I see it more startled context then I used to I used to more personalize it. Now I especially, we've had the opportunity to go to Bali a few years ago and before we went to Balize to Central America, to Guatemala so it really perked my interest in what happened in Central American, the politics of it and I understand more of it on a global scale. It helps me before then the personal experience was confused blur of the war in my up bringing in Germany, the good guys, the bad guys. Now I see it more economic, social pressures, etc. And I feel really strongly that the point of youth of people like (Francis Lillapae) who died for the small planet is accurate there is plenty for everyone. That we just need to share.

When you go to a place like Bali where there it is wall to wall people and they all share there is no hunger their people are small but their strong and their happy. And it is possible we can get along. I know we can do it.

Q SO MAYBE YOU CAN TALK ABOUT YOUR IDEAS IN CHILD REARING AS YOU SEE AS DIFFERENT FROM THE GERMANIC ONES.

A Well, I'm not sure where the idea of the crib was invented, probably in Germany, this whole idea started because up until rather recently the family bed ever one-- even George Washington had a family bed. Everyone slept together and even guests who came to visit would sleep in bed with you, a sleep mat something different it wasn't sexual place that we think of like now of the bed as a place where the husband and wife have sexual encounters. Until rather recently like in most tribal cultures you don't have sexual relations in the family household or in the bosom you go off somewhere. And in Germany the people are segregated to separate space and when you are all together your expected to interact, socialize. My mother has one of her problems she has a difficulty being in the same room with other people and not interacting with them. So I've tried to bring up my children all together, sleep in the same bed with them together live all together in the room and so they can quite early in age learn to be themselves in a group and

not feel uncomfortable. It starts with carrying a baby, like in Europe no woman carries her baby on her they have a buggy or there is always a vehicle in between you and your baby. When a baby is born they are wrapped in a receiving blanket and then they are handed to you. I'm not sure exactly how they do that today I'm kind of ignorant and the birthing practice in detail. I know in Germany right now they do very technical medical prenatal care and every woman has at minimum of at least three sonograms besides all the other tests that are known to man. I'm not sure exactly how the birth goes but when I was born the standard practice was to have the woman stay in the hospital for ten days with complete bed rest and a belly binder. The whole ten days the children were in the nursery away from the mother and then brought every four hours for feedings. And this was the way it was done. It created a lot of Nazis. So in many tribal cultures where children are raised to have a more stable personality base this child is born, brought up onto the mother's body, never leaves her body until it can walk away, and it sleeps with them and has constant access to the breast. None of the scheduling stuff which is still going on in America today. Scheduling feeding which is ridiculous it has no biological base at all physiologic base. I think part of my interest in this became because I studied biology

in college and graduate school. Although i have always been interested in art a Lot. I paint and draw. I'd probably be an artist but I couldn't, I wasn't into the night life. I don't like to drink. I'm a teetotaller kind of lady. I didn't fit in the art world at all. I am always interested in nature, flowers and trees and bird watching and so nature girl. I studied biology I think that is something like so I got into biology I was very good at it. So I went to graduate school in botany and studied that. It was real interested in reading literature and at the time I was having my children or just before I had any children, there was the new science of ethology that came the whole idea of bonding and imprinting and that was partly what motivated me to have my second child at home. I was living with my mother at the time. It was really interesting because my first child was born here in San Francisco at a hospital. I had a natural child birth. I was only in the hospital about three hours before I had him it was a pretty easy birth it was real standard the doctor told me what to do they gave me an episiotomy. The nurse took him right back after he was born, weighed him and just finder printed him then gave him to me. I nursed him, after I was stitched, on the delivery table, which I thought was a big deal. They put us in a recovery bed out in the hallway then he went to the nursery

and I went up to a room and we went home the next morning. But my emotional experience was horrible I wondered where is my baby, what's he doing. I had tremendous depravation which was terrible, it brought all the old childhood depravation and meanwhile his father died when he was two and I went through the same thing. When Bill died, my first husband, everyone told me don't let your child see his dead body. Keep the child away. Don't let the child put his faith in what you're doing. Don't let the child participate in what your doing. I listened to them. I have always been sorry that I didn't bring our son to see his body. I did show him where the accident was and explained that all to him. He didn't get to see his body and the reality of it. For me it was such a relief. He had an autopsy because it was a coroner case. They wanted to see him because he died in the road. They wanted to see if he had drugs in him or drinking. So he was gone for about two days, Then I got to see him. It was such a relief to see him after that separation. He was my first lover. We met our freshman year in college. We were together for about ten years. I had a real bonded friendship and after that I just turned to a deaf ear to authority figures. But I felt like the birth life passages and death of my husband I had not been properly guided. So when I was pregnant again I wanted my

