

Interview with KARL LYON
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Interviewer:
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Q IT'S FEBRUARY 26, 1991, AND WE'RE AT THE
HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. WE'LL BE TALKING TO KARL
LYON. THE SECONDS ARE LODIE MONARCH AND JUDY WELCH, JOHN
ANGEL GRANT ON CAMERA. I'M ANN FIBELMAN.

KARL, I THINK WHAT I'LL DO IS START AT THE
VERY BEGINNING AND JUST START WITH YOUR NAME AND WHERE YOU
WERE BORN AND WHEN. AND THEN WE'LL GO CHRONOLOGICALLY
THROUGH YOUR LIFE AND YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY.

A Okay.

Q ALL RIGHT. AND IF AT ANY TIME THERE ARE
THINGS YOU WANT TO ADD OR SUBTRACT, YOU CAN TELL US AND YOU
CAN ADD THEM OR TELLING US TO TAKE IT OUT.

A Okay.

Q SO LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING. IF WOULD
YOU GIVE US YOUR NAME, WHERE YOU WERE BORN, WHEN?

A I'm Karl David Lyon. I was born in Germany
in a little town by the name Buel, Buel in the state of
(Bodenweis) in southern Germany, south western Germany
about ten miles from the Rhine from the French boarder.
And I was born in 1922. And I lived there until 1937.

Now, at that time I was in high school. It

was called the (Rialgonusium) in our little town. I lived with my family, my father. My mother died when I was six years old. And two years later, my father remarried. And my father's name for sake of the record is Alfred Lyon. My mother's name is (Ermina) Lyon. And then my father remarried Joan Lyon and Joan Lyon is still living. She's 95 years old, and she lives here in San Francisco. And it wouldn't be a bad idea in you got her oral history too.

Q WHAT ABOUT OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS? THE SISTERS, BROTHERS.

A I have one brother by the name of Martin, and he also -- he's nine years younger than I am, and he also lives here in San Francisco.

Q KARL, COULD YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LIFE BETWEEN '22 AND '37 WHAT YOUR DAILY LIFE WAS LIKE, SCHOOL, JUDAISM, FIRST SIGNS OF HITLER. GIVE US A FEEL FOR WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE.

A As to Judaism, we were living in a very small Jewish community only about 70 people, very small community. But we had our own synagogue which was about 100 years old or so. And I was the first boy in about 13 years to become bar mitzvah in 1935. That's how small the community was. There were hardly any Jewish children.

There were two girls who were little bit older than I, and I still remember what happened to their

family. Their father was decorated soldier in World War I on the German side, very proud of his medals. I still can picture them hanging on the wall in the frame in his house. He was determined never to leave Germany. And he never did. And he and his wife and both girls ended up in Auschwitz.

And then was the next one closest to my age was a boy about a year and a half younger than I am. And all I know about him is that his family and he immigrated to Chile. And that's where he is now as far as I know. So that was -- those were my contemporaries among the -- in the Jewish community. I went to grade school, and I went to high school.

While I was going to school, the Jewish education consisted of what in our situation was practically private tutoring because there was so few of us and in different age groups that our cantor who was our religious school teacher taught us practically individually. And I still remember him. He was great big fat man with a tremendous voice.

And I always was scared to death on Yom Kippur that during the (mussif) services when the (shatiat sibbor) kneels down and prostrates himself. And I always was very much afraid for him because he was such a very heavy copulent man. He had to hold onto the (beamer) when

he prostrated himself and always when he got up. And I was always afraid he would not be able to get up. So I always breathed a sigh of relief when he was able to make it.

I still have some notes that he wrote for me in a beautiful handwriting where he wrote some of the lines from (Perka Avode) both in Hebrew and then in the German translation. And I just not too long ago I came across them when I was rummaging through my papers. So this was the Jewish education.

Of course, as I said I was bar mitzvahed in 1935. And there was an incident that I might relate about six weeks before or four weeks before my bar mitzvah, my synagogue was desecrated and broken into. I saw it afterwards. And it made tremendous impression on me. I felt that this is what Jerusalem thought the temple must have looked like during (antishbov) when it was destroyed.

Because inside the synagogue -- of course, the most dramatic thing that you see was the curtain from the (orn curish) torn off and some of the (sifratore) taken out. There were prayer books and (telisium) all over and just generally a mess. And then going outside the synagogue in a field not far -- just about half a block away from the synagogue, there was a muddy field.

It had rained that night. And in that field, the arsonist and he was an arsonist -- who had broken into

the synagogue had piled up several (sifrator) and prayer books and other prayer paraphernalia and had set fire to them. And he tried to burn them. But it rained that night which put the fire out before everything was burned up. But it made a tremendous impression on me. And this happened just before my bar mitzvah.

Now, the man who perpetrated this crime figures into the story a little bit later. So don't let me forget to come back to it.

Q ALL RIGHT. TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT REGULAR SCHOOL AND WHAT IT WAS LIKE.

A All right. The Nazis came to power in 1933, January 30th. And the time frame is that I left in June 19367. So during all this time, I was attending school which became quite an ordeal after a while. Eventual each of us of the Jewish children had to sit in the back of the room at a desk by ourselves. Our contacts with the non Jewish children became less and less. We were, of course, verbally abused, ridiculed, and made fun of, and cursed.

You know, all the German children had to join the Hitler youth. It was mandatory. The boys joined the Hitler youth. The girls joined the girls' Nazi organization. And many times during the school year the German boys came to school in their Nazi uniform, the brown uniform. And in their belts they carried daggers. And on

those daggers was inscribed the words blood and honor. (Blude and air.) So you can imagine what sort of a feeling of security we had as rather defenseless Jewish children.

We were constantly afraid that something would happen to us particularly during gym classes when there was a lot of physical activity. For example, when we were jogging or flung a group constantly afraid that we'd be tripped and knocked over. That's just a mildest part of it, okay? But there was constant fear of physical attack. So this is what we had to live with.

I think I just had maybe one or two friends. In other words, non Jewish boys who were still decent and with whom I could feel I could be friends. Teachers -- there were also one or two that were decent, but perhaps there were more. Although I didn't know it. You see, in 1963, I took -- I took my one and only trip back to my home town.

Actually, it was not planned. I had to go to Switzerland. And while I was there, I had a bit of time open; so I rented a car and drove into Germany. And while I was there, I saw only very few people. I just simply didn't want to see anybody except just a few people. One was a lady who was a wonderful friend. She was an employee of my father's. My father had a retail shoe store. And she worked for him until the very end and kept in contact

with us for many years afterwards.

And I visited her, and she went around with me while I took a look at the town and while I went to the cemetery to visit my mother's grave. There were two other people whom I went to see. One was a former teacher, this one teacher whom I felt was a friend. And he was an old man by then, and he said to me something that I never knew.

He said, "You know, we kept you in the school, in the high school long after it was illegal for Jewish children to remain in the school. It was an unwritten understanding we would keep you in the school." And I was in that school until about April, 1937. And two months after that, I left. So I must say this to the credit of this teacher and his associates that this was a kind of passive resistance to Nazi orders.

I might interject too that the only other person whom I went to see on that visit in 1963 was the only surviving Jewish man in the little town. His name was (weil), and that was the funniest visit. Funny in the sense of peculiar. He had been married to a non Jew, to a German. And he survived in Germany throughout the war. And it was the fact that he was intermarried probably saved him. I think he was incarcerated for some period of time, but I'm not sure. But I got the feeling -- and then after the war he went back from wherever he was he went back to

(buel) and lived there.

But I got the feeling that he was a very lonely man, that he was cut off and isolated from both Jewish life as well as German life. That's the impression from the way he talked, from what he said and so on. He was not very enthusiastic about anything.

And all the time that the half hour or so that I spent at his house, I sat across the table from him. And while I was talking to him, he kept looking straight over my head at the television set that was on. And he was watching television while we were talking. So obviously he didn't have very much interest in my visit either. Struck me very peculiarly.

