United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Susie Schwarz
September 24, 1998
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Susie Schwarz, conducted by Margaret West on September 24, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Highland, Maryland and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

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Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Susie Schwarz, conducted by Margaret West, on September the 24th, 1998, in Highland, Maryland. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview conducted with Susie Schwarz on February the 14th, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A.

Answer: I'm Susie Schwarz. I was born in Germany, on May the third, 1931 in a little town called Schlichtern, which is near the city of Frankfort, Germany. My father's name was Max Greenbaum -- or Greenbaum and he was born in November of 1897, also in Schlichtern. My mother's maiden name was Kaita Kahn and she came from what is now called Badbuchau, in southern Germany. Her birthdate is December eight, 1903 and for the record, she is still living and well in Baltimore, Maryland. She married my father in March of 1930, after a whirlwind courtship and moved with him to Schlichtern and lived there together with his family, his mother and several siblings. My father, as a trade, worked as a horse -- or was a horse dealer. They sold -- bought and sold horses and sold them mostly to farmers, I believe, and seemed to have made a very good living, because they lived very comfortably there in Schlichtern, as I was told. However, in 1933, he felt that the political situation was such that he was no longer comfortable staying in

Germany. He was worried that things would go from bad to worse and decided to go to England. I was told that he left in search of new opportunities and went to -- through the Netherlands to go to England. However, he stopped in a little town in Holland called Dinksburlow and there he was -- he was given a contact with a family by the name of Pagrach, P-a-g-r-a-c-h. And when he told them that he was going to go to German -- to -- sorry -- to England, they said, “Why don’t you stay here? In the Netherlands, you will be very safe, and they do need a horse dealer here. There are lots of farmers who are always in need of new horses. And also, there are some people that are interested in riding horses.” Well, it appears that he allowed himself to be dissuaded from going to England, and remained. And obviously sent, shortly thereafter, for my mother and me. I, at that time, was two years old. So, the two of us came to Holland and my recollections obviously are not too clear. With regard to my parents beliefs and opinions, I have a feeling that my mother in particular, felt German first, Jewish second. I think my father may have been a little bit more neutral in that area. By the way, my mother came from a fairly Orthodox family. Her father went to synagogue a lot and I don’t know if they had a really, strictly kosher home, but they were fairly observant. My father’s family, however, was not. I don’t think they were either very religious or very much associated with a synagogue or community, as such. I think they were more interested in their business and my grandfather, incidentally, also was in the same line of business -- my paternal grandfather. And interestingly, my mother’s father was a cattle dealer, slash, farmer. I am not too sure how politically active or conscious they were, other than the threat of

Nazism. But, other than that, I don't think they were involved in any party or political organizations. My father did serve in the German army in the first World War. I do not know in what capacity, but he was a soldier, I don't know what rank he ever -- if any, he achieved. In any case, my mother's family, just to complete the picture, consisted of her parents, a brother -- an older brother and sister, who incidentally, went to Israel in '37 or '38. The mother, having been left behind for good reasons, because they wanted to establish themselves first in Israel, and therefore, the mother remained in Buchau -- Badbuchau. My father's family consisted of three brothers, two sisters and of course, my father. All of the former went to the United States also, in -- I assume it was in 1938, with the exception of one younger brother, who also went to the Netherlands. So, that is for background information on the family in Germany. I --

Q: What happened to the brother in the Netherlands?

A: Good question. The brother in the Netherlands, did not think that anything was going to happen to him. Incidentally, he lived in Amsterdam, and when my father did say to him -- his name was Ludwig, "Ludwig, things are getting tight. Don't you think you should go into hiding?" Ludwig had responded, "No, I'm going to go to Westerbork, and I know that's where many of them are going and I'm sure I will be all right." Obviously, he was not all right, he was killed in Sobibór. However, all the others, they lived and thrived in Baltimore, Maryland. So, to get back to Holland, we -- we settled in -- in Holland. These very nice people by the name of Pagrach found us a home and incidentally, they almost become surrogate family to us. They found us a home across the

street and I seemed to have really bonded with them, calling them Uncle Ohm -- Ohm and Tumter and Oma and Opa, in lieu of having any Omas or Opas around me. So, my father started his new life and seemed to do quite nicely, I think, from an economic point of view, we -- we were all right. My mother was and still is, a very gregarious woman and she quickly made friends. In the German Jewish community, it seems that in the town of Dinksburlow, a lot of German Jews came over the border and settled there. And my mother managed to make contact with some of them and she used to have her Saturday afternoon coffee klatches with them and seemed to be fairly content with her life, although I think living in a small town like that must have been a little bit frustrating to her. I really don't know if she was always very happy living in Dinksburlow.

Q: Was she a very cultivated person, who'd love music and theater and so on that cities -- city life would offer?

A: No, unfortunately she was not -- was not and is not. She was a very good looking, young woman and I think somewhat indulged in by both her father, as well as my father. She was more interested in being courted than perhaps going to theaters, to concerts, to movies, etcetera. She read. I don't know how much she read, but she read. I really don't know what her interests at that time were, other than to be able to set a nice table and to entertain her friends. And my father was a very, very good provider, but he too did not seem to be very much connected with -- he was quiet with the community. He would go on Saturdays to synagogue, which was the proper thing for everyone to do. He would play cards, I believe, perhaps once a week with some of, again, the German Jews. They

led a fairly self-contained life and there was really not much culture in and around that area. And this is sort of the atmosphere I grew up in. I adored my mother. I was very much attached to her, to the point where I would be with her if I could have been with her, morning, noon and night. I was less attached to my father. I guess I admired my mother. She was a very good looking, always very well groomed, dressed lady and I must have been quite taken by that.

Q: You were an only child?

A: Yes.

Q: And I'm interested in knowing if you would suppose that to be the case because by the time you were born, there was clear -- clearly ominous signs on the horizon?

A: Yes. I asked my mother once why it was that I was an only child and she said, "Well, the circumstances were not exactly propitious to have more children. And of course, obviously, it was -- it was a g -- inadvertently, it was a good decision, because I think it would have been very difficult for us to have found two hiding place -- I mean, hiding places for several children. I don't think I considered myself to be a very spoiled child, but I don't know, of course, that's not for me to judge. My mother was very, very strict, a fairly tough taskmaster or mistress and I was expected to obey and she -- in many ways she controlled me quite a bit, because if I were offered a cookie by a stranger, I would look and see if she would nod and say yes, you may take the cookie, or no you may not take the cookie. And expected to make my little curtsy when I shook hands with somebody and things like that. She -- She was strict, my dad was not. He was more -- I

think he was more loving, a little warmer than she. I -- It's very hard to recall the en -- really, the environment too much. It -- I think, in many ways, that I perhaps got more nurturing from my adopted family, the Pagrachs or more attention from the Pagrachs, than I might have gotten at home. It's very difficult to describe this so many, many years later. In any case --

Q: Well, you know a thought occurs to me. It's interesting that your mother would seem to be perhaps a -- a little self centered and yet, when tested by life, she came through with such flying colors, of courage and fortitude and optimism, which is remarkable. I wonder if you think those strengths in both your parents really came through s -- a spiritual sense? A s -- Convictions that were deep in the background?

A: I doubt it. I really, really doubt it, but I think your point is well taken. There was this sort of -- well, what? They were not -- They were not as warm or giving as I think they could have been. I don't know, but spiritual? I think it was a matter of, we have to survive, we want to survive and no further thoughts were given to it. It's very possible. In any event, I would say it was a -- a good childhood, it was nothing extraordinary. I -- I got what I think I should have gotten and what I needed and I had my little friends, who would come to the house and play with me. I read a lot, I went to the library and got very many books and I was encouraged to read. I think my mother read to me. My mother, incidentally played the piano and would play for me sometimes. But, I have no remembrances of either one of my parents ever playing with me, playing games or really doing very many so-called fun things. I've tried to -- to think if there were instances and

the only instance I can remember where I was taken somewhere just for my pleasure, was some -- I guess you would call it a very fancy playground in another town. But then again, my town, Dinksburlow, did not have many opportunities for very many activities, so we had to make our own. We certainly managed to do that and did it very, very well, I think. So life in Dinksburlow really went on with friends and this -- the Pagrachs.

Q: Now you had taken identity papers from the Pagrachs when you went into hiding. What was the purpose for doing that?

A: No, I did not take identity papers of the Pagrachs when I went into hiding. I got those papers after the war. After the war, the Pagrachs came back to Dinksburlow to, they were in hiding. One sister perished, her name was Lien and I had the letter from the Red Cross in which they notified the family that Lien had died in Sobibór. I got that letter from Lien's sister, whose name was Berta -- Bertha, and she also gave me other papers.

Q: I see.

A: And those are the papers I also turned over to the museum.

Q: Yes. So, was she -- was she also a child?

