INTERVIEW WITH: Lewis and Trudy Schloss
INTERVIEWER:
DATE:
PLACE:
TRANSCRIBER: Sandra L. Wallenfelsz

INTERVIEWER: I'll give you a series of real short questions, or I think they are short questions, that we'll go back to in detail later. Um, I need your name and where and when you were born.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: My name is Trudy Schloss. I was born March 8, 1924 in Fruts-hiem, Southern Germany.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: My name is Lewis Schloss. I was born May 20, 1921. I was born in Gos-in-cake-in, Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And, um, wait. We need to get a little closer here, all three of us. We have to get--to be real friendly here. Okay. Can you tell me also what ghetto, ghettos you were in, or ghetto?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: We were in--I was in Riga. I was in Shoe-ten-sin, Buchenwald. And, uh, we wound up in an aus-in-lag-in, both from which I and my father escaped in 1945, about two months before the end of the war.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And, um, and how about you, Trudy?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: I was in Riga. I was in Stutthof, and later on I was sent also to an aus-in-lag-in, as they call it, from Stutthof; and I was liberated around Lowenberg, which is in Pom-min, with today is--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: (inaudible)

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --which today is Poland.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Um, can you tell me then what camps you were in and when and how old were you?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, I went--I was 21 years old. Uh, no, not quite. I was 20 years old, and I was shipped from my home town to Riga with the transport; and I spent in-and-around Riga until about two years, two-and-a-half years. And then from Riga we were sent back to Stutthof, and from Stutthof we were there only a relatively short time and we were shipped to Buchenwald, and from Buchenwald I was shipped to an aus-in-lag-in, and, uh, which happened to be like ten miles from my, our original home town. It was a goof that they made because usually what they did--what they did at the time, they tried to avoid putting German Jews in to areas that were near their home town or in general in to German areas because they would speak without an accent; and, therefore, if they escaped were not easily detectable, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, right.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: So, that was my goodluck, because my father met somebody in the work camp whom he knew. Um, from, um. No, he knew his brother from before Hitler. And by accident after an air raid when we were all in the shelter, he got talking to him and he commented on his good German--this guy on my father's German--and he said, "Where did you learn?" He says, "Well, I come from here"; and, of course, one thing lead to another, and we developed a friendship and eventually made an outside contact for us; and over a period of half a year, uh, managed to bring clothing; and we had forged papers; and, uh, and we walked out in broad daylight one day.

INTERVIEWER: How did you walk out? Weren't there security? I mean, I don't understand how that could happen.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, that's the whole story. I mean, I don't

know. Uh, it's, it's--I'll tell you this is what happened. We got into this camp, I think it was about September of 1944. It was a part of the Kraut munitions combine, and this particular camp, uh, was around a work shed, I mean the plant, which was manufacturing 88-millimeter grenades for the German tanks, Panzers; and it was a brand new camp just set up. And my father and I, we were brought there as crane, overhead-crane operators, you know, like in a work hall, big gigantic cranes and we operated. And we lifted the amunition from one lathe to another and so on. And then, as I said, we--after then, we got hit by bombs constantly, and the camp was mostly destroyed; and we were really jam-packed; and we got to talk to Germans who were the foreman and the advisors and the controllers of our work.

INTERVIEWER: Uh, huh.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: And, uh, after this particular air raid, my father got talking to him and he, he was a--he was a lathe operator before the war; and he went to see my father's friend and convinced him that we were still alive, number one; that he was legit, that he was not a spy or an informer; and that we were starving. And so he brought in like weekly, like kind of what you call today care packages to us; and he sneaked them in because we were--My father was working the day shift, and I was working the night shift, or vice-versa. And then he would give us the packages, and he'd help us to sustain ourselves. And I always try to--in the back of my mind I had an idea that if there was an opportunity to escape, uh, that I would do so. And then 'round, not long before Christmas 1944, the famous Albert Speer came and gave us a pep talk that we, believe it or not, should work harder and produce