Those are the only people that I went back to -- that I saw on that visit. So this was the situation in our school. My parents didn't know what to do. My father still had his shoe business. All our people have a certain amount of inertia and lethargy. They can't get themselves to pull up stakes, pull up their roots very easily. So my father didn't do very much by way of getting out of Germany. Although the handwriting was on the wall.

And this I remember very clearly on April 1st, 1933, just two months after the Nazis came to power, was a national day of boycott against all Jewish establishments and against Jewish professionals and

everything Jewish that the Nazis decreed. And all over Germany was a boycott. And in front of my father's little store, there were storm troopers posted. There was graffiti scrawled all over the wall and the show windows, you know, "Jew, don't buy from Jews. Defend yourself against the Jews" and all that.

In many parts of Germany there was violence against Jewish persons and property, but thank goodness there was no violence so far as our family was concerned in my father's store. All that though, of course, when this happened my father closed the store, and we stayed away from it that day. But then, you know, the business went down hill, of course.

My father had had that business for at that time for 13 years. I think he started it up in 1920, and he built it up to be the pretty much the best shoe store, retail shoe store at the town. And I had quite a following from people in neighboring communities. Because he used to be a traveling salesman before World War I. And so he got to know everybody in the neighboring communities. So when he started his own business, people came to him.

So many times when people were afraid to patronize a Jewish store, they would come in the back way through the back entrance and come and see my father and buy their shoes from him. And then leave by way of the

back entrance.

And I remember one time my father was talking with a non Jewish acquaintance and said, "Well, what are we going to do? We have no future here. What are we going doing with this boy?" pointing at me. So the German man said, "Why don't you send him over to Strasbourg and Elsa Lorraine, France and have him attend the university in Strasbourg?" So my father said, "Well, that's easier said than done."

But I'm sure glad he didn't do that. If he had, I would have been caught in the Nazi onslaught when the Nazis entered France, and I would have been in Auschwitz too.

So my father had a brother in Kansas City, Missouri who was an executive of a fur company. They made their own fur coats and sold their own fur coats, a very fine store. And besides my uncle, there were also some other relatives in Kansas City. And my uncle took steps to get me an immigration visa to come to the United States. And my parents took me to Hamburg and put me on a ship, and that's how I left Germany.

Q WHAT WAS THE DATE?

A The date, I left Germany I think it was June 17. A arrived in the United States on June 24, 1937. It was an American ship. The name of the ship the S.S.

Washington of the United States lines. And I breathed a sigh of relief as soon as I stepped on board that ship. Because I was no longer in Germany. But my parents -- so I came to Kansas City, Missouri, and the first thing I did that summer is take some English lessons. I had taken some English lessons in Germany before; so I knew a little bit of English but not much.

So I took some more private English lessons which my uncle and aunt arranged in Kansas City. And the first book that I read was a history of the United States. And the first thing I memorized was the list of all of the presidents and their terms of office. And then I entered high school at Southwest High School in Kansas City. And that's where I graduated two years later in 1939.

But my parents -- it took a little longer. As I said, my father still had his business, but then in the latter part of 1938, he was already taking steps to get rid of his business which he was an loud to sell freely. He had to have a receive ear pointed by the Nazi authorities who executed the sale. They sold it to somebody for a song, of course.

But before my parents and brother were able to get out, Kristallnacht occurred on the 10th of November, 1938. And my father together with all the Jewish men in all of Germany actually was thrown into a concentration

camp. This was Dachau.

My mother still -- of course, I was in this country already by then. But my mother still telling the story that morning she had a telephone call from the woman who was working for us in the store and had gone there and opened up the store. And she said that Mr. Lyon should come to the store right away. And she wouldn't tell my mother why. So my mother say why is it the police?

The woman said yes. Well, you can't get away from them; so my father went to the store, and the policeman was a local policeman, a decent sort of character. But he took him in to the local jail where all the other Jews were. And they were then transported to Baden Baden which is right near there. And from there they were transported Dachau. He stayed in Dachau until sometime in January when they let him go.

At that time the policy of the German government was not to annihilate us. It was not a policy of extermination yet. At that time their idea was to drive us out, to terrorize us, to destroy our livelihood, to take everything away from us, and to drive us out. As a matter of fact, I had ten marks on me when I left Germany which at that time was exactly \$4.00.

My parents' efforts to leave Germany had started shortly a few months before kristallnacht. And

here I ran across an interesting bit of history quite by accident. I have a second cousin in Kansas City Missouri who's a federal judge. He was appointed by Jimmy Carter. When he was appointed, I wrote to him and congratulated him. And he wrote back and said, "I've been meaning to write to you because some time ago I was doing some research at the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, and quite by accident I ran across a file in a box of files that had your father's name on it. So it contains correspondence concerning your family."

So he suggested that I write to the Truman Library and get photo copies of it which I did, and I have those photocopies at home now. You see, my relatives in Kansas City knew Harry Truman, and they turned to him for assistance to speed up the immigration process for my family because they were on a waiting list in accordance with our immigration policy at that time. And Truman wanted to help to shortcut the waiting period. And it was not successful.

The counsel wrote back to him and said, "Sorry, but it will take at least four or five years before we can reach these people." So Truman wrote back to our relatives and said, "Tell your relatives in Germany to get out of Germany as quickly as they can and go anywhere to any neutral country and wait there until they can get an

immigration visa to the United States." And specifically he suggested Cuba.

And my relatives in Kansas City moved away. They had to put up a thousand dollar deposit with the Cuban government to guarantee that my family would not stay there permanently. And my parents were able to go to Cuba. And they left Germany in April 1939. Mind you, the war started September 1st; so the skin of their teeth. And they went to Cuba, and they lived there for 13 months. And then their number came up, and they were able to come into this country.

In fact, they landed in Miami on May 10, 1940, and I know that date for another reason because that was the date when the shooting war started in Europe. Before that, it was what they call the phony war. It was relatively quiet. But on May 10, 1940, the Germans invaded Holland and Belgium and France and took over in short order. So that was the day when my parents came to the United States.

Now, when I say they got out by the skin of their teeth, that's true in another respect. Because about one month after they went to Havana, Cuba closed its doors. And another few weeks after that, the famous or infamous "St. Louis" came into Havana harbor and tried to unload its cargo of over 900 Jewish refugees. You know the story. It

was made into the a movie "The Voyage of the Dammed."

Well, my parents saw that ship in the harbor. In fact, my father and a cousin of his rented a little row boat and rowed around the ship to see if they could see anybody on the ship that they knew, and sure enough my father saw somebody who was a business acquaintance of his. And as you know, the ship then -- the people were not allowed to land, and the ship went anchor and sailed up and down the east coast and was not allowed to land in the United States either thanks to (Cardel Hall,) the secretary of state. And it sailed back to Europe.

And those people who landed in England were safe, but those who were taken in by France and Holland and Belgium eventually became victims of the Nazis and most of them perished in Poland. So my parents were lucky in that respect too. And then they came to Kansas City, and I had been living my uncle up to that point. I graduated from high school in 1939. And they came in 1940. So then I went to live with them.

And at that time, I was working at the First National Bank in Kansas City. This was after high school. And I was going to night school taking classes at the junior college and at Kansas City University, just all kinds of different classes just to get some college credit. I had to work because I had to help support my family. And

that's where I made my first acquaintance with San Francisco.

Because I think it was in 1941 I was taking some courses also at the American Institute of Banking which is the school for bank employees. It's a national sort of organization still in existence. And my bank had offered a prize for its employee who would get the best grades in taking courses at school. And I happened to win that prize. And the prize was the magnificent sum of \$125 which was to defray the expenses of coming to San Francisco to coming to the national convention of the American Institute of Banking.

And I'll tell you in those days this \$125 paid for the whole trip and even bought a hat with it or something. And that's how I came to San Francisco, stayed at the St. Francis hotel for five glorious days and decided I like this town. Eventually I'm going to come here.