A: No. The Pagrachs, there was a brother and there were two sisters and they were all contemporaries of my parents. And the oldest sister came to the United States and lived near us and as I said, I considered her truly an aunt and a member of the family and had a lot of fondness for her, and m -- when she came to -- we had her come to the United States and when she came to New York and couldn't live there any longer, we moved her to Rockville and we looked after her there.

Q: Now, moving along, what I was interested in knowing how you -- how your father arranged the hiding places and whether his ability to reward somebody financially had any role in that. O-Or whether people would be given help through the organized resistance.

A: Mm-Hm. Well, my father and -- arranged -- it was not done through an organized resistance. My father, because he knew very many farmers, had sort of, in a discreet way, tried to find who could he trust, who could he not trust and who could he contact and who could he not contact. And found -- And knew a farmer with whom he had been doing business and had sort of dropped a hint, saying, you know, things are getting tough for us and when push comes to shove, I think we -- we probably have to try and hide ourselves rather than report. And this man, whose name was Yolink and this figures very prominently in my survival, said, “Well, I have these --,” I think they were cousins of his and they were sh -- teachers. And he said, “They are involved in the underground movement, or in the resistance movement and why don’t you talk to them, because I think they may know some people. But,” he said, “I, myself, would be more than happy to take you.” And, so that was arranged, that my father would meet those two ladies. And they -- And they’d had probably a number of addresses, one -- two of whom were the people where we ended up being in contact with. But, above all, Mr. Yolink said to my father, “I would be happy to kee-keep you, but not your wife and child, because I can only take one person.” And that’s how we came to Yolink and then my father learned about the other families, but did not meet them at all. It was just a name -- two names that

were given to him. And one of the families had said they would take me and the other family said they'd take my mother and her mother, my grandmother, who, remember I said, had been left behind in Germany, and came to live with us.

Q: Mm-hm. Why do you think these people did this and put their lives on the line?

A: I think these people are -- first of all, they were -- especially the Hartamings where we stayed, were very deeply religious, they were Dutch Reformed and the Yolinks were also Dutch Reformed, perhaps a tad less religious than the Hartamings were. I think it was religion, slash, humanitarian need to help your fellow man, because interestingly -- and I'm jumping ahead a little bit now, when I have spoken to them about why, they -- they sort of look at me in amazement and they say, "Well, we'd do it all over again." And Yolink's son said, "Well, I don't think it was such a big deal." Well, it was a big deal indeed, because, after all, they put their lives and their farms and their families on the line for us, but over and over, over the years, they have said, no, they would do it again and it was only the right thing to do. So, I guess it was indeed Christian as well as humanitarian.

Q: Yes. I'm jumping ahead also, to that wonderful moment you describe, o-of the -- at the end of the war, when you gave thanks in the kitchen. And I wonder if you'd talk more about that. And I was interested also, when your host family -- and I think it was the mother who prayed, were -- did you also -- those of you who were Jewish, did you also offer thanks? Do you remember if there was more to the ceremony?

A: Well, it wasn't really a ce -- I don't know if it wa -- it wasn't really a ceremony, it was all -- the war was over and we all came out of our little crevices and, as I had mentioned before, we sat around this, what looked to me like a huge, round table, the same table they sat at every night and they ate their porridge and then they played the organ and they sang hymns. So that the day of liberation, Mutter Hartaming, Mother Hartaming said, "Well, we should all sit down and eat," I guess the porridge or whatever it was, together and all of us did there, six, seven children, Father and Mutter Hartaming. My mother, my father and I, two or three other young men that were s-semi hiding there and our neighbors, whom I talked about on my tape, that had crawled into the hole with us for the last few weeks. And we all sat around that table and then Mutter Hartaming simply said, "Well, let us pray." And we all sat and we bowed our heads and then she said, "I want to thank the good Lord for having allowed us to survive this and to be able to save --" and she named all of us and sort of said, "We thank the good Lord." And we all sat and then we said amen, and that was it and I think there were many a wet -- not too many dry eyes left after that. Also, I think the Sunday after our liberation, we came back to the farm to accompany all of them to the church for a service, where we sat and prayed with them. We looked at the prayer books and prayed with them. Being Jewish didn't make any difference. And it was a very beautiful moment.

Q: Do you have a memory of the shape that people were in physically then? Would your parents -- I mean, would you be sitting in your -- the arms of one of your parents at that

farmhouse table and think you were very weak, at the end of the war, but I wonder if the others too, were poorly nourished and ragged in your clothing and so on?

A: As a matter of fact, no. I think all of us who came out, probably looked as well as we did when we went in. My mother, who was blonde, I think her har -- her hair may have darkened a little bit. And I had gotten rather heavy and I think part of this was due to the illness, coupled with inactivity and I think I was a rather roly-poly, with long hair. My father looked the same as he always did and the farmers themselves -- of course, we did not suffer from any malnourishment. We were always very adequately provided for. It may not have been gourmet food, but it certainly was good food and we -- what they had, they shared with us. So no, I think -- and clothing-wise, it's funny -- I don't remember that too well, I know I must have outgrown the few clothes that I had when I went in, but I also know that as soon as we came out, someone gave me clothes, perhaps some friends, to fit me and my mother immediately went in search of her dressmaker and found some material to have herself some dresses made. And dad had probably the same clothes he had before the war, so there was no -- no problem there, and I know when the war was over, we went back to Dinksburlow and the first thing I did -- and I don't know why I did it, I had, at that time, very long braids, and I had them cut off, because I thought I had to start to look a little older, but I don't think it helped.

Q: And you -- your mother was blonde, you were dark-haired as a child, and that would increase the risk of you being discovered, is that right?

A: Precisely. My mother looked far -- well, my mother almost looked -- almost looked Aryan, because of her blonde hair, her sort of bluish gray eyes, whereas my father and I were typically Semitic looking people, very dark and that was another reason it was fortunate that I could go to the farm with my mother, rather than to the farm that I was pegged to go to, because I could not have been free to roam around, since I did look too Jewish.

Q: They do -- I was struck by the kindness of the farm people, which you talk about also. The occasion when you became sick with rheumatic fever, was when the farm daughter had stayed with you, because it was one of -- your mother's only visit, I think, to your father, but I thought it's -- it's striking kindness and sharing that went on.

A: Oh, they were, they -- they all, each and every one of them were absolutely warm and loving and wonderful. The -- Actually, the father -- the head of the household, if you will, we had very little interactions with and I think this was considered really to be a -- a women thing.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview, with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number one, side B.

A: Well, of course, with respect to my childhood, there are memories. They're all sort of jumbled. There is the memory of my grandmother coming, which was a major, major event. She was my uncle's -- my uncle and aunt had left to go to Israel, she was left

behind. And then, I think in ‘39, it was decided that she would come and stay with us until she could go to what was then still Palestine. And she was set to go -- she must have been in her late 60’s, to me she looked ancient -- and came to a border town with all her earthly belongings, her jewelry and lots of luggage and she was sent back, which was a tremendous blow and I really don’t know why that happened, but she was sent back to Germany and then was not able to come back til the following year, which was already in 1940 or maybe it was even ‘41, I don’t know. And when she came to live with us, I was very, very happy, because she did give me a lot of attention and she was always busy knitting, knitting sweaters for me and for my friends and would bake cakes and cookies and I would be allowed to help her. And she was very wonderful and my father, too, enjoyed her very, very much. But I think she was rather frail, and I mentioned this on the tape, too, she -- she died a few days before we went into hiding and that was all very traumatic and very, very sad. But she played really a major role in my life.

Q: What would happen to all your worldly goods when you went into hiding?

A: Our worldly goods -- some of our worldly goods were hidden, too. There were a few contacts again that my father had, that said they would keep some of the furniture and furnishings. And I know -- I think the silver was buried in the ground near our house. And some of the worldly goods were simply abandoned when we left -- when we went into hiding. And when we came back after the war -- first of all, our house was 90 -- 85 percent destroyed and my father said some of the furniture, he could even find in the woods, still, it was just chopped up. But the people that had taken the bulk of it, returned

it all to us and the silver and the crystal and whatever it was, was uncovered and it all came with us to the United States. So we were very lucky that we could retrieve a lot of the things we had. After the war, it was really rough too, to pick up the pieces again and I don't know if we should talk about that yet.

Q: Yeah, I -- I also wondered -- you mentioned on the videotape, your father, the day he left to go into hiding. Do you remember more about that moment or that day of saying good-bye to him? It must have been hard.

A: No, I don't remember. I do know he left well ahead of us and I don't remember, for example, a very dramatic good-bye or a hugging, kissing. He -- He left. I'm not sure if it was on the same day or perhaps the day before. He too -- He left alone, that I know, on his bicycle and I have a feeling that he went to this sort of in between house, where we also were taken to. And then, I was not aware of contact with my father, but my mother said that the farmers were in touch and knew he was all right and he was well. And interestingly, now that I have gone back to the farm quite a number of times, I realize he was far closer to us than I thought at that time we were. As a matter of fact, I would say he was in 10 minutes walking distance from us, which was not far. But, at that time, I think -- I thought it was very, very far. It was -- Go ahead.