for the Third Reich and--but, anyway, one Sunday maybe a week or so before Christmas we went to our friend, and my friend said, "Give the Schloss' our regards, and if he wants to visit us, he's welcome." Which meant, of course, that if we have an opportunity to escape, you know, it was a code. And then, of course, from then on I tried to, to find ways-and-means to, to escape from the camp--which by the way was in the middle of the town, houses were all around us, people could look right in to the camp. So, anyway, uh, what, what we did eventually he--our friend--brought some used clothing for us which we hid in an inoperative crane. And then during lunch hour he lent us his pass which was, you know, enclosed like in plastic like this with a photograph; and, and I have a little artistic talent, and I made a copy on a, on a postcard, Army postcard, on a blank. We still have it. And the coincidence was, was that--I think was fate--was that you needed a photograph. Now, how do you get a photograph in a concentration camp? Well, I dragged along with me through the whole period of time, not of my mother or not of my sisters but of my father and myself. And I needed those two little photgraphs to put on those cards. And one day after an air raid, uh, was March the 14th, 1945, I tried to, to, to get out at night because I figured the way to go was to sneak out through the guards. And there was an SS guard and there was a German civilian guard and a work police. So you had three different gates one had to pass through, and I nearly got caught with my father because we were not suppose to be out. My father was sick, quite sick at that time. And then on the 14th--that was the 13th. So then on the 14th after daylight air raid I always, instead of going into the air raid shelter, went on top

of the roof because I was near the roof, and I watched whatever was going on, and I watched the guards and I noticed that a very--the most--the dumbest SS guard was in charge of a gate and in daytime there was not a double team, only single team. And I decided then and there, just like this, uh, to get my father out of the sick area; and we changed our clothing in this crane, walked down the maybe 50 yards of ladder, down into the work hall, past our own prisoners, outside along, and walked right out, and talking of course German, because no one even thought for one second that we could possibly be prisoners, even the people we were in daily contact with. We walked out in broad daylight and we were talking, my father and I, we were aggitatedly talking, and the guard said to us here, "Why the hell do you talk so loud?" you know, and, but of course he never, of course, detected any accent, and we walked out just like that--3 o'clock in the afternoon, beautiful, sunshine afternoon. If I would, uh, uh--Hollywood wouldn't believe it.

INTERVIEWER: I know, I know.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: It's one of those things, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Were you afraid?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: No. I was, I was too desperate to be afraid because our camp was emptied three or four days later and sent back to Buchenwald, and of those people who were sent back, not too many survived.

INTERVIEWER: So why do you think that you--I mean, do you feel like it was fate that, that--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Luck. Absolute luck. I would say that most of the things that--it was my youth, my relative youth, some

technical ability and that ingredient luck. Without that I would never had made it.

INTERVIEWER: You want to talk a little bit about what camp you were in?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: I was--I left Germany, southern part of Germany in--my parents were sent away a year before me because I was in Berlin. I was in nurses training. And my parents lived in the southern part of Germany. And a year before we were sent away, they were sent to the southern part of France which was German occupied at that time. So I was more or less by myself; and eventually I went with my family--my grandparents, my uncle, my aunt, my cousins. We were sent to Riga from Stutegart, Germany; and we ended up on a farm in Riga, which naturally we worked on the fields. We walked into that particular camp and we found there was still hot food on the table when we were walked into the camp, because about an hour before they had killed quite a few thousand Latvian Jews, especially women and children, to make room for us. So we came in there, and we worked in the fields for a little while, which naturally helped us because we worked on potato fields. So we used to steal, uh, what's--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Potatoes or beets, beets.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Uh, uh, no.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Sugar beets.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, stuck-wer.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Beets.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Beets. All right. And what we used to do, we used to take them out of the ground and eat them raw, so naturally helped us a little bit because we weren't hungry, you know.

Afterwards, much later, I was sent to Stutthof which was a very big camp with lots of gas, destruction, all this kind of things; and then I was sent to an outside camp where we worked for quite a while. As the Russians came closer, uh, we were sent--the ones who could walk, the ones who were sick were killed. The ones who could walk were sent out of that work camp, and the Russians came very fast; and they decided one night to put us in a barn. And they had in mind--they locked the doors--and they had in mind to put that barn on fire, kill us. But about, I would say, a half hour before they wanted to do that, the Russians came. And they didn't even stop. We only heard shots. What they did, on their motocycles and on their trucks, they were shooting the Germans while they were going. And we--I don't know whoever opened the door, I don't even remember that; and that's how we survived--just about a half hour before we were killed--by the Russians. And that was our--and then naturally later on eventually we walked back, you know, to Germany. Walking and hitching by--and Lou and I met during the war. We met in concentration camp.

INTERVIEWER: You did--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: We met and then we were--for how long were we apart? We didn't know if we were still alive? About a year?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: About a year, yes.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: We didn't know that we were still alive. But on the way back from the Russian part of Germany to the American part of Germany, we decided, a girlfriend and I, to stop in the camp of Buchenwald, because, you know, everybody was trying to find if there was still family members left.