younger child to come to the birth. I couldn't do it in the hospital, everybody said, you're crazy, I said, no way I want I him there and so I just did it at home by myself. I was living at home in Pennsylvania with my mother and she just couldn't - - she was totally panicked. She registered me for the hospital. She had any medical friends she had call me and warn me that I was going to die. All these terrible things were going to happen. Of course the baby was born fine. I didn't tear. I didn't bleed to death. Nothing happened. He's alive. And it just spurred me on to question authority, life, which I had been living.

Q YOU HAD THAT BIRTH WITHOUT A MIDWIFE?

A Yeah, nobody would come to help me. There was a really nice midwife in New Jersey. Midwifing in Pennsylvania was illegal at that time. Now in California you can be a nurse midwife, now legally there are lay midwives in Pennsylvania. But in New Jersey there are midwives functioning they were at the birth center in a town near by. I couldn't go to the birthing center and bring my son that was a little to risque. Now if you want to bring your child to birth it is more a standard practice. When I had my third child back in California in Novado we made a video tape of her birth and it was used by the first people in the system who pressured to allow to have children there at the birth it was the

A It does create a problem though because my husband is know quite an authoritarian somehow I think with my first husband dying he was a companion to me my first husband. Then the man that I think, because of my shock of his death and not willing to grieve properly, I started living with another man two weeks after he died, who was an older man, who had been a neighbor of ours, just divorced his wife. He was a nice guy but I was lonely, he was lonely, he was willing to father another child because I wanted another child. We started living together and I think, it was my search for a father and my need for comfort to be with this older man. I learned a lot from him. I certainly didn't want to spend my life with him. He had a lot of problems himself. I couldn't stay married to him. I tried to - - I asked him to leave my house, finally after we were together a half of year, I didn't get pregnant. As soon as I asked him to leave I found out I was pregnant. It was really ironic, it was kind of well - - I started on the treadmill to get an abortion. But I couldn't do it I knew I wanted this baby so I left California and went back and stayed with my mother to have the baby. It was a very painful time for me, I cried a lot. At six months I started grieving for my first husband. I was crying everyday. I started going through whatever you go through with death, separating and I

feel bad for my child . Now he's older. That he had to live through that in me, but I had a great birth, he's a beautiful boy and well I will go back and marry his father and try to do the right thing, get them together. They do have a good relationship. I'm glad that I did that for him. I wanted a daughter really bad. I had two boys. I was young still. I pressured my husband to have another baby. He kind of didn't want one. The he gave me a hard time the whole time I was pregnant. He harassed me about being pregnant again. He had two boys by his previous marriage, he felt that was enough children and he had his own childhood problems that the children evoked in him. It was hard for him being with the children. I love the children. I have children with me all day everyday. That's why my mother was talking about the children farm that's because where I live in the community there always children and I'm like a mother to all of them. I like kids. It doesn't bother me so I kind of made thin inner vow as soon as I could I was going to leave him. I didn't want to stay with him. It's hard for my daughter because she is having trouble establishing a relationship with her real father and I live with a man now who is a little younger than I am. Very powerful man, energetic, but he's also very authoritarian. It's interesting that I get two

could I was going to leave him. I didn't want to stay with him. It's hard for my daughter because she is having trouble establishing a relationship with her real father and I live with a man now who is a little younger than I am. Very powerful man, energetic, but he's also very authoritarian. It's interesting that I get two authoritarian husbands. Yet in principle he agrees with me. When we talk about child rearing, he believes and is trying to raise children who are self-confident and emotionally stable and able to create a better world. He agrees with me and he agrees that we've had a family bed. He lets the children sleep in with us in the room and nurse them along time. He agrees with my dietary and things. But he still doesn't like the results because of course as in tribal cultures when you bring up your children in a permissive fashion. When they get a little older they talk back, they curse at you. They don't talk nicely. They go through this phase before their brain completely develops. Which in tribal cultures parents would deal with it by sending them out in a kid herd where you're left to the peers, be it the parent or some other tribal member, to deal with, discipline them. In our culture we are stuck with them until they grow up. Luckily my two boys they're grown up and I know it is right because they are really fantastic boys. And my