So then in November, 1942, I was drafted into the army. I had wanted to enlist, but since I was still technically an enemy alien, the army wouldn't allow me to enlist. However, they drafted me. And then about four months or so after I was drafted, I became a citizen. I became a citizen in Paris. This is Paris, Texas, not Paris, France. Since I was a soldier, all the formalities that you have to go through when you become a citizen were

waived. I didn't have to take any examination. I didn't have to have two witnesses to attest to my good character, nothing like that. All I had to do was walk into federal court in Paris, Texas and raise my right hand and be sworn in. So I became a citizen on April 19, 1943.

And there's another coincidence which I found with that many years later. On that very day is when the Warsaw ghetto uprising started April 19, 1943. Well, we're up to my getting into the army. As soon as my basic training was over which was in Texas, I was in the artillery in the survey section. And as soon as my basic training was over, I was promoted to corporal which was fine.

And then, however, I was given the opportunity to go to college to enter the army specialize training program it was called. We were picked to be given engineering training, college training, regular college training but more compressed and speeded up. And I could -- I was eligible to go into that if I gave up my stripes, my corporalship. I don't know why they didn't let me keep it, but anyway. So I said sure, give it up. So I became a private again. And I went to college at Oklahoma A&M College in Stillwater, Oklahoma. There they had very short terms. Three months was a term. And I was there for three terms.

And then the army broke up the entire program and sent us back to the combat troops. And I landed back in the artillery. But unfortunately I landed back in a division -- 103rd division which had no openings as far as their ratings, their ranks were concerned for promotion. They had a full complement of officers and non commissioned officers. So it took me another year before I made corporal back. And I made that back in Europe.

Now, in September or October 1944 we went to Europe on a troop ship from New York. And after about a week or ten days on the water, we landed in Marseille. Marseille had just been captured about four weeks or so before that. And we went into a staging area, and from there when the whole division was assembled, we drove north through the Rowen Valley up to (Elsa Lorraine.) And there in the (Voige) mountains near the little town of (San Diay) we got into combat.

And I was in the fire direction center of my artillery battalion for part of the time that I was there. And another part of the time I was there, I was an artillery forward observer. That means you go up to the front when the infantry wants to get artillery fire to help out. You send the messages back and direct the fire. Then we went through the (Voige) mountains. And this is the first time I understand that an invading airplane had

crossed the (Voige) mountains since the days of Julius Cesar. And then we went north toward Elsa Lorraine. And we entered Germany.

But then we had to withdraw. And we were -- came back oh, no wait. No. Before we did that, at one point I was ten miles away from my home town, right across the Rhine on the other side. And I remember spending a night under artillery bombardment in a (Margino) line bunker in a little town by the name of (Sessinhein) which is about ten miles away from where I was born. And at that time the Germans were counter attacking on the west side of the Rhine. And we had to retreat just a bit, about ten, 20 miles and wait it out.

It was a cold night in January in 1945. My wife was in (Bergan), Belgium at that time. Of course, not that I knew. Then as I started to say, we went up north and went across the German boarder into the (Siegfried) line which is their defensive line for the formations. And then the Battle of the Bulge started. And we were sent -- the Battle of the Bulge did not take place where we were, this big counter attack. This last gasp counter attack of the Germans, that it was further north from where we were.

But since other troops had to be rushed into the area of the Battle of the Bulge, we had to be moved into another sector of the front in order to hold that

area. And that was near (Sarbrookin) where we were sent to. And we were there for a while until the Battle of the Bulge was won. And then we came back into Elsa Lorraine. And on March 15 the last offensive started.

And we went -- we drove up north, broke through the Siegfried line at exactly the same place where we came in once before. And from there went through, spent some time on the western side of the Rhine River, and then we drove across the Rhine at (Manheim Ludrigsofen.) Ludrigsofen was the place where the I.G. fireman industries was. (Manheim) and (Ludrigsov) were a pile of rubble, both cities at that time. And then we were in -- for a while we were in a wooded area. And we were behind the lines for a short period of time in the mountains.

The mountain areas is called the (Odenwalden), and the name of the little town was (Diceberg.) And I still remember being there because that's where I was when the news came that Franklin Roosevelt had died which of course affected all of us at that time. And that was in April, '45. But before that, let's me back track a bit.

I had a very interesting experience, actually two that I'd like to tell you. One was started out in Marseille when we were in Marseille, I went to at bar at one time and bought a bottle of French wine. I think was

Vermouth and took it with me. And every morning I wrapped it up in my bed roll, my sleeping bag to keep safe. Every evening I unrolled it and set it next to me, never opened. When we got close to the German boarder, I was in the battalion headquarters; so I said to the battalion commander, "Colonel, when we get to the German boarder, I want to shoot the first shell across the German boarder."

He says, "Okay." So one night we were given our fire missions from division artillery. And one of these fire missions just went across the German boarder. I said, "Colonel, remember what you promised me?"

He says, "Okay. Take a jeep, go to battery and shoot the first round off at ten o'clock." So that's what I did. And I shot that first round across the German boarder of my division. And then took the jeep back to our battalion headquarters and then that night we killed that bottle of wine which I had safeguarded for several months, see, in my bed roll. That's the first little episode I wanted to tell you.

Another one has Jewish significance. On (pesa) 1945 we were still on the west side of the Rhine in an area near Worms. Worms is an old city, and it's a city where (Rasheeth) used to live. And we were in the country side. Now, for the first Sedel night, they collected all the Jewish soldiers from my division, the division is 15

thousand men. And they collected all the Jewish shoulders which was several hundred dollars maybe five hundred men or so. And they brought us into one little town. I don't know the name of it into a big beer hall. And I still remember all the windows were blacked out you know war time. And here we were. We filled this beer hall, all Jewish soldiers with steel helmets on, full battle dress, guns on our shoulders, and we were celebrating Seder. We didn't have a rabbi. Some of the men simply performed the ritual. But the non Jewish chaplains of our division did their best to get us kosher wine, get us matzo, get us everything we needed for Seder. And there we celebrated Seder on German soil.

In 1985 when Gloria and I went to Israel, we went there for the purpose of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the victory over the Nazis. And the motto, the slogan was a (nack nu kan,) we are here. And that's exactly what also applied to that Seder celebration on German soil. In April 1945 when the Nazis were just about to give up the ghost.

Q I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS AT THAT POINT. I'D LIKE TO GO BACK AND DO A LITTLE CATCH-UP WORK. BECAUSE YOUR STORY IS RICH, AND IT BROUGHT UP SOME QUESTIONS THAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW. ONE WAS WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE A JEW, AN AMERICAN IN THE AMERICAN ARMY GOING BACK TO GERMANY

FIGHTING THE GERMANS. I ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK MY FATHER THAT QUESTION; SO I'M ASKING YOU THAT QUESTION INSTEAD.

A Well, these two little episodes that I just told you are part of the answer. I felt that I knew what I was fighting for. This was one of the few just wars if you can call it that. And I do not think I was alone in feeling that. My non Jewish fellow soldiers I think felt that way too. But I felt especially that way being a Jew and being from Germany.

It's funny I encounter Germans over there, I didn't want to let on that I was from Germany. Maybe this was sort of a self-imposed security device maybe. But I just didn't want to let them know that. I was told them -- of course I spoke German, to them, but I always told them that I learned German in American schools. We have good schools in America you see.

Q WHY DIDN'T YOU WANT THEM TO KNOW?

A As I said I think it was sort of a self imposed security device. I didn't feel safe somehow letting them know that. Maybe it's not particularly rational. I don't know. There were many Jewish soldiers who are liberated concentration camps. It's very strange, but I never ran across any of the concentration camps while I was there. I found out later that I was very near some of them. In the (Voige) mountains there's a terrible camp,

and I was within two or three miles of that as we drove through the mountains. In Bavaria I was very close to several camps. But I never got into any of them. Now, I did see some people know.