INTERVIEWER: This is after the liberation you are talking about?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: After the liberation. So we stopped into Buchenwald because we decided, "What can we loose; we gonna find out." And you know the Germans, that's one thing about the Germans, they were always very organized. And everything was documented; and after every name it said what happened to the person. That's typical German, right? So we walked into Buchenwald, and we were just ready to walk into the office there when somebody who was with me in camp stopped me. He said, "Trudy, what are you doing here?" Naturally, we were hugging each other, and I said, "Well, I wanna find out if Lou is still alive." He said, "Yeah, he's alive. He was here a week ago." So I knew he was still alive, and after--it's a long story, we found each other again, you know, and eventually got married.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get married--well, wait a minute, let me start--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: We got married in forty--September '45.

INTERVIEWER: Here?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, no, no. Still in Germany.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: In Germany.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: We came here with the first boat which left Germany, and we arrived here on May 20th, 1946 on Lou's birthday.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: When I got here--21 years old; that's right.

INTERVIEWER: So how old were you when you two met?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Seventeen.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Oh, no. Let's see, we met in '43--you were 19 years old--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Nineteen years old, I was.
LEWIS SCHLOSS: And I was 22. I was 22. At that time when we met, I had no plans of marrying her. (Laugh)
INTERVIEWER: And then what happened?
TRUDY SCHLOSS: Then what happened? We came to the United States. We, uh, I had two aunts here and Lou had an aunt here in New York, they picked us up at the boat. We stayed with my one aunt for--how long did we stay?
LEWIS SCHLOSS: A couple of weeks.
TRUDY SCHLOSS: A couple of weeks. We arrived here on a Friday; Lou was working on Monday. His cousin got him a job, and I started to work right away. I'm a nurse, and I had a job immediately. So we really came here and were just--
LEWIS SCHLOSS: We didn't have time for vacation, you know. We--
TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, no. But I mean we, we had really no hardship because we right of way had a job, we had no children--
INTERVIEWER: Well, you don't have to apologize to me that you had no hardship.
TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, no. What I mean is, you know how some people had a hard time finding, we had no problem because we had the kind of trades and profession where you could find a job right away. And Lou spoke English very well because he had worked for the Americans after the war as an interpreter.
LEWIS SCHLOSS: Yeah. I was, I was, I was--I escaped on the 14th of March, as I mentioned, in 1945. I was hidden with my friends 'til April the 11th when the 17th Airborne took Essen, which is, you know, also partially my hometown because it's only a few miles from where I was born, and I volunteerred my services, uh,

the moment I saw the first American tank. Uh, my father and I--By the way I should say my father and I, of course, we are together at that time; and we were hidden--openly hidden--by a friend of ours who had very good contacts with the military, local military, and the Gestapo, believe it or not. And, he said, "The only way to hide you is to be completely open about it." And he made us relatives who had been bombed out in central Germany, and he supplied us with civilian clothing. As a matter of fact, I--since I was a young fellow, he says, "Well, I'll have to cover it up," and he gave me an Iron Cross, First Class and a Purple Heart in gold and a cane. And he introduced me--I mean the gall that he had or hutzpah, whatever you want to call it--and he introduced me to the Chief of the Gestapo in 1945 and told him, "This is my second cousin," blah, blah, blah. And then I volunterred my services immediately to the Americans who accepted me on face value, because I had no papers. I--as a matter of fact, I don't look particularly Jewish, and, uh, at that time I still had blond hair, which I don't have anymore. And I worked, and I was in an American uniform on April 12th. And I remember that very well because Roosevelt died that particular day, which was a shock to us even, you know, because we didn't know very much about him except that he was on our side.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: And then I worked for the Americans 'till shortly before we came here. I worked for the various--for the Strategic Bombing Survey, North German Cold Control, and various other outfits, and the 17th Airborne, of course, also. And then afterwards I heard--we heard--that the only way to leave, because we were in

the British zone which had been--it was taken by the American troops, but turned over to the British, so we then moved to Frankfurt, and I started working for the High-S, and as I spoke some English I was assigned to the American Consular General in Frankfurt. And we found out that there would be affidavits for people who wanted to go to the states and free transportation that would be paid by the High-S, by the American Joint, and I made sure that Trudy and I got onto the first boat to the United States; and that's what we did.

INTERVIEWER: What happened to your father?