daughter is in the process of, who is not his child. So that's has been really hard because she is bold and stands up for herself and it's painful for him because our next daughter who is 13 she also is quite bold and self-confident she talks. But it's easier for him to take it from her than his step-daughter. And the Germanic aspects of that I guess, I'm like an reaction. I over react maybe that's partly why I don't share my German heritage as much as I might because my anxiety about Nazis. Having grown up with Nazism and feeling what it feels like being in a really repressive police state atmosphere. I feel it really strong in California what a police state it is her. It makes me be a rebel. I'm not really a rebel I guess I am it's hard being a woman being a rebel. You can't really know the social way to lay it out.

Q HOW WAS IT WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO GERMANY?

A When I went back the first time in 1955 it was pretty frightening. Because the war was still really evident. You could still see the bullet bombed walls everywhere. The country hadn't really been rebuilt. I remember I was 14 one of the boys I went to school with his sister and one of the boys in her school had a crush on me. He would call try to see me. He tried - - it was scary for me. American boys hadn't come on to me at all. I didn't know how to handle

it. He invited me to the movies. We went to see a war movie. And it was horrible for me. I couldn't stand it. It showed orphaned children in the bomb scenes. It reminded me of what Darmstadt had looked like. I didn't seem to bother him at all. It was awful for me. I didn't like looking at those pictures and seeing it.

Q THEN YOU WENT BACK AGAIN?

A I went back when I was a junior in college in 1961 to study German better. My German was childish. I studied in Vienna at the art academy. And by then the signs of war were pretty much gone. No one talked about it no one talked about anything to do with the war at all except they survived.

Q WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO GO BACK AND STUDY THERE?

A My family, I just wanted to connect with my family. I wanted to see my father and I wanted to have a relationship with him. I missed him. He was very nice to me then. He's busy but he's a typical German man. He gets up at six in the morning everyday exactly the same every day goes to work by seven comes home. At lunch time, exactly at noon has lunch. Has a coffee break until one, goes back to work comes back at six. Supper at seven, watches the news, goes to bed at nine. Something like that, very rigid life. For me as a child as a visitor I just had to fit into his

with our son when I was pregnant with my second child in the summer of 1971. I went and my father really took time with me then because I guess my son - - he liked him a lot. He was really a beautiful child, Ethan my first born, playful and interested in everything. He also had peculiar habits that made him interesting to be around. And my father spent more time with me then, I guess, because I was older. And I remember bringing the teachings of Don Juan to read when I was in Germany. I looked at everything with different eyes, a different lens. I already had some experience with psychodelics by that time and began to see him through my mothers eyes or imagining him being as my mother had experienced him in their youth. I felt really relief that they had divorced. I felt she was lucky. He was such a bourgeois German man, tied to his routine and work and his life interests were - - so he wasn't very fluid, I don't know, I can't explain it, put it in words what I experienced. For me to see him, relief to see him as a human being off his pedestal with all his bad faults. Just another person, he's my father. Then we got to be friends from then on we were pretty close. My father and I and I helped him die. He wanted me to come when he was ready to die to die. He liked - - He didn't like - - he likes my husband now because he's a physician. On a professional

level they could relate. Also the husband I have right now is fairly independently wealthy and my father being into money, whatever - - he liked that about my husband. I don't participate in a consciousness much myself. I enjoy the benefits of it. It isn't my interest at all but my father like Don and he wanted us to come and be there when was ready to die. So that was nice. It was nice for me to be able to end with him and I'll probably help my mother when she dies.

Q GENEROUS OF YOU.

A My duty.

Q DO YOU HAVE ANY OPINIONS ON THE CURRENT AFFAIRS IN GERMANY?