As we drove -- we went through southern Germany, Baden, (retinberg), Bavaria, and then from Bavaria we went south into the western part of Austria into the Austrian Alps. First into the Bavarian Alps and then to the Austrian Alps. And we ended the war on top of the (branel) Pass. That's where we were when the war ended. But as we drove up the highway, up into the Bavarian Alps, I saw many people, mostly men -- I don't remember seeing any women -- walking back down the road from the mountains. In prison clothing, striped clothing and what they still had. And what impressed me most was the way they were walking. They were staggering. They were walking in twos and threes and fours holding on to each other, supporting each other and just sort of going one foot at a time, just sort of staggering down the road looking terrible and haggard, of course.

And not that I had any definite knowledge of the holocaust at that time, but I knew just from looking at them, these were Jews in concentration camps. I mean I had a good inkling of what a concentration camp was. My father was in one. And so, of course, we were still in combat.

And we were in our jeep driving up the road with our -- with guns of or artillery battalion. And so we couldn't stop and even talk to them. But this is -- the one contact one time that I saw concentration camp inmates, they had been released shortly before.

Now, interestingly enough, a friend of mine lives in Santa Rosa is a professor at Sonoma State University, professor Paul (Banco.). He was a prisoner at that time in Dachau. And from Dachau they transferred him to one or two other concentration camps in that area. And finally they put him -- I believe they put him on a train, him and hundreds of others, thousands of others, and drove them up to -- up the Bavarian Alps to a place called (Mittenval) which I've been through.

And in (mittenval) we took them out of the train and they were by the side of the road. And their S.S. Carts took over. So he and all the others started walking back down from the mountain back down into the plane. And that was the group that I saw.

Q HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SAW THOSE PEOPLE?

A Terrible. Because I could just imagine what they might have gone through. Actually, I couldn't imagine it, but you have an idea.

Q WHAT DID YOU WANT TO DO?

A Well, I wanted to help them, but I was stuck

in my unit, and we were on the move.

Q KARL, WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE
HOLOCAUST? DO YOU REMEMBER?

A It was an a particular time. You find this
sort of thing out very slowly in bits and pieces. And you
put the picture together. I mean I knew what the Nazis
were doing to the Jews, but not that there was a systematic
organized industrial type program of extermination. That I
didn't know until later. I had sort of an interesting
little episodes come back to mind.

After the war ended which was May 8, 1945, we
were occupation troops for a little while in Austria near
Innsbruck. In fact, since I spoke German my battalion
commander put me in charge of a couple of Austrian towns.
So I reinstated civil government there, appointed a
mayor, and reactivated the fire department, that sort of
stuff. And generally had a good time in that respect.

But at one time a few of us took off for a
day and took a trip to Munich. And something that made
quite an impression on me. In Munich there's a monument
called the (Felden Holland.) It means the hall of the
German war lords. But it's a monument. And it's
historically important because that was the place where
Hitler had his push in 1923. That's where he tried to take
over the government of Bavaria. And that's where he

marched through the streets and right by the (Felden) hour, the police line stopped him. They fired into him and several of the Nazis got killed. So this monument became very holy to the Nazis; right?

Well, I saw that monument, and somebody had scrawled on it with white paint in letters a foot high ("Ich shama mickets deutschman.") It means, "I'm ashamed I'm a German." And the man signed his name to it because I took a picture of that. So maybe there's some good people too or some people who saw the light.

I also took a trip to (Bartous) Garden where Hitler's home was, his he is state. And the eagle's nest on top of the mountain. That was quite amazing. You first come to his estate about 20 buildings. And that area had one bombing raid. I think the R.A.F. bombed it. And every one of the 20 buildings on the estate had a direct hit including hit letters own personal house. It's all gutted. It was pretty accurate bombing.

Now, to get up to the eagle's nest, you drive up there. It's a five mile road, beautiful road but it's not touched. It just goes around the mountain. And when you get up to the top, there's a big packing area where you park your vehicles. And then there's a big gate, and you walk into that, and there's an elevator that takes you up the last couple hundred feet up to the top.

However, the electricity was out, the elevator was not running. So we had to climb up the last couple hundred feet like mountain goats. And here is where the democratic nature of our system became very visible to me. Because here I was climbing up this very steep incline and brigadier general was climbing upright next to me. So very democratic.

But up there the eagle's nest was not touched, was not destroyed, is still in existence. And what impressed me was the semicircular main room with picture windows all around, 180 degrees with a gorgeous view of the mountains. But what I was thinking when I was there is that how awful the European politicians and statesmen must have felt who were trying to negotiate with Hitler and whom he had come there and how lost they must feel to be in this top of this mountain with the Nazi soldiers around them and nothing else and have this maniac scream at them. That's the mental picture that ran through my mind when I was there.

Q I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS THAT I WANT TO GO BACK AND DO A LITTLE CATCH UP. YOU HAD MENTIONED WHEN ROOSEVELT DIED THAT EVERYONE WAS VERY AFFECTED BY THAT. TELL ME ABOUT THAT.

A Well, we were in this town, and we occupied the houses all along one residential street. It was a much

better staying there in some real beds, much, much better than fox holes. And our battering commander had the first house on the corner. And he had put up a little -- since we were there for several days, we were in reserve at that time. He had put up a sort of a bulletin board on the fence in front of the house where he was.

And I was walking down the street and looking at the bulletin board, and there was the announcement that the president had died. It hit us like a sledge hammer, the other guys too. After all he was the only president we ever knew. He's president for 12 years, and nobody ever knew any other president. Most of us were too young to remember Hoover. Or remember him very actively. So we were very much affected. I don't remember what we did. I think we had a sort of a memorial service for him. But I don't remember it specifically.

Q KARL, ANOTHER THING I WANTED TO ASK YOU IS CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE DAY THE WAR ENDED? WHERE YOU WERE, WHAT WAS IT LIKE, WHAT YOU HEARD, WHAT YOUR FEELINGS WERE?

A Well, just driven up the road from Innsbruck up to the (Brenel) Pass which is the pass over the Austrian Alps where the Italian boarder is. And our fifth army had driven up the mountains from Italy. And I think it was just about a day or so before the official end of the war

that we linked up. Well, our ford units drove three or four or five miles past the pass and linked up with our fifth army units coming up from Italy. I just went as far as the pass. And that was our -- that was the last action.

Then we drove back down toward Innsbruck. I can't tell you exactly where we were. I don't think was a sort of a water shed moment. We knew this was coming. We knew the war was practically over particularly since we linked up with the fifth army coming up from Italy. And by the way the Bavarian and Austrian alps were the last resort of the Germans. The north had been totally taken. Hitler had committed suicide. He committed suicide on April 30. Berlin had fallen. We had linked up with the Russian armies. There was no further resistance in the north.

In the south, in these mountains, they wanted -- they were thinking of making the last stand. Nothing too much came of that either. But it was the last gasp. So everything practically everything was occupied by the allies by then. So I think the official end of the war was sort of anticlimactic because there was nothing left of Germany anyway.

Q WHAT ABOUT ONCE YOU KNEW THE WAR WAS OVER OFFICIALLY? DID THAT DO ANYTHING TO YOU? OR NOT? IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE ARMY?

A Well, no, life became a lot easier then. As

I say, we were occupation duty, and I was kept busy with running my two little towns, the government of the little towns. But this didn't last long because see we had a point system. You get so many points for having about in the service so and so long. And you get double points maybe or something like that for duty overseas. Now, I had only had about maybe ten months duty overseas. So I was fairly -- I was one of the low point men so to speak. And those were the lowest points were supposed to be sent to the Pacific theater.

So in July, I came back to the United States. I was sent back on a troop ship, landed in Boston, and from there was sent to Camp Kennel, Kentucky.

Q I'M GOING TO INTERRUPT FOR A SECOND. WHAT I WAS TRYING TO FERRET OUT IS WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU TO KNOW DEFINITELY THAT GERMANY HAD BEEN DEFEATED?