LEWSI SCHLOSS: My father came here in January of 1947, and he died here in the United States of a natural, early death in nineteen--January 1955. But, I mean at least he survived. My mother, who was together with Trudy but was one of the sick ones who could not make it, was liberated by the Russians.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: She was liberated by the Russians, but I guess if she might have been liberated by the Americans she might have made it. But being liberated by the Russians, they really didn't take care of the sick ones, and she had typhoid. And she really died--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: She died two weeks--about April first--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Two weeks after--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: --on or about April 1st, 1945.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --two weeks after the liberation she died, Lou's mother. And Lou's sister who survived, um, Theresienstadt. And Lou has another sister who lived underground in Holland. And I have a sister who was in France, and she was in a convent. She also lived underground, you know what I mean. So, but my mother and my father were sent to Auschwitz from southern France and got

killed in Auschwitz.

INTERVIEWER: And you also mentioned that you had another brother?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: No, I did not.

INTERVIEWER: No, you didn't. No, you didn't.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: No brother. My two sisters. Uh, you know, and because my parents, after the famous Kristallnacht in 1938, sent both my sisters to Holland where they spent--my younger sister the war years underground after Germans occupied, and my other sister was for a couple of years in camp in Holland and in 1944 was sent to Ter-is-sen in Czechoslovakia, where she survived also. It's very--I mean, we are in a way very fortunate because it is very rare that four members out of a five-member family survived when we were all in different areas. My mother was someplace else, my sisters--both sisters--were in two different places, and my father and I were the only ones who were together in a camp, but only in the last year of the war. Prior to that we also were in different places constantly. Just the combination of fortuitous circumstances, I would say, you know. It was very--it's very odd and we didn't know that we were--that everybody was alive because--And Trudy crossed the Elbe in 1945. A German girl asked her to let her go onto the boat across the Elbe and she said, "I'll do it under one condition. You take a note to me or my father." She came from our area, and she promised her and she actually did do that. Then about, I would say, about July of nineteen--early July of 1945 she delivered this note to my father--because she found that there were very few Jewish survivors at that time, especially in our area, a handful. So, it was easy for any-one who wanted to look to find us. And she delivered the note.

The note was a very small note, but a piece of paper maybe three by five, and it said that my mother was liberated, but had died; and that she would be in a small village in southern Germany that I had heard of, but didn't even know where it was. And then I decided, "Well, I'm gonna pick her up." And (inaudible) we automatically got married, you know. And then my sister, my younger sister who was underground, was liberated in 1944 in Holland by the British. And there was a British sergeant who was with the FSF, which was the British equivalent of the CIC, and he was a Jewish fella who had quite a crush on her. And he was transferred to right near the next town where we were in 1945; and he came up one day and told us that both my sisters were in Holland, and both were alive. And so I just grabbed--made myself travel orders, and we went to Holland to see them both, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Uh, huh.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: And they came in May, May 19th in 1947, just nearly to the day, the day a year later, you know. And, of course, they're both here and well, so far.

INTERVIEWER: That's wonderful. Tell me, do you have children?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Yes, we have a daughter 29 years old, and we have a son 25 years old.

INTERVIEWER: What did you tell them or what have you told them about the Holocaust?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: I'll tell you something, there were many, many years we never spoke about it. It was difficult to speak about it. One day our daughter was a senior in high school, she came home and she was very upset, and she said, "You know, I have to write a paper about anything, and I don't really know what to

write it about." So Lewis said to her, "Why don't you write it about the Holocaust?" So she said, "How can I write about the Holocaust, you never talked about it?" And that all of a sudden made us realize that we have to talk about it. And we talked about it ever since. And they know, I mean, they don't know details because (inaudible), but they know quite a bit so on and so forth. And Lou feels very strongly about it that especially young people should know about it. So we live in Teaneck, New Jersey, in a smaller town; and many times he's called from our school system to speak to history classes. In fact, next week he's speaking to five fith-grade classes about the Holocaust. And strickly he feels very strongly about it, that, you know, that people should know about it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you want to talk about that a little bit? how you feel?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, I'll tell you very frankly, what happened was aside from our daughter being overwhelmed--first of all when we suggested, uh, that she write about concentration--actually we didn't call it that. At that time it wasn't called concentration--Holocaust. I told her, "Write about concentration camps." So she went to the library, and she came back in tears. She says, "I'm totally overwhelmed because there's so many books and so much material. I don't know where to--what to do." So I told her, I said, "Well, I'll tell you what, why don't you pick one subject which was on everybody's mind at that time was the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. And she wrote about that like 50-60 pages, and so on; and she got the first inkling. Then shortly--then I felt that we don't talk about it; people don't know about it, even our