A Not really. I don't really know what's going on there. I just - - the external, I know from the youths there that everybody is really glad that the wall is coming down and everything that it symbolized. What the future holds, I really don't know. I think Germany right now is one of the places in the world, where there is the greatest interest in learning about the old ways of living, Shamanism that Shemanic practice, many books, Native American books, Native American, I guess Germans have always been interested in indians, like cowboy movies and well now they've been really instrumental in reviving the pride of the native american

places in the world, where there is the greatest interest in learning about the old ways of living, Shamanism that Shamanic practice, many books, Native American books, Native American, I guess Germans have always been interested in indians, like cowboy movies and well now they've been really instrumental in reviving the pride of the native american people here and consequently many of the older people who know the teachings because they've gone to Germany and given money and interests and come back and are beginning to teach the old way to tribal members also to white people, so I feel that Germany - - I feel like - - German in Central Europe no just Germany but Central Europe is the heart of Babylon materialism is to worship the golden cat is there and but it also where it's going to change. Maybe the east meets west is going to come around through the native americans because once you - - what's happened for me for example, learning the native american's cosmology through the - - my living in sub-cultures has made me wise enough to be able to understand Eastern beliefs and be able to read Eastern scriptures and learn about the old ways of Buddhism and Hinduism and (Pree), which is also a Shamanic practice and - - I know that's happening in Germany that's why the wall is coming down. I'd like to go -- I would like to have my book be translated into German. The book that I wrote

about child birth is called, ARTEMIS SPEAKS, because Artemis and Apollo were twins born, and Artemis is the goddess of child birth and Apollo he is the god of medicine. They both deal with birth in different ways and Artemis is the -- she's also the goddess of woods and goddess of little baby animals and her way of -- her knowledge about birth has been dead. Now it's been revived by the strong home birth movement. In just in herbalism, use of herbs. So the book that I got together it's called ARTEMIS SPEAKS, about natural child birth and it's a collection of material, handouts that I've written and other people, friends from up and down the coast about how not to get in the hands of Apollo if you want to have a natural birth. I think, in Germany in their women would particularly like it. It's just simple things that have been kept alive by German women as long as anyone the herbal knowledge is really strong in Germany but it is not applied in child birth very much.

Q YOU HAVE THAT AMBITION?

A A little bit. I'm not really ambitious but I would like to. It would be nice. I'm too old. If I were younger I would go there and travel and talk and do workshops and things like that. I have to wait to go through menopause, then I will do it. I am almost 50, so it's coming.

Bali, where the Balinese look at us with pity, were (cathless). They think we have no history, no roots. I think we Americans are displaced and, I think, that the war definitely stirred that all up more so that our traditions are all messed up and makes us crazy, a little crazy not to have that.

Q WHEN AND HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH LEARNING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST WHEN YOU GOT OLDER?

A Well my earliest memory was that Life Magazine special. I remember seeing that, maybe as a matter of fact I still have it in my possession, my brother and I pouring over those pictures of all the bones and skulls and teeth and hair of people, the Auschwitz, and the other places that were in Life Magazine special when I was maybe in fourth grade, fifth grade. I think, it was probably good for me to see that because I couldn't articulate the way, I would - - My mother certainly didn't talk to us about it in any depth, but it helped me understand where I came from, why I was in America. I think, I did a little better in school after that.

Q AS YOU WERE GROWING UP, DID YOU RELATE TO THAT HISTORY AS A PARTLY JEWISH PERSON YOURSELF?

A Yes. Well you know in school how kids are. They always - - I was a curiosity anyway because I travelled and

no one else had ever been anywhere or having a little bit of Jewish in your background makes you a curiosity. I didn't experience any negativity from it.

Q CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD OR STATEMENT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?

A Well, I feel one of the things, one of the difficulties that I'm experiencing personally right now which relates to the war, I think, I hold back a lot because of my fears and anxieties of being displaced and homeless and so I have a constant fear that if I do something wrong I won't have a home and of course the way I'm coping with that is by doing spiritual practice. Because they say that you can't have a home. You can't own anything if you are going to be a spiritual person. So if I - - the more I try to blend in with that I have a set feeling of relief. It's all right, I'm not supposed to anyway and you're not supposed to have a family, own things or be attached in anyway but I've wanted to - - there's a part of me that wants that stability so that I feel I need it in order to - - Like this woman I was telling you about, who's mentally ill, she's not mentally ill just incapacitated, who has two little children and they are trying to take her children away. I would like to be able to take her in on the land where I live. I would like to be able to help more people. I've helped people, a lot

of people into my home but it's never enough. I know that's part of my war mentality. I hope I will work that out some how. It makes me think of what is happening right now in Israel with the Jewish people who are trying to make a life for themselves, who are looking for the promise land and I just - - I feel we're in the promise land. There is no place to go. We're home already and we have to put our roots down where we are and be brothers and sisters to everyone. There is plenty for everyone. I just see us as hoarding everything, our possessions. Especially the Jewish community. That's one of the reasons I don't belong to Friends anymore because Quaker are like that. Also a lot of older Quakers they don't - - they're pretty materialistic. Not as bad as many Americans but just - - I'm reacting again.