A A great feeling of triumph that we had prevailed and that not only had we prevailed as Jews I mean those of us who survived, but also that tyranny was beaten, that the right side in quotes one, and that there was hope for a new beginning. It was a very exhilarating feeling. Of course, the war -- it was tempered by the fact that the war in the far east was still going, and we were about to hit them. So it's -- that's generally the feeling.

Q I ASK YOU MORE HOW DID YOU FEEL QUESTIONS

BECAUSE I FEEL THAT'S FOR ME IS WHAT I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT.

A Okay.

Q GOING A LITTLE BACKWARDS IN TIME NOW, WHEN YOU BECAME A CITIZEN, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE FOR YOU?

A Great. I was very proud to be a citizen. I might say this conversely. When I came to this country, I did not want to speak German anymore. I bristle whenever someone called me a German Jew. I said, "I'm not a German Jew. I'm a Jew from Germany." See the difference that that implies. That's how I felt. I had no -- I didn't want to have anything to do with Germans in Germany really or the language even. So I felt very good and very proud to be able to stand up in that courtroom and take the oath.

Q WHEN YOUR PARENTS CAME TO THE UNITED STATES, HOW DID YOU FEEL?

A Well, I was very gratified, very happy that they had made it and we could start fresh. It wasn't an easy thing for my parents. My father was in his 50's. He was born in 1883, so in 1940, he was 57. And to start fresh at the age of 57 when you didn't know the language and strange country is pretty hard. And now when I was -- because I had lived at my uncle's house, and they only spoke English. In fact, my uncle had been in the United States since about 1894 or 1897, something around that

time. And his wife, my aunt was a fifth generation American. So she only spoke English.

So then when my parents came, I left my uncle's house, and I went to live with my parents again. I said to my parents, "Now look, you're in the United States" -- I was telling them what to do -- "you got to start a new life." And we're going to start this by speaking English. So I only spoke English to them. And of course they spoke German to me, but eventually I and it didn't take too long, they spoke English to me. Of course, now my mother is now pretty well advanced in age. If you say something to her in German, she'll answer you in English.

Q BEFORE YOUR PARENTS WHEN YOUR BROTHER ARRIVED WHEN YOU WERE IN KANSAS CITY AND THEY WERE STILL WAITING IN CUBA AND EVEN IN GERMANY, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE FOR YOU?

A Pretty difficult because I was -- I devoured the newspapers for every bit of news from over there. It was terrible particularly at the time of kristallnacht. And I kept bugging my relatives to do something more to get them out of there. But you see, they didn't even tell me that they had contacted senator Harry Truman. I didn't find that out until 1979 or thereabouts. So here I was a kid. They didn't share this information with me. I don't know why not. They certainly should have. It would have made me feel a lot better to know that some real efforts

were being made on behalf of my parents. But they didn't. They didn't tell me.

So no, I was very down hearted at that time, very depressed. But they made it thank God. And comparatively we made it in a lot easier fashion than so many Jewish people, so many who had not even to speak about the holocaust what went through the camps but there were also other Jewish refugees who had a much harder time.

I mean just remember those who were in Shanghai, for example, for years or those who had to go from country to country before they finally found a place where they could land. Or if you consider those who went to Israel, and those who were caught were sent to detention camps in Cypress. And then came back only to find themselves in a war immediately. So compared to that as difficult as it was at times, we were very lucky.

Q COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE TRIP ON THE SHIP FROM -- YOU SAID YOU LEFT FROM HAMBURG THEN ARRIVED IN NEW YORK. WAS THERE ANYTHING UNUSUAL WITH THAT?

A Nothing remarkable. As a matter of fact, that goes right along with what I just said how relatively easier it was for us. Because this was a nice ship. It was an American ship with all the amenities. I mean it wasn't like the troop ships where afterwards they took me back to Europe and then back here again. Things were much

more difficult.

Q ON THIS SHIP WERE YOU WITH A GROUP OF CHILDREN OR BY YOURSELF?

A No, I was by myself. There was one young man from somewhere not far away from where I lived who apparently -- I don't know if my parents knew him or whether they had just met him. But anyway they asked him to take me under his wing a little bit. I was 15 years old. So I guess he took me under his wing a little bit. But then when I got to New York, I was met by relatives of mine who lived in New York. So that trip was very nice.

Q OKAY. I JUST WANTED TO KNOW HOW A 15-YEAR-OLD GETS FROM HAMBURG TO KANSAS CITY WITHOUT GETTING LOST.

A That's no problem. I stayed for two weeks in New York with -- I had three aunts there in Brooklyn, and I stayed with them. And they put me on the train to Kansas City. And at Kansas City I was met by my uncle. That's how I got to Kansas City.

Q ANOTHER THING I THINK WE MIGHT HAVE MISSED WHAT WAS THE EXACT DATE OF YOUR BIRTH.

A April 24, 1922. It's the number 24 somehow keep reoccurring. My birthday is 24. I entered the United States on June 24. I got into the army on November 24th. I got out of the army on November 24th. And -- oh, when we

got married that we lived in apartment number 24. Things like that.

Q NOW, YOU HAD ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE MAN WHO DESECRATED YOUR SYNAGOGUE.

A Oh, yes. I have to sort of back into that story. In 1985 again when Gloria and I went to Israel as I mentioned, we went to (Jampa shem) in Jerusalem to do some research to try to find some records concerning her life.

And we did find three books in the archives that had her name in it. There were lists of people who were rescued by the Swedes and were taken to Sweden. That's where she spent two years after the war.

Now, while we were doing this research, I went through an index of unpublished materials. They have tremendous index of unpublished materials. Five volumes of index. I just sort of idly looked under the name of my town (Buel) and sure enough there was reference to two documents.

So I had these two documents brought up from the archives, and they were carbon copies but with -- but certified. So they were certified copies of German court documents of trials that took place in 1948 and '49 after the war. And there were two trials. The main one was where a man by the name of (Kissler) was put on trial for being the principal arsonist that set fire to our synagogue

on kristallnacht. He's the one who burned it down. I mean he's the one that was most active.

Believe it or not -- oh, this document was the judgment of the court hand sentence. He was sentenced to about six years in a penitentiary. But the document was about 25 pages long. And it related the entire testimony, the entire evidence, the whole story, in fact in detail what the witnesses said. Also what the defendants said.

And then it said why and how what the defendant said was lie and not persuasive and so forth. So in great detail. And for me it made fascinating reading. And it so happened that this man was the same one who broke into our synagogue three years before, three years before my bar mitzvah. It was the same man.

Now, interesting enough when he broke into our synagogue in 1935, he was caught. And believe it or not, he was put in jail for about ten months or so. So at that time the Germans still wanted to have the veneer of respectability as imposed. But only three years later, he burned the synagogue down, and he was counted as a hero. That's how things went down hill.

The other court document was a little shorter. It was the judgment in the trial of two Nazi function areas, lower level officials in the town. And they were there when the burning took place in order to

supervise more or less and make sure that nobody does anything to prevent it.

They were there in full uniform. And that alone tells people stay away. This has official sanction. Don't interfere. And they were tried for this -- for this passive more or less passive complicity. They were also sent to jail. In that judgment, I found a very interesting reference. It related the testimony of the two defendants of these two officials. And they testified we were at the Nazi party headquarters when we heard that something is going on at the synagogue.

So we went, and we wanted to find out what's going on. You know very sad testimony. They wanted to exculpate themselves from any liability. So he says, so he testified. We went through the town towards the synagogue. As we went through the Swan Strassa, Swan Street, that's where my father's business was.

He testified we came by the shoe store of Mr. Lyon. This is in the record. And it says. Were a lot of people milling around there. And the store had been broken into, and merchandise had been thrown out on the street and was lying all over the place. But we didn't stop there. We went onto the synagogue. That was the only reference to it. But imagine how I felt here 47 years after this event, I find reference to it in Jerusalem. It

really threw me for a loop. I have copies of these records. And, of course, it told me what happened to the synagogue in detail. It's pretty tragic story.