friends who were--who came here before the war or American born, did not know what was going on. And I felt it's at least my duty to make sure that people I talk to know about this and that I decided that if there's an opportunity to speak about it, I would speak up about it. I, I--even to this day I haven't got a set pattern of what I'm going to talk about. I don't know five minutes before I talk what I'm going to say and what we're talking about, but I have spoken to junior high school, high school, and college students whenever I'm asked. And I want to do this because I feel I owe it to the people who did not make it. That, that mankind does not forget it. And that too many people--especially I get very upset when I hear the people who want to deny the existence, the happenings of the Holocaust, you know; and so I go constantly, I mean whenever I can anyway. And I speak to classes, most of who know very, very little about it. Our state is one of the few, or maybe the first state that has by Order of the Governor Kane, a Holocaust program in the school curriculum. I don't know if it's anyplace else, but if it's not the only one, it certainly is one of the first ones to have it. And I feel it's my duty as long as I am around that I keep, uh--that I prove to people that I'm a survivor, that I was there, that nobody will ever be able to tell you that this is a--what they called in Germany under Goebbels a grool-make, a rumor. Uh, that isn't true. And so I just constantly follow-up on these things, you know.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about, um--do you feel that it has been important in your lives to be married to another, um, survivor?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, I don't think that we really look at it this way at all.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: No, we never considered that.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No, I don't think so. We--I consider we have a very good marriage, our ups and downs like everybody else, you know. But I don't think we ever used it when it came to our children--"Well. you have to do this because we have gone through this." I don't believe in this. I believe--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: We never put any pressure on our kids.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Never, never.

INTERVIEWER: But, I mean, has it been helpful to you as a support? I mean, someone else who understands without you having to explain or has that not been a factor?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No. You know something, we really don't dwell on it at all. We came here. All we wanted is to make a life for ourselves. We feel the country was very good to us. We, uh--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: We wanted to benefit from a free life, you know.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: We wanted to start a new life, you know. No, that's all right. We wanted to start a new life, be happy with each other, eventually have a family. Thank God it worked out. We both worked very hard. Um, and I really feel that I'm very happy. I feel verylucky that I'm one of the survivors; that I'm well. And I think basically what it did, I think it strengthened us quite a bit when it comes to accepting sometimes lifes short-comings and stuff like that. I really do. I feel--I really--and I don't feel bitter at all, I must say this.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, it took you quite a few years to get over it.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No. No, what I used to have in the beginning--the first few years, I used to have terrible, terrible nightmares. And there was one thing I think which stuck in my mind the most was that I saw, with my own eyes, mothers poisoning their children before they were sent away, because, you know, that was part of the SS cruelty was to take away children from their mothers. And the mothers knew what's going to happen to these children, so they used to poison them ahead of time. And it stuck in my mind so, but I never realized it until I had my own children. And I had a lot of problems with that, to deal with that in the beginning, especially when Julie was born, that's our daughter. I used to be afraid I might hurt her. And I had to work this out, and I did. Now I can talk about it, but there was a time I couldn't talk about this.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the kind of dreams you would have, about that?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: I used to have terrible dreams. Also, about my parents. But I think once we started to talk about it more, and, and, uh, also talk about the fears we had, I think that went away eventually. I think it was more when you tried to push it back, you know.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: It was gradual.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: It was gradual thing. It went over the years. It took quite a few years. But I think we did very well when it came to adjustments.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: (inaudible) quite a few close friends from the wartime. Survivors from various countries: from Russia, from Poland, from Lithuania, Latvia. And we every so often get

together and we used to talk about other things. The things we talked about was never the terrible things, or very rarely, let's put it that way, just the tricks we used to play and the stuff we used to steal because we were all expert thieves. In order to survive you had to be; stole food, I mean from under the nose probably from the plate if you would have a plate in front of you if you turned your eyes. And there was--so, but little by little you talk about it more and you become freer talking about it. The one thing I must say that I do not have any, uh, regrets talking about it or that I have any inhibition talking about it. Uh, some people can't talk about it to this day or they can't even look at a documentary or anything. (End of Side A) Even though it was kind of a love story involved in it, I felt it was the first time that a mass of people was really acquainted with what went on even though, you know, it was glamorized a little bit. And I disagree, for instance, with Elie Wiesel who's speaking here, because he wrote in the New York Times that it was diminished, etc., and so forth, and I felt just the opposite. I feel that people were, uh, are not receptive to constantly seeing the horror pictures and the cruelty because it's hard to take for some people. But this way they finally understood, and I think the proof is, uh, that in Germany right now it just recently was repeated after the first time around. And the more people see the programs, even if they're not really true but there is a kernel of truth in it, people will understand it. And I find that when I speak to students in a high school, or, or those who--and I ask those who have seen it, they have much, much better understanding of what went on than the ones who have no idea and