Q: I was just thinking of possessions. Were there particular things that you had in your knapsack when you went into hiding, that really comforted and were precious to you or to you and your mother during the years of hiding?

A: Well, I don't think it was really a knapsack -- it may have been a knapsack, it may have been a suitcase. As a matter of fact, I think some of our personal things were taken to the farmers in advance of our going there, which must have included some clothing items, because when we went on the bike, the evening that we were taken to the farm, I don't remember that we had anything with us. So, clothing and some personal items were taken along, but I don't remember that anything specific of mine went along with me. Perhaps a few books, I know my mother had a few books. But all during our hiding time, I really did not see any -- many personal belongings, other than probably some blankets that we slept on, and pillows that were in our hiding place with us, but nothing more personal came along. Come to think of it, I must have left all my books and toys, or whatever it was, behind. And I must have also left it behind without looking back or giving it further thoughts, because perhaps it wasn't meaningful enough or it was just, well, we had to go and don't think more about it.

Q: Do you ever have dreams and if so, sort of what has -- what have you dreamt of, of this time?

A: That's a very good question to ask, because I've been talking about that a lot. I had dreams after the war was over and for many, many years -- subsequent years, including after I came to the United States and it was always the same dream, namely, I had two very good friends. They lived within shouting distance, if you will, of where we lived. Their name was Menist, M-e-n-i-s-t. There was a boy, he was the grandson of the local rabbi and his sister and my parents were very good friends with their parents. And we

were always playing. As a matter of fact, I would almost say they were amongst my best friends, and they were deported. And after the war, I dreamt that I were -- I dreamt that they had survived and they came back. And I would go to their house, where they lived, and there would be a woman and perhaps it was the mother who said, “Well, you can’t see them today, but come back tomorrow.” And then my dr-dream continued. I would go back and she would always say, “Well, you can’t see them now, but come back tomorrow.” And that dream haunted me for years and years and years after the war. And, as I said before, even after I arrived in the United States. And that was about the only dream.

Q: Did you ever find out what had happened to them?

A: Yes. They were both killed in Sobibór, too. Most of the Jews in the village where we were, were taken to Sobibór and I know that for a fact, because of the research I’ve done. And speaking of the Menist children, they too were a big part in my life, because th-the grandfather was the local rabbi and he attempted to give us Hebrew lessons, instill some Jewishness in us and we would meet every week, on Sunday, in his kitchen and he would teach us a little bit of history and little bit of the reading. But I was never very interested and besides, Eeshe, the boy -- there were two other boys, who were also friends of mine. And the rabbi was very critical of me because I wouldn’t come to service every Saturday as he thought I should. I did go sometimes. I would sit in the women’s section and instead of reading a prayer book, I would read Tilonspiegel. And he would sometimes come home from the synagogue and walk through the streets to go home and I would be

out on the street playing and then on Sunday I would arrive at his house and he said, “I saw you playing with the Gentile children. I don’t want to see that any more.” And then one day he said to me, “You are not coming to synagogue often enough and the reason, Oma Pagrach is ill, is because you don’t come to the synagogue enough.” And I -- I guess I must have been about eight, nine, 10, I don’t know, and it was, I got very angry at that and I said, “I’m not staying here.” I got up and I was ready to leave, and Eeshe, his grandson said, “Well, shall I keep her?” And he said, “No, let her go.” And I ran out of there and it was bitter cold, without a coat. And on my way home, I see a little girlfriend, I say, “Go back there and fetch my coat.” And I walked into the house and I said to my mother, “I will not go back, because he blames me for Oma Pagrach being ill.” And my mother said, “I agree with you.” And that was the end of my Jewish education and so therefore, I’m totally uneducated and that was an incident I remembered quite well. Sadly, of course, he too was deported and died in Sobibór.

Q: Would they have thought of leaving the country, do you know? Wh-What was in my mind was whether he would feel that it was important that he continue with his people t- to the end.

A: Again, I think that -- no, I think he -- he would not have contemplated leaving and I think that he also would -- I don’t know if he had any sort of philosophy, I want to stay with my people or with my flock til the end. He was old, he was -- I think he was primitive. But how do I know, I was so young. I think he just went, as many of the others went. He met his fate and apparently, I was told afterwards, he must have been very upset

when they were collected on the marketplace to be sent wherever it was. He was very agitated and angry. But just like all the others, he met his fate and that was that. There was another women there whom we knew. Her name was Mrs. Schwab. She was also German and my father, toward the very end, mentioned that he could find her a place. And she was one who said, “Well, I’m not going to go because they won’t have kosher food.” I think I mentioned that in my tape. And she was, of course, killed, together with all the others. It was a nice town and I think the people were very nice, but I think they all knew -- many of them knew that things would not continue to go well for them and there were always rumors and they were always speculating what is going to happen to us.

Q: I wanted to -- you to tell me, first of all, in your first few months in hiding, when you were in the coffin, what do you remember about following each day and having a sense of time then? And then go on to tell me how your mother coped and whether she was able to deal with the situation more ably than your father in his hiding place. And to what extent she always kept up her defenses.

A: Interestingly, my recollections of the coffin are fairly vague. I see it in front of me, how we went into it and we were lying on those huge sacks of milled flour, I think it was and it had a very dr -- it was very dry and stuffy. It was as if you are constantly inhaling dust, but of course it didn’t -- there was an odor to it, too. So, it was big enough that we could stretch out in it and we were lying there. I don’t think we could sit [indecipherable] positive. And they would -- they put us in there and we had a little receptacle in case we had to use the toilet facilities. And must have been given some food. What I do remember

quite well though, is at night, the daughter, or one of the daughters would come, open the lid and told us to go out, because this was in a -- in an attic-like place. Opened up the lid, we would go out, stretch, walk and we were given food at that time and I guess maybe we washed ourselves. It's -- It is truly very vague. And while we were lying in there, my mother and I would of course talk incessantly and she always tried to put a positive thing on everything, this is only going to be a short time, they are going to find us another place and told me stories, which she did the whole time anyhow. But also, during that time, I wasn't well. And I think that was the -- probably already a forerunner of what was to come, because one evening, when the daughter took us out, I had chills and I was really not feeling well. I had the sore throat already. So, mother was ma -- mother was positive and I was, I think, fairly weepy and well, we stayed there and I wish I remembered how long it was. I can't believe it was all too long and then we were transferred to the other wonderful palace that I called it, that we occupied for the remainder of the time. And, with respect to my father, there was little contact and strange, I -- I wasn't homesick for my father. I think I was too busy trying to adjust to that life that I had to lead there with my mother, that I could not think too much about my father's absence. It was [indecipherable]

Q: Tell me about the one occasion when your mother did let her feelings -- reveal her feelings to you, of disappointment.

A: And it was only one occasion that that happened. It was during the time -- it must have been in '44, I think, when the allies had this aborted invasion of the Netherlands, near

Ironham, I think that's eventually, what the movie, "One Bridge Too Far," was based on and they were sent back and we had hoped that the end was in sight, and we were all so euphoric about it all. And then it all came to naught and then my mother was very down, I would almost say depressed, and said, "I don't think we'll ever get out of here." And another thing she said to Mutter Hartaming, "I guess if you had known that it would last this long, would you have taken -- you wouldn't have taken us." And she said, "We took you, no matter how long it would be." But my mother is one of these people who you can't keep down too long and she recovered from this tremendous disappointment and the farmer said to, "An end will come and you have to continue to hope." So, we went on.

Q: Well, I wanted to ask you about -- your mother told you stories, that helped to pass the time. Has that been important in your life since then?

A: Yes and no. Of course, many of the stories have stayed with me and many of the songs that she has taught me have stayed with me and I really savor them and enjoy it, is it important? Has it made a difference in my life? I don't know, I don't know what the answer to that would be. My mother wo -- as I said, I was very connected to her as a young child, I was afraid to leave her and yet she was -- I mentioned that too, she was very strict as -- very strict, a real disciplinarian of the old school. And she continued this after the war, too and I think I rebelled a lot and became very -- in some ways, she was very intim -- controlling and intimidating and I think I had a hard time working on that and working through all that. So, am I really answering? Yes, there are a lot of things that

stayed with me and that I remember very well and remember with fondness. And the other side of it is that there are also a lot of things that I remember very well, with not that much fondness, because I think her being so very controlling, has, in some ways, at times, hampered me in my development.

Q: In what sort of ways are you -- and -- and when would you have been working through that? In the -- Would that have begun in -- when you went to the Montessori school in Utrecht, sort of, or in your years here alone?

A: I think, in my years here in America, alone, although -- because even while I was at Montessori, I still felt very controlled by her. I was controlled as a young child, i.e. the cookie incident where, you know, you shouldn't always take -- accept cookies or whatever. And in Montessori, it was a boarding school and I only went home on occasions, but even then, I was supposed to -- to do her bidding. And I think one of the reasons that I went to the United States when I did, and as I did, was probably to get -- become a little bit more independent, because I think I realized that she was too -- too controlling. And my father was not at all, but she was and I think that continued through my early and late adolescence and even my early adulthood.