Q I FEEL LIKE WE'RE COMPLETE WITH WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR NOW; SO I'D LIKE TO CONTINUE WITH YOUR STORY NOW TO THE PACIFIC THEATER OR ONCE YOU GOT BACK TO AMERICA AFTER EUROPE TO PICK UP THAT THREAD. I INTERRUPTED YOU THERE BECAUSE I WANTED TO FILL IN SOME.

A All right. That was easy. Because see, when we got back from Europe, we got a 30-day leave. We were home for 30 days. And I was in Kansas City on the front porch of my house when the news came that the war in the Far East had terminated. So I didn't have to go. I was lucky. I was home in August '45 when the Japanese surrender occurred.

Q AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A And then I went back to the troops. And we were stationed at Camp Kimbal, Kentucky. And then we -- my division received a request from Camp Night which was the Oakland army base in Oakland, California. And they requested 5,000 men from our division to come to the Oakland army base to work in the Christmas post office.

Now, I was in the post office to process the Christmas mail for our troops in the Far East. And I was among those selected to come to Oakland. So they put us

into a nice train, and we traveled across the country and went to the port of Oakland. When we got there, we found that the army in its usual efficiency had hired 5,000 civilians to do the job that we were supposed to do. So there was nothing for us to do.

So we just fooled around, just did nothing except to go to San Francisco and have a good time. And then they didn't know what to do with us; so they broke us up into small groups since we had nothing to do and sent us all over the western states to different army posts. And again, I was lucky. I was sent to the Presidio of San Francisco, and they put me into the post M.P. military police. So I was in military police for a month. And then I was discharged. And that was the end of my army career.

Q AND THEN WHAT?

A Then? Oh, I hitchhiked back to Kansas City. But three months later in February of '46 I was back out here again going to school in Berkeley at the university. I had -- while I was here during that month, I went over there and applied and was accepted. And I had always wanted to become a lawyer, but I thought since you never know what happened with my parents. My father was getting older, I should do something that would be of more immediate practical significance.

So I decided to go into business

administration and graduated with a major in accounting. I graduated in 1947. I had received a lot of credit, college credit for the work at Oklahoma state college, Oklahoma A and M in Kansas City. So I was able to enter Cal in the upper division as a junior. So I graduated in accounting.

And then I decided now I want to go into law anyway. And so I applied to go to Hastings College here in San Francisco and went there for three years and graduated in 1950. And passed the bar first time I took it. And then I got a job on the staff of the chief justice of the state Supreme Court. I had a pretty good record in law school. I graduated second in my class.

So chief justice put me on the staff as a research attorney. We did legal research, and we wrote memos and opinions in cases for the judge. And that is very good experience in the appellate courts. And I would stay in that for a year. Then I went into private practical. And I've been in private practical every since for about eight years or so. I work for a firm, small firm here in the city. And since then I've been on my own as sole practitioner.

Q AND, KARL, WHAT KIND OF LAW?

A I have a general civil practice. I don't do any criminal work, but a variety of things.

Q WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE THAT YOU WANTED TO BE A

LAWYER, AND WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE CIVIL LAW?

A Well, I think it's sort of sense of justice made me decide to go into law. And I think probably most of us who go into the legal field have certain amount of idealism along those lines. I think basically that.

Now, what made me go into civil law is you see sometimes, of course, a lawyer like any other professional will consciously specialize in some particular field. But many times it's not necessarily conscious, but it's just what type of cases you're thrown into, where you happen to get some experience. Well, if you have the experience in that particular field, well then you continue that. It just sort of a happenstance, hap hazard way of specializing. So that's pretty much how it happened with me.

Q DO YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT PERSONAL HISTORY NOW? MEETING GLORIA AND THAT END OF LIFE?

A Okay. Well, many times when Gloria speaks in school, she tells them her story, her experiences during the holocaust. I go with her many times when I can get away from the office. And in a way being a sole practitioner, that has it's benefits because -- and burdens, of course. But my time can be a little more flexible than if I were punching a time card.

So quite often I'll go with her to the

school, and quite often I then participate in the question and answer period after her presentation. And every once in a while that same question will come up. How did you two meet? And Gloria is very nice, and she defers to me to answer that question. And I start it off by saying, "Well, now, would you like to hear Gloria's version, or do you really want to find out what happened?"

Well, that usually gets a good laugh. But then I tell them what happened. Gloria was living at that time in Kansas City, Missouri also. This was in June of 1948. I was going to law school here, and school was out for the year. So I wanted to go back to Kansas City to spend the summer with my folks. I hitchhiked back to Kansas City which I did quite a bit in those days. It was still pretty safe to hitchhike.

Something happened those on the way at one point. I stepped off a curb and twisted my ankle. Now, that's important to the story. I went to the hospital, and they taped my foot up. And I continued hitchhiking to Kansas City.

Now, one time while I was there that summer when it was a Saturday night and I was getting together with two friends of mine. One was a dental student at Harvard. The other one was an engineering student at Texas University. And I had come from the west coast. So that

Saturday night we were going to go out together.

Well, what to do? So one of the fellows my mother told me something about a birthday party that's being given for some girl from Paris, France. So one of us suggested, "Well, why don't we crash that party?" We weren't invited. So we decided to crash the party. All right. We've got nothing better to do.

So we did, and it was a very, very dull party. We walked in there, and they had a group of girls lined up on one side of the room and a group of boys lined up on the other side of the room. And the record player was playing, and nothing was happening.

So that was very good because it gave me time and leisure to survey the field, you see? So I pick out the prettiest girl in the crowd and asked her to dance. And that was Gloria. She was a friend of this birthday girl. And she had been invited, and they had told the girl from France had told everybody to leave their boyfriends or girlfriends home. She would provide people. But she didn't do a good job of it because nothing was happening.

Anyway so I was dancing with Gloria, and she made an impression on me. And my two friends were bored to tears. So they said to me, "Look, let's go. We're leaving. Want to come?"

I said, "No, you go ahead. I think I'll

stick around for a while." So I stayed there and kept dancing with Gloria. Now, I had trouble dancing because of my taped up foot. So I said to Gloria, apologized for not being able to dance very well because of a sprained ankle. So I could feel from the nervous laugh that she gave me that she didn't quite understand what I was saying.

She had been in this country only one year by that time. She came here in 1947. So I stopped, and I showed her where my ankle was taped up. And then continued to dancing as well as I could. But she told me long afterwards that that was the crucial moment that apparently aroused her maternal instincts when she saw my taped up ankle. And she told me that that's when she fell in love with me.

Q AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A Oh, what happened then? Oh, yes, at the end of evening, of course, my two friends took the car. I had no car there. I very gallantly offered to take her home. So she said, "Well fine, but I came with my girlfriend. So you have to take her home too." Okay. I called a taxi and we took the girlfriend home, and then I took her home. And then as she tells it, she thought she would never hear from me again.

However, the next day when she went to her (Agasa) meeting when she came home, her aunt with whom she

had living told her that some fellow called, and his name is Karl. So she was quite happy that I did remember, and I called, and we made a date. And the for the rest of that summer we --

(End of tape 1; beginning of tape 2.)

Q KARL, LET'S SEE. SO THAT SUMMER YOU DATED EACH OTHER, AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A And then I hitchhiked back to San Francisco and went back to school, law school. And then as it happened. Gloria's aunt decided to move to Los Angeles. So Gloria went out with her to Los Angeles. And we kept corresponding. Gloria was really still just still learning English, but I can tell you that every one of her letters did not have one misspelled word in it because as she told me much later she had the dictionary opened and looked up every single word in the dictionary. But so we had a long distance romance for a while. And then when she moved to Los Angeles, we kept Greyhound in business by taking bus trips back and forth. And that winter I went down to Los Angeles for -- just spent about a week or something like that or two weeks. One of the things we did was go to the Rose Bowl game because Cal was in the Rose Bowl that year. This was Gloria's first and only Rose Bowl game that she went to. Mine too as a matter of fact.