never saw it, you know. So I find it was a great thing to happen, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. Did you--during the war treaty when you were in the camps and ghetto, did you feel like--did you have to take any major personal risks in order to survive?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: You, you took always, because you were always--you was thinking not from day-to-day, you was thinking from hour-to-hour; you were thinking where you could get your next piece of bread from I had a little, again like Lou said, "luck experience. I was in Riga--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: In Keis-a-valt.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --In Keis-a-valt, which was also an outcamp from the ghetto. You know what I mean.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: After the ghetto it was--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: It was a big camp. And I got there; and, you know, you would stand in reveille twice a day, morning and night. Now figure about 2,000 people standing reveille twice a day. As it happened, I was standing in the first row. Why, I couldn't tell you, and there was one of these SS women. I mean, I don't have to tell you--blond, looking like a German, like a Broom Hilda, you know, And she was terrible. She was hitting people. She always had a--what's a pie-chert?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Okay. A whip.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: A whip. Sometimes I have to think.

INTERVIEWER: That's okay.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: And, um, she was constantly looking at me. And you know when you have these kind of people looking at you, you become very frightened because you didn't know, "What do they want?"

INTERVIEWER: What were you afraid of?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Well, that she--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Being selected.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --might single me out and select me and send me to my death, which they did. All of a sudden she stops in front of me and she said to me, in front of all these people, "Do you recognize me?" I said, "No." She said to me, "Are you Trudy?" My maiden name was Allman. "Are you Trudy Allman?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I recognize you." She said to me, "Do you remember Shower's Shoe Store?" I said, "Yes, I do." She said, "I remember your mother coming into that store with your sister and yourself and buying your shoes there. I was the saleslady in there." Now, as bad as she was with everybody else, I became her Jew. Do you understand what I mean? She used to come and bring me food. Now, she killed perhaps--I don't know how many others. Now, naturally since that was a certain length of time, that helped me. And it's what you call luck. She put me someplace to work where it was protected; it wasn't cold. I worked in a place where they selected clothing. You know where you--because--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: A quartermaster.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: That's right. You know, because when we got new transports, when new transports came, their suitcases--people never got their suitcases. So we had to go through these suitcases and then, uh, put whatever was in there in certain places. Now that was what you would call a very protected kind of job. And this is why I am saying you had to have a certain amount of luck. That's all what was to it.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: And, you know, a certain amount of gall, you know. I give you, I give you an example now for instance. In the early stages when we were in Riga we marched out of the ghetto and it was 40 below zero. It was really something we were not used to and certainly we didn't have the proper clothing; and a lot of people died, just froze to death, simply. And they would

search people as they came back because they might have brought in some food from the outside. The SS was aware of what was going on. We would take a shirt off our back and trade it for a loaf of bread or something like that to the local population if and when we had a chance. And then when there were searches going on people were so afraid, they would drop whatever they had. When that happened, I would take, for instance, I had a jacket. I used to hang it over my shoulder, take my sleeves, put the sleeves in my pockets like this, and load up the sleeves with whatever was laying on the ground. So I just walked in with my hands raised and the SS could go like this and never look at the sleeves. It took a lot of brass, I'll tell you that. I mean when you think about it today, it was a matter of life and death for me to want to eat. At the same time if they would have just grabbed it, they could have killed me right then because they hung many people for bringing food into. And then another situation was that, due to my mechanical ability, I became, uh, also like she said, "my Jew", for somedoy else and he put me in the SS garage, whoch was the garage of the Einsat Kommando Zwie (EK2), which was the famous groups that went into the various Russian and Baltic countries to exterminate Jews, but I worked in their garage, and I had--I was a protected Jew for a while. So while they were selecting people, uh, to be killed out-right or to be sent into other camps where they starved to death, I was always--with the morning. We used to line up every morning in certain commandos or groups that were sent to various places in Riga and the SS--they were just walked, marched out, and they never knew who was alive when they came back. But they themselves, in other words members of that particular group, always survived much longer than the ones who worked for other non-SS groups, you know. And so it's all luck. Luck. Luck. Luck, you know.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: That's what it was. I had typhoid, also, towards the end but I--why I couldn't tell you--I survived. So many died fom it, and I was just

lucky that I survived.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: And how about your arm?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: And my arm? I have a human bite on my arm--on my other arm. What's the matter?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: (Laughs)