Q: On the other hand, I cannot imagine that you would have survived if you had been in hiding, not allowed to come out of your hiding place, without your mother.

A: That's correct. You're right. Her -- Her -- Her strength and her dominance was what got us through. I think if she hadn't been as strong as she was and if she hadn't been the no-nonsense type of person that she was, and if she hadn't been as resourceful, I think it

may have been very difficult. And I always have to think of her having to be there with a -- a young child between the ages of 12 and 14, and it was no easy task.

Q: This was not a normal adolescence.

A: No, it was not -- it was not at all a normal adolescence and interestingly, I can't even -- I can't even identify what -- what was right at that time or not. I mean, what kind of thinking I had. You know, girls of 12 and 14 have their interests and problems and so on. I don't even know what, if any, I had, other than there is tomorrow and the next day and the next day and all those days really had very little to offer. Of course, in hiding, one of the highlights was that I was being taught on occasion by the farmers. The daughter's fiancé, and that was really very, very wonderful.

Q: And that sounded as if your mother's resourcefulness had been at work.

A: Yeah, mm-hm.

Q: He's a teacher, he can be trusted.

A: Yeah.

Q: And immediately, that was under way.

A: Yes, it was her resourcefulness, as well as the farmer's daughter, who suggested that she bring in her fiancé. A-After all, he was trustworthy, his family was hiding people, too. So, yes, and mother encouraged that, of course and that was good. And also, after the war was over, it was she who must have come up with the idea of my going to Montessori school, realizing that I could not stay in the little school in the village, which would have been a disaster. And sent me to that Montessori school and I still have to find

out how they were able to fund all that, cause it must have been frightfully expensive, it being a boarding school, slash, lyceum.

Q: Yeah. Why was the -- Why would it have been a disaster to be at the village school?

A: Very -- The reason it would have been a disaster is, I should have been at the -- at 14, I should have been in the middle school, and had I stayed in the village -- and I was in school there, I was in six or seventh grade, so I was in with the wrong age group and that was not very comfortable. Also, I had difficulties. Remember, I had missed school for many, many years and it was very hard to catch up. And I think the reason the Montessori school came along as my -- again, the Pagrachs suggested my mother take me to the city of Arnam and have some testing done to see what I was capable of doing. And I do remember I was taken to Arnam, which at the time was considered to be the big city, and I was tested and when the report came back, it said that perhaps I should be sent to a school where I could progress at my own speed and see what would happen to me and then make a decision later on. And I think that's how the Montessori came about, which was really a terrific decision, because again, the Montessori school was very good for me. I could indeed progress at my own speed. I may have progressed in the wrong areas, because I concentrated more on -- on learning languages and literature and history rather than in math. But, it was a good environment, I was around young people my own age for the first time ever. And it was a little bit of an adjustment to be suddenly thrown into this -- this type of an environment. It was a fairly exclusive school and very, very small. But, I made some friends and I was very happy there. I had a very nice time and we'd go

home every few weeks for a weekend and in turn would be invited at some newly made friends home for a weekend and it was a rather posh school. We learned dancing and sailing and hockey and tennis and it was all very nice. But, then, after two years at Montessori, I was 16 and had I stayed at Montessori, I would have ultimately have to take what they call a state or a final exam, to matriculate, and I was very concerned about it, too, because I did not know if I was up to par. And the family in the United States kept agitating that I should come and spend a year there, just to forget about what had happened or -- and I think the reason they did that too, because they were hoping that my parents, particularly my father would ultimately come and be reunited with his siblings. So, I said yes. I guess, to me, it was an adventure to go across the big ocean to the United States and to be independent and go on my -- be on my own, although I had to -- I was going to live with my father's family. So, the idea was for me to go for a year, go to school in Baltimore and then come back. And, in the Montessori school, of course, the children all thought that was pretty neat [indecipherable] someone to go to United States, because United States was still Hollywood, big cars and all these wonderful --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: -- continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number two, side A. The Montessori school.

A: The Montessori school, there was one other Jewish girl there, her name was Marishka. I think she was Hungarian and I really don't know anything about her background. Either she had been in hiding, too, or perhaps she came -- I don't think she survived a camp. And all the other children that were there were children of, I guess some of the Dutch, either aristocracy, as there were some -- a few girls, they were vaguely connected to the royal family and a lot of children whose parents were still in Indonesia, and the parents being Indonesia, they sent the children to school. But it was all very democratic and really very nice.

Q: Was that quite a sacrifice for your parents to send you there, or did the school give scholarships, or --

A: I -- The school definitely, definitely did not give scholarships and it must have been a sacrifice, because I cannot imagine that it was very inexpensive. It was -- As I said, it was a very small school, it was a very exclusive setting and the type of children that were sent there, I think it must have been fairly expensive, and I really don't know where the money came from, if my father had indeed done that well again, or if someone lent them the money, I don't know. But, I do think it was a wonderful thing that they did for me, having sent me to that school instead of suffering through another school.

Q: Yes, I wonder if you have any memories about the attitudes of the other children there? Were they at all anti-Semitic? Did you talk openly about what had happened? Not just the -- to the Jews, but really, do you remember discussions about the war, and what they'd all si -- gone through?

A: I remember one specific incidence, because this is interesting. I'm sure I must have talked about it, and I had one friend who -- well, who roomed with me. As a matter of fact, there were two girls. We sh -- There were three of us in one room. And one of whom I became very friend -- good friends with, she w -- visited me in the United States. I think she immigrated here eventually, herself. And no feeling of anti-Semitism whatsoever. I think the headmaster was Jewish, I'm fairly sure. However, one of the roommates was a young woman who had come from Curacao and asked me home for a weekend and I accepted and I went home with her in a neighboring town and I remember a remark she made, oh, her family really liked me, although in general, they were not too keen on Jews. And that was fortunately the one and only remark that was made and I don't even remember how I responded to it, or how I handled it. I do know I never did invite her to my house, nor did I ever go with her again. But we stayed on very good terms.

Q: You know, I'm -- I'm remembering that when I was first told your story in just brief details, in my mind, of course, was Anne Frank and her diary, but, do you think that there are any things in Anne Frank's story or experiences that are -- that you share in common with her? Superficially, your experiences were very similar.

A: The experiences were very similar. As a matter of fact, I think, age-wise, we were fairly close. Interestingly, she came from Frankfort, which was not that far from Schlichtern. No, I really don't think so. I alway think, having of course read her diary several times, she was more -- a much more introspective, much more thinking person at that age than I was, ergo her diary. When I wrote my so-called cookbook diary, which I interspersed with little things, they were never very thoughtful or significant, other than what was going on with the war, what the family, meaning the farmers, were doing, and what my mother and I were doing, whereas I think Anne Frank led a more -- ma-maybe more profound life, a more thinking life. I think she came from a very different environment than I did, too. So, do I have anything in common with her, other than that we were hidden? No, I don't think so. I saw her hiding place this summer and of course, compared to my hiding place, they were living in luxurious quarters. But, those luxurious quarters were not that good for them.

Q: Yes. It does -- It seems to me, too, that she may have been more living a life of the mind when you were also so bonded with your mother, who may have been discouraging that. You may have survived emotionally unscathed, as you said you had, partly because you were keeping in the present. Maybe remaining a child longer than you would have otherwise.

A: I think I did remain a child much longer than I would have under normal circumstance, or even if we are comparing or trying to see if there's any connection or -- or whatever, with Anne Frank. I think I was more connected with my mother than Anne

was with her -- both her parents. And yes, I was kept a child and that may have helped me, too. I think I was not yet a real adolescent and Anne Frank was, even beyond that. And perhaps that is why I consider I came out of there un -- relatively unscathed, because I still came out as a child. I was a child at 14. I think I was still a child at 16 and perhaps that was to the good.

Q: And it may have been a blessing, yes.

A: Yes, it -- perhaps it was to the good, I think.

Q: Yes. And, what about physically, the physical aftermath of the -- the hiding?

A: Physically, of course, when I -- while I -- when I was in hiding, I started menstruating and became aware that I was a woman, but even that was taken very much as -- it was a non-event. It was -- matter of fact, it was a nuisance, because, given the circumstances we were in, it was not very pleasant. But I never thought, “All right, now you -- you have passed a threshold and now you’re entering womanhood.” These things never occurred to me. I also did not have romantic fantasies, as -- again, as Anne Frank did. I think I became aware of boys when I went to boarding school, where I did -- well, had my little flirtations with the boys, because, by the way, I think I did mention, it was a -- the first coed Montessori school, too. And, you know, we all had our little fantasies and so-called romances, but I was a child and my family in Baltimore, they confirmed that, too. They said when they picked me up and brought me to their home, they were very surprised how -- what a young child I was at 16, because, after all, in the United States, even then, at 16, the girls and the boys are more -- more forward, more developed and of course, not

as sheltered. I was a very, very sheltered child before the war and even somewhat after the war.