Q PROBLEMS OF HUMANITY.

A Yeah, right. So it's hard for me. It's hard for me to relate to my Jewish ancestry in a positive way right now because I don't like what's happening in Israel very well. The Jewish nation is, we're selling the guns to everyone else in the world. We are making all the mess because there is so many Jewish business men who want to make money. There is so much profit in selling arms. It's all so covert and hidden. We don't see the roots of it. I don't know, I

have a lot of confusing thoughts like that. I probably don't have too much more to say.

Q JUST IN MY NOTES YOU MADE SOME ALLUSIONS TO RELIGIOUS POINTS OF VIEW, PART SPIRITUAL THINGS. I GATHER IT'S NOT FROM ANY ORGANIZED RELIGION?

A No. I have been really lucky to have contact with really strong spiritual teachers, a native American from the east. I have a teacher now who comes once or twice a year to America, a (arevadic) scholar, he's really big about being non-sectarian. I'm trying to follow all paths and I do. I like all holidays and all spiritual practices. I try to do in my home every holiday that comes by. I encourage my children to celebrate everyone. We celebrate all the Jewish holidays that I can, all the Christian holiday, all the Pagan holidays. I try to do it all. To make life a celebration as much as possible, every moon cycle, to try to tune ourselves with nature. It's hard because I'm like a curiosity. I've been called a witch lots of times. It makes me - - at first when I was called that I have things German ideas about the witches from the fairy tales who are always bad and they look ugly, negative hags. Then to have people - - the first time that ever happened to me it was in child birth class. A guy came up to me afterwards, "you're what they call a witch, Nan." I thought, oh, my God,

what's he talking about. But I have paid attention I can understand why that is. Even little children call me a witch at school sometimes. Then I think, oh, did their parents tell them that. It is negative, but I'm trying to make a positive thing of it. A lot of women are facing that same kind of thing. It's kind of scary because being from Germany women like me were burned and I'm in the position where I could be put in jail for speaking out and for giving people -- I give free advice on the phone, medical advice. I help people in child birth. In situations where I could be accused of practicing medicine. I try not to practice medicine, I'm not interested in practicing medicine. I don't want to practice medicine or masquerade a medical person at all. I come from a family and have background and have the knowledge -- I don't believe you should buy knowledge. It shouldn't be for sale, it should be free. I feel real strongly about that. So I am very open and people ask me anything. I will tell you and that threatens people because many people make their living off of knowledge even the simplest things. I help a large community of woman stay out of the system, the medical system. I don't get-- the midwife's job is the birth attendant's job is to get the people on the treadmill of the medical system you to your doctor monthly check-ups and all of that, you're on the

treadmill in the system. I nip it right in the bud. I don't believe in doing that. I think it is terrible and as my knowledge grows and my confidence, my vision is right.

I get more and more negativity coming to me. It's hard not to be afraid, I think that's why coming here it stirs it up in me. It's pretty close for me, people trying to get me in jail right now, in my home community. So it's pretty real.

Q YES, WELL THANK YOU ALL THE MORE FOR COMING AND DOING THIS AND I DON'T KNOW LIKE YOU SAY. HAVE YOU ANY OTHER MESSAGES OR STATEMENTS OR PIECE OF INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD? THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS INTERVIEW.

A Thank you for doing this.

Q ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE SITUATION.

A Yeah. I was really anticipating doing this interview, new image of myself holocaust survivor. I told my husband and he said, what, I said, I lived through it, I was there, right.

Q ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

A Right on.

Q YOU HAVE THE TAPE TO PROVE IT.

A I think it is great what you are doing.

Q THANK YOU AGAIN FOR DOING THIS.

A Thank you. It's good for my mother, too.

Q YES, AND I REALLY APPRECIATE - -

A Yeah. I am. It's good for her.

Q She's getting us there.

A She's much more ambitious than I am. It's good for her.