INTERVIEWER: From?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: From--well, I'll tell you what it was. Again, like Lou said, some--it was in Stutthof--I had a blanket. Very few people had blankets, and there was a woman next to me and she wanted to take my blanket; and I held on to it and so she bit me. And I had an arm like this. So when we were sent away from Stutthof to a labor camp out of Stutthof, there was a Jewish doctor and she took a kitchen knife without--whoever heard of anesthesia--and a fork and she opened it up with the kitchen knife because it was full of pus, and she made out of paper, she made a drain and she put it in. And lucky for me--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: She made it.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --I made it. It's all--why--you will ask me how come I couldn't answer it. You know what I mean. It's just--we just one of the lucky ones, that's all was to it. And for everyone who made it, a few hundred-thousand didn't make it.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, you--she went with her uncles and aunts and cousin, and she's the only one who came out from her family. Now, for instance, our transport--which as a matter of fact was called after the City of Dortmund--was the Dortmund. There were others that came into Riga in 1942, but all those were killed immediately. And so, uh, I would say that our transport maybe had 13-15 hundred people, I'm really not sure of the exact number. I'm sure it can be found out. But I would say that of those people, maybe 50 are alive. So the percentage of people who made it, you know, is small; and everyone has a particular story. I mean, you know, a friend of ours in Chicago who survived,

who lived across the street practically from where I came from, and he was in Buchenwald and he hid. He was suppose to be shipped out, and he hid in a coffin for 3-4 days, and finally he was caught anyway. But by that time he was put together, not with other Jews, but with criminal prisoners who also were in Buchenwald; and these guys were sharp, and you know, they knew every angle. And during an air raid, you know, they just busted out of the train and started scattering about Germany. And he attached himself to one, and that's how he survived. Now I mean all kinds of crazy stories, you know. Another one, uh, a friend of mine who is quite sick now and lives in Burbank, California, uh, who went together with me was shipped from Buchenwald when I went to Boo-come to the camp where I was to the camp called Dora (D-O-R-A) which was in the mountains, and where they made the B2 --where you want B2 bombs--and he was in very, very bad shape. And he was being marched from that camp to Ter-i-seen, and he walks into the camp and my sister was--had a position, if you want to call it that, of receiving new prisoners, and while he was a ghost--I mean he was called a moosel-man because he was skin and bones, he was ready to collapse. He recognized my sister from pictures I had shown him. And then my sister took care of him and nursed him back, and he survived. You know I mean these are all coincidences, you know. They are unbelieveable, you know. And there are not hundreds, there are thousands of them. And I think if you go in to the histories of any of the survivors, I think that you will find that, with very few exceptions, those, those things--I mean ridiculous things happened, you know. Uh, uh, to allow it--to allow them to survive, you

know. It's really unbelieveable.

INTERVIEWER: How much--I mean what part, for people who are not survivors, my family, none of my family are concentration--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Excuse me, are your parents (inaudible)

INTERVIEWER: No. My grandmother was born in Poland. She came out during the pograms. She came back at the turn of the century. My grandfather, on the other side of my family, was American born. So, as I was going to say, for people who don't--who are not, uh, come from, um, do not come from survivor families, it's hard to know how much of your life since the end of the war has been occupied with thoughts. I mean, how much in your everyday life do you think about the Holocaust?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Not very much. Not that really much. It comes up here and there--you see something on T.V., you meet your friends, and you might say, "Oh, do you remember?" You know, this kind of thing. But everyday life, you know, life goes on. And if you're--especially when you want to make a new start in life, you're so busy, uh, trying to live a normal life--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: You put it in the background.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: --and try to put it in the background. I do not think that I am occupied by it that much. It's perhaps in the background, but I find that my everyday living is much more important. I have a nice family, and I find I'm very lucky. And so I don't look at it this way, you know. I'm a positive thinker anyhow. So--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: She certainly is. For her a glass is half full; for me it's half empty.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to ask you, how do you feel and how