Q: Mm, it's u -- it's actually a funny term to use, you being sheltered, captive.

A: [indecipherable] Right. I was sheltered in more ways than one. I was emotionally sheltered and physically sheltered.

Q: Yeah. Now, what about -- do you have any physical problems that resulted from your rheumatic fever and from those years of little movement, and --

A: Well, physical problems were just that I developed -- because of the rheumatic fever, they think that was the cause of a -- a mitral valve, or heart murmur. But it did not hinder me in any way as a young woman, I participated in the swimming and the tennis and everything else. That only manifested itself in later years, maybe because this valve has seepage or leaking and as I got older, it became a little bit more debilitating, til finally, in 1988, it got so debilitating that the decision was made to repair that valve. So, as I like to say, in 1988, I had a valve job and in 1998, it is still holding up, so the warranty ran out and it's still going strong and I don't think I have, other than the brief period of time when it was somewhat incapacitating, with shortness of breath, things like a rapid heartbeat, it has not really kept me from doing all the things that I've always enjoyed doing, such as hiking, tennis and all the other fun activities.

Q: Let's move on to that story now, of coming to Baltimore. How did you come? Where did you live, what did you begin to do and so on?

A: I came to Baltimore, as I said, supposedly for one year. How did I come to Baltimore? In ‘47, it was still very difficult to move around, and my family managed to book passage for me on the SS Ernie Pyle -- you know, Er-Ernie Pyle was a war correspondent and this troop ship was named after him and then it was converted to transport people. But, I had to pick up that ship in Lahavre and my parents could not go. By the way, they never got their Dutch citizenship, they kept their ger -- well, we were stateless. I came on a stateless passport to the United States. But, again, a friend of the Pagrach’s said he would accompany me as far as Paris. And then, in Paris, we connected with another young woman who was also going to board that ship. So, my parents took me to the train in Amsterdam and we said good-bye and I think --

Q: Tell me about that good-bye.

A: That must have been difficult, but again, it’s hazy and I don’t remember a thing, other than going to the train, getting on the train and it must have been a sleeper, I would think, and getting off in Paris, with this man who was a cousin of the family Pagrach, who incidentally, was a survivor from a camp. Had dreadful, dreadful stories to tell. Wonderful person. And he came with me to Paris and then in Paris we met this woman, her name was Margot Faulk, I remember her name and I remember also the first evening we were there, this man and this woman wanted to go to the -- the Moulin Rouge or one of these clubs and they didn’t know what to do with me and decided to take me along. Oh, it was called the Casino de Paris and for me that was big adventure.

Q: You were 16?

A: I was 16. Sweet 16. And I don't even remember the hotel we stayed in. I only do remember we went to this Casino de Paris and must have then, the next day, said good-bye to this man and went by train to Lahavre, where we boarded this, what looked to me, enormous ship. And there were thous -- I don't know how many people on this ship. And we didn't have cabins, we were in sort of dormitories and there was a dormitory for men and a dormitory for women. A lot of farmers were going on that ship and I -- my guess is the-they were a lot of Dutch and maybe Belgian and French, who could not make it any more in Europe and went either to the United States or to Canada, which actually, several of our -- of our farm families children did, they moved to Toronto and neighboring areas.

Q: Are -- That's cause it was -- life was hard in Europe?

A: Yeah, mm-hm. So, we got on this ship, this woman, Mar-Margot and I and I was mighty glad to have her, because I would have been totally lost and I -- I was rather timid and not very happy at that point. Now, that I remember very well. It's interesting, I don't remember saying good-bye to my parents and don't remember details of the Paris stay, but I do remember being overwhelmed by that big boat. And then we were assigned a bunkbed. I think they were triple bunks and I remember we had to eat in the cafeteria and this Margot and I amused ourselves. We were sort of left to our own devices and it was a 10 day journey. I was a little bit seasick and I think I was quite homesick already then, too. But she -- she was very wonderful. I think she ended up going to Canada, but I'm not too sure.

Q: What language would you speak?

A: She spoke Dutch.

Q: Yes, so that was --

A: Yes. And incidentally, yes -- so she spoke Dutch and most -- a lot of the people on the boat were Dutch, but we did not have too much contact with them.

Q: Were many of them Jews, or were they a real mixture?

A: I don't think so. I -- I don't know. I don't think so. I only remember all these women in that huge dormitory and then in the morning, the men would come and say, "Well, it's time to get up." And again, most of the journey was fairly vague. Obviously, it was quite uneventful, but this Margot and I became good friends and remained in touch with one another for a couple of years afterwards. So, the 10 days -- after the 10 days passed, we approached New York harbor and I knew my father's oldest brother and his wife would meet us.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Now --

Q: Di -- Well, did you s -- You'd come into New York harbor where you'd see the Statue of Liberty?

A: Yeah, I saw it.

Q: Would you -- Where would you --

A: Well, I was quite impressed and overwhelmed and I saw the skyscrapers and I found it all to be very, very interesting, but of course, I was also very frightened and intimidated by it all. So, we were standing on the top deck and I recognized my father's brother,

because he looked exactly like him. Of course, I had seen photographs and incidentally, the family, after they heard that we survived the war, they sprang into action and send us lots of care packages, together with clothes, together with food. And my uncle's son was in the American army and visited us there, and I think I may have mentioned that. That was quite wonderful. So --

Q: How long would they have gone not knowing whether you were all right or not?

A: For the duration of the war. Oh, no --

Q: For several years?

A: My -- My parents managed to get word to them through the Red Cross in -- in sort of code language that -- letting them know that we -- we were all right, that we were not deported. They did --

Q: In hiding --

A: Yeah, well, they didn't know that, but they knew we did not -- we were not sent away to concentration camps. And after the war was over, the son who was in the American army found us and that was a beautiful -- that was one of these memorable incidents, which I think I spoke about.

Q: You spoke of -- tell me about it again, that's --

A: That was so lovely, because we were staying in makeshift quarters. I think we had two rooms on the farm. And my father was taking a walk on a Sunday morning, or whatever and, you know, we were surrounded by a lot of the Canadians who had liberated us, so -- and they were very nice and they would always bring us food and -- and good things to

eat. So, my father was taking this walk and he sees a soldier, thinking it was another Canadian. The soldier looked at him and smiled, my father smiled, and must have made a little chit chat with him and suddenly the soldier said, “Well, Uncle Max, don’t you recognize me?” And my father looked at him and recognized him because he had a little scar here where a chicken had once attacked him.

Q: By his eyebrow.

A: Yes, and it was his nephew Martin and he took him home with him and I remember I was so embarrassed because I was still wearing my -- my slip, and I ran away. And he says -- he spent the day with us and told us about the family and he was also saying, you should -- I should come to the United States. And it was really a wonderful get together and I think he came back once or twice more, when he was on leave, so that was a big -- wonderful, big thing and we connected again. Anyhow, when I arrived in New York and I saw them standing there, there were also some others, and then I realized they were my mother’s cousin. And of course, because of our being together so much, I had a very good knowledge of who was what and what they looked like, practically down to their size and shape.

Q: More information than they had, probably.

A: Right, exactly, and they too, were standing there and they were all frantically waving and then I got off the boat and after I went through the immigration. And Margot was -- must have been met by someone, too, and then I met them and it was very emotional. My uncle was crying and my aunt was crying and then it was my mother’s cousin and her

husband and an aunt who were also there. And we first went to someone's house, it was my aunt's sister, where we were probably given a meal. And then we drove to Baltimore from New York in my -- what I thought, my uncle's enormous, big car and I was really awed by all the cars, by all the buildings. It was just vast, it was very impressive as well as intimidating. But what was more intimidating -- when we got to Baltimore, we didn't immediately go to my uncle's home, we went to my aunt, that was my father's older sister, with whom I was supposed to stay. And we get into the house -- she was a remarkable lady, my Aunt Eva, and -- by the way, they all spoke German, of course, and English, but my German was almost nonexistent, because I remembered a little bit from my grandmother, who spoke German, but I always spoke Dutch. So my German was not very good, but I managed. And my English was fairly poor, too. So I get -- I arrive in my aunt's house and the house was full of people -- well, they wanted to all be there and give me a big welcome and there were -- there was another aunt and her husband and lots of cousins and cousins children. It was really overwhelming and I was very, very intimidated and frightened and then my cousin, who was my aunt's daughter still living with her, could see that I was close to tears, and she said to me, "Come with me to the kitchen. I -- There is some mail here for you from -- I think from friends in Holland." And I remember she took me to the kitchen and she gave me a banana. And I looked at that mail -- I think I'm getting very sentimental about it, and there were letters from all my friends from school, you know, oh, you must be in United States now and how wonderful and how anxious they are to hear from me. But it was very smart of my cousin

to have done that, to have removed me from all these people that were sort of standing over me and wanting to know everything. So, she must have gone back into the living room and told them to disperse. And th-they did. And then, eventually, it was just my cousin, her name was Erma and my aunt and I, who were left. And well, I -- they said I have to share the bedroom with my aunt and my cousin, cause my aunt was a widow. She came to the United States with her two daughters, she was widowed. And she had a fairly big house, but she rented rooms. So the three of us all slept in the same room. And my cousin was getting ready to get married shortly after I arrived, so it was just my aunt and I that were left behind, but she was a very forceful woman. Now, I arrived in July and she said, “Well, in September, you’re going to go to the high school here and I will arrange it.” And in the meantime, the summer was there and we visited another aunt whose daughter had lived -- lived in Cumberland. So, the family really took a tremendous interest in me and -- and tried very hard to --

Q: Be kind.