And then a few days later we formally gotten

engaged. And then I came back here. And in August -- well, actually that summer in '49 I got a job at the Alameda County Law Library which I quit one day and drove down to Los Angeles because our wedding had been planned for August 17, and I arrived just a couple days before that. And then August 17 we got married in 1949.

Q WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A What? The wedding? Oh, very interesting. Actually, there were very few people at the wedding that we knew. Gloria did not have her parents there. Her mother had passed away by then. The rest of her family were all in Europe behind the iron curtain. So she had her aunt here and had some cousins. I too didn't have relatives there because my parents were in Kansas city. It was very difficult for them economically. They couldn't make the trip out to L.A. So my immediately family wasn't there either.

But Gloria's aunt had an old friend, an elderly man whom Gloria called Uncle Louie. He was not related, just a good friend. And he befriended her. In fact, he used to go to Garden Grove, I believe, where they had a gambling joint where people bet poker. And he took her with him, and as a good luck charm. And he told her that if he wins, he will split I had winnings with her. And sure enough she made some money from that.

Anyway he offered to underwrite the wedding. And he had. We had the wedding in a Jewish restaurant in a basement of a Jewish restaurant on Beverly Boulevard. And we side the very few relatives that we had there, Uncle Louie invited a number of his friends which was fine because we didn't know them. He also imported the rabbi. He hired the rabbi who was going to do it whom we didn't know either.

You know it's helpful if you have a Rabbi who have known people who can say something personal about them. No such luck. But that's all right. We didn't need it. We stuck together anyway so far. In a couple of months it will be 500 months. I keep track of that. So in other words, 41 years and then some.

Oh, yes. A friend of ours had a movie camera, and he was going to take movies of our wedding which was fine. But in those days the flash or the lights anyway were separate from the camera. And when one person held the camera, the other person held the lights, and they didn't always coordinate. The lights sometime went that way and the camera went this way. So you had all kinds of very dark spots in the movie and then all of a sudden bright light. But we still have the movie, and it's sort of cute.

Q AND THEN WHERE DID YOU MOVE AND LIVE, AND

WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE WHEN YOU WERE SETTLED IN AMERICA WITH GLORIA?

A Well, okay. We had a short honeymoon in the Santa Cruz mountains the (Brookdale) Lodge which is a restaurant that has a brook running through it which is a very beautiful romantic spot. And in San Francisco we lived in a tiny little apartment not far from the civic center where my school was located. It was very convenient. And we lived there until after I graduated and until after I got my job at the Supreme Court.

In fact, Gloria tell the story that one day the telephone rang, and Gloria feeling a little silly answered "Lyon's Den." And a female voice on the other end of the line says, "Is Mr. Lyon there? This is Chief Justice Gibson's office calling." So Gloria nearly dropped the phone, and then I took it and was told that Justice Gibson wanted me to come in and for an interview, and that led to the job. But Gloria said, "I've never answered the phone 'Lyon's Den' ever since."

Q WHAT PART HAS GLORIA PLAYED IN YOUR LIFE?

A What part? Oh, a very great part. She's been a wonderful wife and mother, and we feel very close to each other. We have our differences like everybody does, but we both have a very overriding -- we feel a very overriding commitment that no matter what happens, we will

stick together.

Gloria felt that she always wanted to marry someone who had a similar background who would be able to understand what she went through. Well, she had known a number of young men and had a number of proposals, I think seven of them.

But when I met her that summer in Kansas city, we went out on a picnic just the two of us. And we sat out there in the park, and she told me her story. She said later she wanted to see what my reaction would be whether I would understand because if I didn't have the right reaction, there was no future for us obviously. And she felt that I understood.

I mean my background was even though I didn't go through the holocaust was similar enough to have understanding for what she had gone through and what consequences she was still suffering because she was still suffering great consequences emotionally. She had nightmares, many nightmares for years and sometimes would wake up crying. I would try to calm her down and so on.

We have a fine family. We had two boys. Gloria had a miscarriage first which was somewhat traumatic for a while, but then it didn't prevent her from having two perfectly healthy children, two boys. And they, I think, were affected by our background, particular background too

because they both went into professions that serve humanity.

Our older son a doctor, internal medicine. And our youngest son a speech pathologist at work with children with speech and hearing problems. Our older son David lives in Modesto. He's married to a girl whom he met in medical school while he was going to medical school in Rome, Italy. And she also went through her own period of Jewish problems. She was born in Libya in Tripoli.

And at the time of the six-day war, there were antiJewish riots and they had to flee. And they fled to Italy. And then several of her families' children went to Israel as she did. And she was educated there and became an Israeli citizen. And then she went back to Italy. And that's where she met David. And they've been married now since 1979, and they have three beautiful girls.

Q WHEN WAS DAVID BORN?

A David was born 1953, and Jonathan our youngest son was born in 1955. (Geeus) was born on his birthday. That's right. It was a dark and stormy night at Christmas that night when Jonathan was born. And Jonathan is married. He lives in Berkeley. He's married to a girl from Berkeley whom he met while going to Cal. Both our sons went to Cal. And they have five children.

And Jonathan is not only a speech pathologist, but he also has two other professions. One is he teaches American culture and English as a second language at Hayward State University. And then he's also a professional musician. He plays the trumpet, and he has his own small dance band which you might have heard of. It's called "Hot Borscht." They are popular all over the bay area.

Q HOW DID YOUR EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE HOW YOU RAISED THE CHILDREN?

A I'm sure that our experiences influenced that. I couldn't give you chapter and verse as to any particular examples or instances.

Q I WAS THINKING MORE GENERAL VALUES THAT YOU TRIED TO TEACH THEM ABOUT PEOPLE OR LIFE OR YOUR BELIEFS WHAT YOU SAW.

A For one thing we did not insulate them from the history of the holocaust. We told them about what happened to our families. And by the way, on my side there were people who perished. I had three aunts, my father's sisters, who perished in the holocaust, and my grandmother that's my step mother's mother, so to speak. Although I don't call her stepmother. She's the one who raised me. I call her mother.

Just to clarify, her mother was taken to

(Gource), (Acounta Gource) is southern France and spent four years there as one of my aunts was also. And by the way after she was liberated, she wrote a diary, a 15,000 word diary, which I have at home and translate into English. Fascinating story.

But she then died in 1945. And my aunt barely survived (Gource) also and then died in southern France. But one of my other aunts was taken to Theresienstadt, and from there I'm not certain, could be Auschwitz. And the third one committed suicide before they came to get her.

Now, to come back to your question, we told our boys as much as they were ready to hear. So they learned about it piece meal. Gloria's story particularly. But mine too. But they had a great interest in it which evidenced itself at one time when Gloria was being interviewed by a New York author Dorothy (Rabinovitz) who was writing a book which is called "New Lives about Survivors in America."

And both our boys who were in their teens at the time insisted on staying in the room during the entire interview. And Dorothy (Rabinovitz) was amazed. Because she said wherever else she went, the kids didn't want to have anything to do with it, didn't want to stay in the room, and didn't want to hear anything about it. And here

these two boys wanted to hear.

And this was probably the first time when they got a coherent story of Gloria's background all the way. I think our background sensitized them quite a bit to deal with human problems and to be charitable in the outlook and trying to help people. There was something I meant to tell you, and I forgot. But it will come back to me.

Q WHEN YOU WERE RAISING YOUR SONS, DID YOU HAVE ANY CONSCIOUS FEELING THAT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO PASS ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF JEWS?

A Yes. That's right. And that's why Gloria particularly made it very clear to our boys had they were growing up that they should only bring a Jewish girl home when they get married. In fact, she didn't even like the idea of them dating non Jewish girls. You never know what it will lead to. So she was very emphatic in that respect. I think we gave them a pretty good background in Jewish values and outlook as well as custom.