much of your everyday life--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Well, I'm very cynical when it comes to the goodness of humanity, to tell you the truth. I may be wrong, but this is how I am. I'm, I'm a doubter. If a person wants to be good, he has to prove it to me, because you have a lot of talk and very little is being done. And when you look around the world, you see what's going on. Uh, you wonder. And I'm certainly one of those people who say it can happen again, and it can even happen here given the right circumstances. And so- I mean, I hope not; and I certainly pray it doesn't happen, but I don't foreclose the possibility, you know. Because I really-- when I think about it, you know, what's happening right now, and the world really does nothing but talk about it, you know. You take the United Nations. One would assume they've learned something from the Holocaust. I personally believe they have learned nothing. As a matter of fact in my opinion, they have gotten worse, you know. Just reading something today in the New York Times just before we came here, in 1938 there was a famous conference in Evian-le-Bank, uh, about the solution to help Jews from Germany. And of the nations, 32 democratic nations, the only one, the only one who offered Jews to come to the country without anything, just a few hundred dollars, was the dictator of Santo Domingo, the General Trujillo. Roosevelt didn't and the whole world didn't do. And that really--that particular instance proved to Hitler that the world didn't give a damn about us. Because they didn't, and so, therefore, he knew that whatever he wanted to do to the Jews he would be able to get away with it, and he did. He proved it. You know, that we--our lives--were just

a matter of time. If the war would have lasted say another six months, I would say that 99 percent of the people who are here today, would not be around. Because I know my father wouldn't have made another week he was in such bad shape. And there were hundreds of thousands, ten thousands like him, you know. And so I just--this is an additional reason why I speak to people. I warn people to, to protect the individual freedoms and to be very careful that they don't lose their rights little by little like we did in Germany, you know. Because Hitler took a little bit today, and three months later he did another thing, you know. And you get used to anything as long as it's gradual, you know. And that's how it was done; that's how we accepted it; that's how the people accepted it; how the Ger--how the world accepted it. And in the meantime we wound up, you know, in a concentration camp.

INTERVIEWER: What do you feel about the--do your feelings about the--like where we are now in the world in terms of anit-Semitisim. Do you feel there's a rise, a new rise of anti-Semitisim, or it's always around?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Nothing that I would call it a rise. I think it was always latent. I don't care where it is, and I think at times it comes out more than others. And, uh--

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Usually in times of, uh, a, a economical slowdown, because that's how Hitler got power in Germany. I mean, you had a situation where people were unemployed, you had a depression; and you had Jews who were only one percent of the population but who had larger percentage of business or professional offices than the average non-Jewish, uh, uh, population. And so people

especially when you have an empty stomach, you become easily jealous. I mean I'm proof of that. You know, I had plenty of empty stomachs. So I can understand that when somebody says, "They are to blame; and if you knock them off or dispose of them, I'm going to give you what they have or whatever is rightly yours." And the Germans went for it. There were quite a few more sympathizers, uh, to the Nazi Party and system than are willing to admit in 1945 and today. You know, let's face it, I mean, uh, somebody was an anti-Semite will only come out of the closet when the situation is right for him to come out. When things are going good and nobody wants to hear about it, uh, he's not very popular; but if somebody has no job, uh, and he's looking for somebody to blame for his problems, whose there? The Jews have always throughout history been there and very convenient, because they are the smallest minority. You know, when somebody wants to pick, you don't pick on the guy with the majority or the 6-foot-5 guys, you pick on the guy who's 5-foot-2 when you are 6-foot or 5-foot-8, right? And that's exactly what it is. It's no different--uh, it hasn't changed. The only thing is, uh, that, that in this country we have a more open society, you know, than in most other countries; and we know about what's going on, and we have at least the opportunity here and there to fight against what's going on, you know, which is something that most people in the world or most Jews in most countries do not have.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Okay. Um, have to talked about the, the--well you talk about the Holocaust all the time. Have you ever been interviewed about it before?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Yes. Uh, in fact we were interviewed--remember the

lady, what was her name?

LEWIS SCHLOSS: I don't remember.

TRUDY SCHLOSS: And then from Washington.

LEWIS SCHLOSS: Somebody from the Justice Department at one time came over because they were--they are prosecuting quote, unquote "a few people after 35 years" and they, they asked us for some information and they spent a couple hours with us. And then there is a Professor Hattenback in New York who is working on a book about the fortunes or misfortunes of the Jews in Latvia and who came to Latvia, who interviewed us; and a number of other people, you know. But that's basically it. We belong to the Riga Survivors Society, and uh, but that's our extent of organizational connection.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you come to this gathering?

TRUDY SCHLOSS: Well, I felt, first, that I wanted to come for whatever emotional reasons; number two, I just felt that we should do it for the six million who didn't make it; and we did not go to the Israeli gathering so we felt we should come at least here.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything else you wanted to add--

TRUDY SCHLOSS: No.

INTERVIEWER: --on your own. No, here. Okay.

LEWIS AND TRUDY SCHLOSS: (Inaudible)