A: Be kind, yes. Most of them did. They were very wonderful.

Q: But your links -- your letters back to your parents and friends would be what really kept you going, is that right?

A: I don’t know if that’s correct, if that really kept me going. I think the -- probably, yes, it could be that kept me going and thinking also, well, I only have to stay a year, I will be able to go home again. That’s -- I think was the key to it, too. In the meantime, my aunt had decided to really bring Susie into American life and started to teach me the right

things to say in English, thank you, you're welcome and so forth and so on and you have to be more assertive and you shouldn't be so shy and we have to make friends. And she was -- I think she probably was at -- with me and for me at the right time. And after the summer was over, she enrolled me in the local high school and this is what I think is interesting, because I was 16 and I -- she managed to place me in the 11th grade, which I could never have been in, had I stayed in Holland. So I realized, well, that was good, because that would mean I would graduate at age 18, as all normal children would. Had I stayed in Holland, I would have probably been 20 or 21 before I would have gotten that diploma. And she took me to the school, I remember very well and she took me to the counselor and she said, "She is supposed to get the easiest classes, because her English is very poor." And the counselor was very understanding and said, "There are lots of," -- nots lots of, "there are a number of other immigrant children and don't worry, we'll take care of her." And -- And she had a young girl go with me to school, because after -- I didn't know my way and she was also the daughter of immigrants and they all -- the -- the -- the German Jewish immigrants, they stuck very much together. So, this young woman, Ellen, took me to school. And when I came on the first day, the counselor said, "You know, there is a young girl here who speaks Dutch." Well, I thought I'd died and landed in heaven. And he introduced me to the girl who was really from Germany, from Berlin, but she had spent the war years with her family in Bangkok and was sent to a Dutch school there. And in -- her name was Marion. And, incidentally, Marion was my first friend and she still is my very dearest friend. She still lives in Baltimore and we see

each other, oh, at least once or twice a month. And she and I became inseparable and that was very, very good for both of us, because she was shy and I was shy and we did not fit in too well. When -- Neither were we too comfortable with our American peer group. We did meet also, some other young immigrant girls and became friends with them. And slowly, we developed a -- a nice group. As a matter of fact, we even had a little social group, boy - girl, which would meet every weekend and we'd dance and have a good time. And my Aunt Eva was always prodding, "Now you have to do this and you have to do that and you have to become more social." I was still homesick, but I think it star -- oh, and a big event was, after I was perhaps a month or two, they said, we will call your parents and you know, making a transoceanic call at that time was a big event and I called and talked to my mother and father and of course it was bittersweet, because after I hung up I felt worse, I think, than I did before. But, I thought that was too very wonderful. In any case, life at Aunt Eva's was very, very good because she took such a tremendous interest in me and tried to get me socially -- emotionally, socially and intellectually up to snuff. No -- No small task. And --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number two, side B.

A: Well, life at Aunt Eva's was quite good and I think I benefited from it very, very much. I remember when I got my first report card and I got a near failing grade in

French, she marched herself to school and said to the French teacher, “That won’t do, she is not going to accept that.” And transferred me out of the French class, into a German class, which was very smart, because of course I did very well there and it helped my -- my German. So -- But I could not stay at Aunt Eva, because her married daughter had to move back in, because they were going to remodel a house, and then I was shipped off to my Uncle Meyer, who was my father’s oldest brother. That was the father of my cousin Martin. There, I was not that happy, because Uncle Meyer’s wife, whereas I’m sure she was happy to take me, was not used to having a young girl around and was accepting of having me there, but did not like -- did -- was not as encouraging as Aunt Eva, ergo, she did not like it when I would invite people over and --

Q: Was that also in Baltimore?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: So your school, everything else, your friendship --

A: Everything was in Baltimore.

Q: Yeah.

A: But my friendships stayed the same, but life at my Uncle Meyer and Aunt Ada’s was not quite as wonderful as life at Aunt Eva, although I continued to see Aunt Eva all the time, but I had to stay there, because -- so, after the year was over, my mother came, with the idea to take me back. And at that point, I was quite well settled, very happy, oh, and I had gotten babysitting job, so I learned how wonderful it is to make money, 50 cents an hour babysitting. Every Saturday I would babysit and that was a pretty good feeling.

However, Uncle Meyer made me turn most of the money over. Later on -- And I resented it, he only allowed me to keep a small amount -- and much later on, I learned that he had put that money in an account for me, but he didn't say that. So, the year was over, my mother came with the idea of taking me back and at that point, I think -- there were two reasons, I -- I felt very comfortable. I liked school, I liked my life and my Uncle Meyer and Aunt Eva and Aunt Hunny, they all said, "We think your parents should come here and it would be much better," and they were -- they were very close, th-the siblings.

Q: And that had been their plan a-all along, [indecipherable]

A: Of course. So, my mother came, and I let it be known I was not going back.

Q: Well, do you remember what it was like, the reunion with your mother?

A: Well, I was very happy that she came, but there were -- there were some things in -- you know, she -- the first thing she saw, I had very bad acne and said, "Well, why isn't anything being done about that?" She was a little bit critical. But I was happy to see her, but I think I was very ambivalent. Well, here she is and she wants to take me back, and here she is and the first thing, she was saying, "Well, you need to do something about this and that." It was a mix -- mixed thing, and I think I let it be known very early on that I wanted to stay and -- and she must have been agreeable to it. So, she stayed, I believe, for three or four months and went back without me and I continued doing what I did, living with Uncle Meyer and Aunt Ada, babysitting. As a matter of fact, I think I even got an office job at that time, because I took a commercial course in the high school, knowing full well that I could not qualify for higher level courses, not having had any preparation

whatsoever. So, in ‘49, my father came and that was also the time I was due to graduate from high school, so he was there for my graduation, which was very important to me. And I was so happy to see him. And --

Q: That must have been -- he must have been so moved and proud himself.

A: Oh, he was, yes, he was moved, A, to see me and me doing as well as I was and in particular to seeing his -- his siblings, again. He hadn’t seen them since the mid - 30’s. And they enveloped him, they just didn’t want to let him go, and he didn’t go, he stayed, and must have said to my mother that he was not going to come back and that she should close up, finish up, whatever, and come, which she then did, in 1950, but -- so, he stayed for one year with my uncle, also. And that was wonderful and he and I actually became very close, because, remember I said I was very, very close to my mother, very attached to her, but at -- that year was very good for my father and me and we really bonded and I think it was very wonderful. So, I graduated in ‘49 and I went to work. And, interestingly, I went to work for a physician, who was there for -- he came from Detroit and he was working on the book of diseases of the -- I don’t know what it was, lung disease or stomach disease and I was doing some work for him at Hopkins. And he and his wife were awfully nice. They didn’t have children and they sort of adopted me. They were very interested and very helpful and he said, “You know what, I think you need to go to university.” And I said, “I don’t think I can make it, because I don’t have the c-credentials.” And he said, “We’ll help you.” And I said, “And I don’t have the money.” And he said, “We’ll fund you, and I want you to discuss it with your family.” But the

family felt I should not accept it, it was too much of a responsibility and a burden, which, in retrospect was a bad mistake. And I stayed with that man, I think, for a year or so, and --

Q: They didn't want you to be indebted?

A: I think really that's what it was, I --

Q: Was he Jewish? The doctor [indecipherable]?

A: Yes, yes, he was. I think that's what it was, or --

Q: What a mistake.

A: It was. I think that was one of the biggest mistakes that could have been made. My unc -- My family, I think they were not academically oriented and I think that's sad. And my father was not strong enough, I think, either, to make a case for it. My uncle was very, very strong and he felt it's better if I continue to help support, go to work, and if I wanted to take night courses, which I did for awhile, I could, but he was -- there was no encouragement, and --

Q: Mm-hm. It would have been different if you had been a boy? Would you have been --

A: Not necessarily. I don't think -- I think it was not a sexist thing, no, I don't think so. So, when I declined, the doctor was very disappointed, but he said he understood and that was that and I was crushed. I think, if I had been stronger or more willful, I could have probably made a case for putting myself through school, but -- I don't know why I didn't, but I didn't. And then, in 1950, my mother came and she went to work. She had never worked in her life and she went to work in a slipcover factory, where she did piecework.