We were quite active in our synagogue. Gloria was in the choir. I was active in the administration of the synagogue. I was president for six years. And our boys got a great deal out of that. We did a lot of singing, and he had (Brusongs), and much of it liturgical. And I think that had its effect.

David is conservative as we are, belongs to the conservative synagogue, but he has a kosher household and is very strongly -- very strong identification as a Jew.

Jonathan -- his wife actually came from a totally non religious background, but she and Jonathan very consciously decided to become orthodox. And they belong to an orthodox synagogue. They are (Shomarsabat) and have a kosher household of course. He will not drive a car on (Shabat), will not turn the light on. David is not quite as strict as that. Jonathan is, but I must say both of them have beautiful families. And they are inculcating in their children a very strong Jewish identity.

Our relational, you know, we have to repopulate our Jewish people rather than to fritter it away and let it go under.

Q HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THEIR HAVING REMAINED JEWS AND RAISING JEWISH FAMILIES?

A We feel very good about that. I mean we feel the fruit of our teaching. We feel that we can take a little credit for that.

Q AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GLORIA'S PUTTING MUCH OF HER ENERGY INTO HOLOCAUST EDUCATION?

A I think it's very important. That's why I go with her frequently and take part in it. It's very

important not to let the world forget. And it's important to teach the young people. And the best way that they can learn is by actually seeing and listening to a survivor, people who went through it who experienced it.

And Gloria gets thousands of letters which young people always say that "We have read books and we saw movies, but it didn't make any impression until we saw a flesh and blood survivor." And the effect it has on them is really he electrifying. And this is non Jewish children as well as Jewish children if not more so. They identify with her. They start thinking what would have happened to me if I had been in those shoes? How would I have reacted? Would I be strong enough to live through this? And then they start appreciating their own values that they never thought about and their own families.

They start appreciating everything that they have because everything was taken away from the Jews, you know? So here they can appreciate what they have which is both material thing as well as spiritual things. They even become a little more patriotic at times. Also they see the value of tolerance toward others because they see here what the ultimate result of raises many is. And that's why many times in schools that have racial problems they call Gloria in especially for that purpose. And the kids send letters that they think it helped.

Q WHAT PERSONALLY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST -- HOW DID YOU RECONCILE JUDAISM AND GOD AND HOLOCAUST?

A Well, I didn't have to go through what Gloria went through, and I didn't have to, you know, go through this period of saying, "Well, God, if you're there, why don't you help me?" I was much more fortunate than that.

But how do I reconcile in my mind? We're put here by God and given all kinds of potential. And one of the things is we have free choice. We can choose which way we want to go with our lives. It's written right in the tora that the Jews are given a choice therefore choose life.

So we can choose for better or for worse, for good or for evil. And that I think will make us understand that the holocaust is not something that God is responsible for, but that it was people, misguided people who brought that about.

Q AND WHAT IS YOUR FEELING ABOUT ISRAEL?

A We feel very strongly in support of Israel. We have been active in the community in that respect too. Gloria has been active in (Adasa) a number of years ago, but now her holocaust education keeps her busy. She doesn't have much room for her organizational work.

I was active in the S.O.A. I wasn't of the San Francisco district for a couple of years. And we tried

to do our bit in that respect. And of course the films that we're making that you mentioned earlier about Gloria's experiences and teaching in schools, that should also hopefully make an impact in keeping the memory of the holocaust alive.

You asked me about the effect on our children. In 1983 when the gathering of holocaust survivors from all over the country occurred in Washington D.C., we took both of our sons there. And also -- Iris our older son's David's wife. (Dezi) our younger son's wife couldn't go because she was just about to deliver a child. But David and Jonathan and David's wife Iris went with us. And I think they were very much influenced by that.

Q THE ONLY OTHER THING THAT I WANTED -- JUST ONE QUESTION, AND THEN I WANTED TO ASK YOU IF YOU COULD BRING SOME OF OUR PICTURES LIKE YOUR PICTURES THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE OF FAMILY OR THE MONUMENT TO THE WAR LORDS IN AUSTRIA, ANY PICTURES THAT WOULD BE RELEVANT TO YOUR PERSONAL STORY, AND WE WILL PUT THEM ON THE VIDEOTAPE AT THE END OF YOUR TAPE.

A Sure.

Q SO IF YOU WOULD TALK TO WHOEVER SCHEDULED YOU LIKE LENNY OR TAMAR, THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL. AND THEY WOULD FIND A TIME WHEN JOHN CAN JUST -- THEY WON'T GET LOST OR ANYTHING.

A Just photographs.

Q PUT THEM RIGHT ON THE CHAIR AND TAKE A PICTURE OF THEM.

A Okay.

Q THE LAST QUESTION I HAVE I JUST WANTED TO KNOW PERSONALLY, KARL, WHAT IF YOU HAD A WISH FOR THE WORLD, WHAT WOULD IT BE? OR A MESSAGE OR A WISH, HOWEVER YOU WOULD --

A Well, I hesitate to think in terms of a wish or a feeling, but if there's anything I would wish for Shalom for both Israel and this country and the world. That's about sums it up.

Q WHEN HE WAS IN THE AMERICAN ARMY ALSO.

A Who was?

Q HE WAS LEONARD (FIBLEMAN.) HE WAS IN INTELLIGENCE WHICH IS THE FAMILY JOKE BECAUSE WHAT HE HAD TO DO WAS READ GERMAN LOVE LETTERS AND SEE IF THERE WAS ANY CODING.

I HAVE A QUESTION. GOING BACK TO YOUR DAYS, THE LAST DAYS IN GERMANY, I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW YOU FEEL OR HOW YOU FELT. HOW YOU FELT THEN AND HOW YOU FEEL NOW ABOUT HAVING TO LEAVE THEM AT AGE 15 AND COMING TO THIS COUNTRY. DID YOU HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT STAYING THERE EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION WAS AS BAD AS IT WAS?

A No, I did not have any strong feeling about staying there. As a matter of fact, quite the opposite. I had very strong feelings about wanting to get away from there. I told you that I didn't even want to speak German anymore after I came to this country. So I had very strong feelings against -- two was not hard for me to leave Germany let's put it that way.

Q EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE LEAVING YOUR PARENTS?

A Even so. But I had the hope that they would follow me. That's what I was looking forward to.

Q I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT RIGHT AFTER THE WAR WHEN YOU WERE STILL IN GERMANY. YOU HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO ANY OF THE GERMANS, THE CIVILIANS, HOW THEY FELT ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE WAR AND ANY REACTIONS TO HOW THEY FELT ABOUT THE JEWS OR SINCE YOU WERE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM IN GERMAN.

A Yeah, of course, I was able to communicate with them. I don't have any particular memory of any such discussions. Not that I can actively remember. I undoubtedly must have talked with someone along these lines. But apparently nothing significant enough to stick in my memory.

Q GETTING BACK TO WHEN YOU WENT TO YOUR OWN LAW, WERE YOU INVOLVED AT ALL WITH THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS HELPING THEM IN ANY WAY WHEN THEY CAME TO THE UNITED STATES

ONCE YOU WERE IN YOUR OWN PRACTICE?

A At -- you mean years ago when the German Reparations and so forth? Not really because I had not been a lawyer in Germany, and those people who were doing that type of legal work for Rita (Gutmaken) Reparations, most were or had been lawyers in Germany. So you had to know your way around a little bit. Furthermore you had to be able to have a good command of the language. Now I can still converse in German. And I can write a letter in German, but my German is not of a 15 year old, not like one who has gone through law school in Germany and has command of not only the technical expressions but also the way of expressing yourself. As you know, written German can be very complicated convoluted sentences. And so I didn't have that command of it. No, I didn't handle any of those cases. There was a lawyer here who did that, and a number of my clients I sent to him so he could handle it. Because he was the expert in the field, and he had been an attorney in Germany.

Q IS THAT IT?

(End of tape two.)