And she immediately said, well the harder she worked and the longer she worked, the more money she had and she worked very hard. And my father worked in -- well, it was an installment business, clothing and things like that, not very challenging. And we lived in an apartment in Baltimore, on our own. So, all three of us worked, my father, my mother and I. I worked in an office, for a small Jewish department store. And then -- And my mother was very unhappy the first few years she was here, she was utterly miserable and very homesick for Holland and threatened to go back, but my father did -- also did not want to go back. I didn't want to go back, so she stayed.

Q: Two against one.

A: Yes, exactly. She stayed and as time went on, I -- I continued to take a lot of courses, either at the business school, or at Hopkins, where I went at night and took English and literature and history. I don't know why I never signed up for a credit or a degree. I didn't. But I was --

Q: Nobody there to push you --

A: Nobody to push me --

Q: -- to encourage, I suppose.

A: -- it's -- it's really -- if I -- I -- and it used to bother me in my younger -- not at that time, but much later years, that I felt deprived from the point of view of intellectual challenges and education, as I thought education should have been. So I did very -- a lot to educate myself and I think I did quite adequately. But what I really would have liked, I did not get and I think part of it is I wasn't encouraged and the other part of it is, I

probably wasn't motivated enough, either. So, there's -- you can't put a blame on anything, or anybody. And -- But I worked hard and then I got a job at Johns Hopkins, also in a secretarial area and I was promoted and became supervisor of their outpatient clinic, and that was very nice work and very challenging and interesting. And I developed quite a few friendships, that was very nice. And met a young man who was not Jewish and thought that he was the right one, became engaged to him and then shortly -- much later found out that he, too, was a little anti-Semitic and broke off the engagement. And --

Q: Tell me about that. He obviously felt it didn't matter at first, and --

A: Yeah, right. He -- I met him and at first it didn't matter and then, I think when he sensed I was losing interest in him, because I realized he was not the right person for me, he -- he -- I broke off and he -- I broke off, as a matter of fact, it was very traumatic. I cared for him and I guess I really -- he had a vile temper and that worried me and I think he drank too much and that worried me and when I broke off with him, I was very unhappy. And --

Q: Your first big decision --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- that you had made.

A: And -- Right. And I went to Canada and we had very good friends in Montreal and I stayed with them for a little while and then got a job and worked in a children's hospital there and I was there, on my own, for a year and it was a pretty good year. It was bittersweet, because it was difficult. I was still mourning the break off, but I realized too,

I did the right thing. And I stayed for a year and then I came back to Baltimore and I saw -- I -- he was still around, and I saw him. He was almost -- You could almost call it stalking me, he would sometimes show up after work and I didn't like it and eventually, I think he just left. And -- All right, then I had that very nice job at Hopkins, which was very, very good. And then, one fine day, I get a telephone call -- oh, and of course, I continued to live with my parents. I guess that's what one did in those days. I continued to live with them and my mother was her usual, controlling self. I -- Where a -- Where are you going, when are you going, when are you coming back and so forth and so on. She was not very happy about that young man, neither was my father, so -- oh, and the anti-Semitism surfaced when I broke off with him, the second time when I saw him again. And then he -- I was out with him one night -- one evening and he was very down on my father because my father had said to him, "Please don't -- don't trouble us any more, don't bother us." And then she said, "Well, the world would had lo -- have lost nothing if your father had died in a concentration camp." So I got out of his car and I remember exactly where it was, it was late and that was it.

Q: Yes.

A: And then one fine day, my telephone rang and this man's voice identified himself as Max Schwarz and I s -- he said he's Dutch and I said, "Wonderful." He said, "I got your name from my sister." And I said, "Well, who's your sister?" And he said, "Shelly Fried." I said, "Never heard of her. Where does she live?" "In Israel." I said, "I wouldn't know." But, well, could he come anyhow and take me out and I said yes. And after I

hung up, I said to my mother, “Imagine this man.” “Oh,” she said, “I know what this is about.” She had been in Israel to visit her sister and her niece said, “I have a girlfriend who has two brothers in the United States,” one of whom was what is now my husband. So, we went out and that was in 1955 and in 1956, we married. So, it was a very quick courtship, I guess. And --

Q: Was it sort of love at first sight?

A: Oh, I think it was, yes. It -- It felt right. And it was interesting, because I always laugh about it. When I left boarding school, I said to the, “Oh,” they said, “Oh, you are going to marry an American,” and this and this. I said, “No, you just wait, I will marry a Dutchman.” And Max of -- and I, of course, come from totally different backgrounds. His family -- His father was born in Saint Petersburg and his mother in Maylo, which is on the German border. And his father came from Saint Petersburg to Amsterdam, he was in the diamond business and --

Q: So you’d both gone to Holland as children?

A: No. No, no, no. My husband was born in Holland.

Q: Oh, he was born there, I see.

A: His father came to Holland as a young man, from --

Q: Oh.

A: -- and got married --

Q: From -- From Russia?

A: -- in Holland -- from Russia --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- got married in Holland, and --

Q: His whole life had been spent -- that was --

A: Right, exactly.

Q: -- his country.

A: And he had two brothers and two sisters, my bro -- my -- my husband.

Q: Yes.

A: And he lived in Amsterdam and they were a very, very religious -- his father was the founder of the Russian shul -- Russian synagogue in Amsterdam and very, very Orthodox. Th-The boys had Talmud lessons after school and the mother was very intellectual, writes -- wrote poetry and the sister, one studied languages, one studied and became a very good pianist. So it -- it's a very different environment, background. His parents were deported, my husband's parents. They were sent to Sobibór, and the ch --

Q: In what year?

A: I guess in '43. '42, '43 was the -- when all the masses left and -- but in '42, they had sent the children to Switzerland, they went through the underground and ended up in Switzerland and Geneva and the two girls, they were able to pursue whatever it is they wanted to pursue. I think my sister-in-law -- one of them went to study music and the other one, don't know exactly what she did and my husband was sent to a work camp, I think for the first year or two and then went to the University of Geneva, where he got his Ph.D. in chemistry. And then, ultimately, he came to Florida State University on a post-

doctoral. One sister immigrated to Israel, met her future husband on the boat and the other sister and brother both came to New York. And the brother now is in Dallas and he is also in the diamond business. The older sister still lives in Israel with her husband and the younger sister lives in Colorado with her husband. And so, we met and we married and married in 1956 and moved to Washington, DC, because my husband was working for the government. And we lived in -- almost at the edge of Georgetown for the first year and then in 1957, our daughter was born and before she was born, we moved to Montgomery County. And I had worked a little bit before our daughter was born, then after she was born, I did not work, and stayed home. Did a little free lance work here and there. Took some courses here and there and then, in 1960, our son was born and in -- then I went with him to -- and this is interesting, I went with -- I enrolled him in a cooperative nursery school and met very nice women, very nice people. And I was always very much aware of my lack of education, because there were all these American women, with all their degrees and this, that and the other and what did I have a degree in --

Q: And in this area, especially.

A: Oh, and what did I have a degree in? Surviving. And I always had to think of my grandmother, whom I once asked, “What kind of schooling did you have, Oma?” And she said, in German, “Hibin in deshula deslabins gevasin.” And -- In the school -- I have visited the school of life. So, I kept telling myself, “Well, you went to the school of life,” but it was not really -- not very satisfactory. In that nursery school, though, I met and

befriended a young woman who was doing freelance proofreading, and she asked me would I be interested in doing some -- helping her with it. And of course I thought that was wonderful, always having been very good in English and in spelling. And this woman was the one and only one, too, who did not have a college education, so I guess that's the connection. And she found -- she was a -- a single mom and she found all these wonderful jobs doing -- editing proofreading. And we formed a team and I did it with her. And then one day, we were doing a fairly big job for a company and she said, "You know, I'm not going to do this any more. I got a job teaching English at Sandy Springs Friends School. Why don't you take it over?" And I took it over and went to deliver the work and this was a start-up company in Bethesda, called Congressional Information Service. And I took the work back and I said, "I have taken over her job, and -- but I can do a good job for you." They kept me -- And they kept me and eventually, they offered me a job on a part-time basis, doing what they called accuracy, or accuracy editing, which I did and enjoyed thoroughly, about 20 hours a week and then little by little, it crept up and it crept up and it was 30 hours a week. In the meantime, of course, the children -- this is after some time. I started this in 19 six, well '65, so I was associated with that company since '69, something like that. And it -- our children were well ensconced in school, there were the two, Tanya and David and I worked for them. And then I was made an assistant Managing Editor, and then I was made the coordinator for the editorial departments. And then in 1970, they offered me the job of Human Resources Director, which I took -- no, that's not true, that was in 1979, I became the Director of

Human Resources there and I ran it until my retirement in 1990. So, notwithstanding the fact that I did not have that famous, or --

Q: Which only you were bothered by.

A: Which only I was bothered by. I realized that I could achieve and I did achieve without it and I think it was a tremendous boost for me and my self esteem. So, that -- that basically was my life, or is -- has been my life and then when I retire, in 1990, of course I have various and sundry connections here and there and one of which was I knew this young woman who was -- who worked for the Jewish Social Service agency. She said, “Wouldn’t you come and do some workshops for us as a volunteer for our Russian refugees?” Which I did, for about four years. I ran -- I taught the new immigrants how to look for jobs, how to write resumes and how to do applications and things like that. So, I did that for four years and various -- and then once in awhile, I did some freelance work still, from my old companies. Matter of fact, I still did it a year ago. And raised the children and the children now -- some have children. The daughter, our daughter --

Q: Tanya.

A: Tanya became a psychiatrist and I think that’s what I’ll do in my nec --

Q: That must have made you very, very proud.

Q: -- exactly, yes -- in my next life. And she lives in Baltimore and has two children. And our son David became an attorney and is a partner in a firm in Los Angeles, so yes, that makes me feel very, very good, because they did what I didn’t do.

Q: Yes.

A: And my husband and I continue to live a very full life here, taking care of this place and doing quite a bit of traveling and being involved in many different activities, so to sum it up, it -- life has been very good to me.

Q: Yeah. Well, I've --

A: My mother is living in Baltimore. She will be 95, and we talk every day, we see each other once a week and we -- once in awhile we reminisce about what was. She is still very much of sound mind. I think it's been a role reversal, I think now, at this point, I'm more controlling or more -- she's more dependent on me, and that's fine. She still drives her car and she's a very amazing and still very active lady.

Q: And your father died some time ago?

A: And my father died in 1967 and I think -- I think, I know he had lung cancer. He was a very heavy smoker. And fortunately, it was a short illness, but that was very traumatic.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And family, the cousin who was so wonderful to me when I first came and gave me my mail with my banana, she still lives in Baltimore. She -- Her sister and we have always remained very close. And so I have a lot of family. And family in Israel, too, cousins, and -- with whom we are very close, also. So it's -- it's very nice.

Q: Mm-hm. Do you go to synagogue regularly? Do you --

A: No. We are not synagogue goers and even though my husband came from this very religious -- he said, when he was in Geneva, he was still very observant and then one day

he decided, well, it doesn't make sense, and he started to smoke on the Shabbat, no longer wore a beraid and we never affiliated ourself -- we are very Jewish and very -- well, what? We just do not go to -- we don't belong to a synagogue, but our grandson -- our son was never Bar Mitzvahed, our grandson was, this past -- this past April, and as a present, we took him to Holland and we showed him where we both lived, where my husband lived and where I lived and where I was in hiding and he met --

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number three, side A.

A: I think I forgot something very important, namely that -- obviously, I went back to Holland, after I was here for a number of years, to wit -- we went in 1967. At that time, the wife of the farmer where my father was, was still alive. And as we approached the house, she was sitting there and shelling beans and she looked up and recognized me. And she was very happy to see me. And that was very emotional, very. And she looked at me and she said, “My, my,” in Dutch, of course, “those were terrible times, but we’d do the same thing all over again.” I remember I dissolved in tears. And in ‘67, they still, on the farm where we were in hiding, the hiding place was still intact, so I could show it to my husband. But -- And then we continued to go every few years, to visit the farmers, the -- the surviving ones, the children and we always were in touch with them, we -- on birthdays … As I said, we -- we -- well, we write on birthdays and during the holidays, New Year, Christmas, I call them and chat with them. And the Hartamings, that are the people where we were, the only one that is still in Holland is daughter Lida, and her husband Herman, who was my teacher and three brothers and a sister had immigrated to Canada, and incidentally, we are in touch with them, too. They visited us here, once and we’ve been there a few times and we talked to them and we write to them and this past summer, we visited them. And they are still very religious and, is also moving, because when we visit with the one son and we have a small repast, he will sit and say his prayers

and always thank God th-that he still can see us. Anyhow, to go back to Holland, so we took our grandson and showed him --

Q: And how old was he?

A: He -- Now.

Q: Yes.

A: When he was 13.

Q: Yeah, I know, but his age, I --

A: Yes, uh-huh, 13. And we --

Q: Same age as you were?

A: Right. And he was quite -- well, impressed is not the word, he -- when I ask him what was the highlight of your whole trip, because we did many wonderful things, we went boating, hiking, biking and he said, “You know, being in the village where you grew up and s -- meeting the people and seeing where you stayed.” And fortunately, the farm on which my father had stayed, the room where my father had slept was still there, so our grandson could see it. So, that was really quite a -- a nice experience. And I think he got a lot out of it, so that was good and incidentally, when he was in fourth grade, he asked me once would I come to his school and speak to his class about what happened and I did, and --

Q: Now, is this in LA?

A: No, the -- our son in LA does -- is not married.

Q: Uh-huh, oh, it’s --

A: It's the daughter who lives in Baltimore.

Q: -- Tanya's children --

A: It's Tanya's children.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I went to his school and I spoke to his classmates. They were very interested and of course, he was very proud to have his Oma come and -- and tell them about what life was like, once upon a time. So, all this makes for very wonderful things and wonderful living. And our farmers, in 1994, were honored by Yad Vashem, in the Netherlands, and that was very beautiful too, because the Canadians all came for the occasion -- not all, but some of them came for the occasion and Lida and Herman's children were there. And it was a very beautiful ceremony and a very beautiful gathering, and --

Q: Now, w-were a whole group of people who had hidden Jews in the ceremony together, or was it just your --

A: There were two other --

Q: So it was very small?

A: Yes. Two other -- well, and the reason it was so small is it's late.

Q: Yes.

A: And there, too, it is something -- it should have been done -- I should have done it much earlier than what I -- what I did and I was not even aware of how this could be done, but I did it and I'm so happy that we were able to do it.

Q: You sent the documentation and so on?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh [indecipherable]

A: Yes, yes, I did. As a matter of fact, when I was in Israel, I went to Yad Vashem and I contacted the -- the proper people there to set it all in motion and it took a couple years. And I was very nervous that nothing should happen to any of them --

Q: Yes.

A: -- before, and luckily, it didn't, and it was very, very beautiful, and --

Q: I was thinking of your -- as you spoke of the friendship, how wonderful that was, but wondering if there are ways in which you can thank them, and of course, that was the most super way of doing it.

A: Yeah, it was a superb way of doing it. Whatever you do, it -- it can never -- you can never thank them.

Q: No. And we never know --

A: No.

Q: -- if we were in that position, whether we would -- whether we would all do the right thing.

A: Exactly.

Q: And they did.

A: Yes, exactly, and I often say this, there is no way I can thank them. I did this and this is fine, because they will go down in history as having been amongst the righteous.

Q: Yes.

A: And it will be wonderful for their children to be aware of -- they are -- who are aware of that, too, but as far as our role is concerned, there is nothing we can do to ever show them our gratification. There -- You cannot humanly do that, because what they did was so extraordinary, putting their lives and their house and their children on the line for three total strangers.

Q: Yes. And it's -- even like the fact that they were fairly poor, relatively uneducated --

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: -- and yet, they behaved in the most --

A: In a noble --

Q: -- wonderful -- yes, noble --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- princely, I was going to say, but noble.

A: Noble way, exactly.

Q: Yeah, according to, sort of higher standards of [indecipherable]

A: Exactly, exactly. That's precisely correct. And was it religion or whatever it was, it's just -- and even now, whenever we go and see them, especially the daughter, there is something very beautiful about their presence. And they still like to talk about the times, but never in a -- a sad way, well just reminiscing what -- what happened, but always with the feeling, well, what happened -- what we did, it was right.

Q: Yes. Has life been good to Lida, the daughter?

A: I think so. Her-Herman became the principal of a school and I think -- and they have five children and they in turn have children and I think they have a very good family life. One son is -- had a brain tumor, and that's very sad. He's terribly handicapped, and he lives with them, but they seem to be quite positive and upbeat and the Canadians are a very happy and wonderful people. And I learned something interesting there too, when we were there just now, that the son's wife -- in other words, was Lida's sister-in-law, came from a family -- the father was a minister and she told us that one brother was killed because he worked in the underground. One sister did nothing but transport Jewish children to and from hiding places .The mother was engaged in -- imprisoned in underground work. The father, a minister, was sent to a work camp -- concentration camp -- was sent -- came home again. And it's so amazing when you hear how many people did what they did, it's awesome.

Q: Yes.

A: Very awesome.

Q: Even Lida herself, you told a story in your previous interview of her being threatened by German officers --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- when they searched the farmhouse and showed her courage then in risking --

A: Yes.

Q: -- the [indecipherable]

A: Right, exactly, because it was something she believed, and that -- and no matter how threatening they were and intimidating they were, she was going to stand her ground. And I think they -- they were really -- and -- and when we visit, we talk about the courage and it's -- it's awesome.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So amazing.

Q: You know, another thing, stays in my mind is the -- the -- the mother's wrestling with the issue of having sworn on the Bible that she was hiding no Jews, but in fact, again, that -- an ordinary person, but what she did was correct and she found her way of --

A: Yes -- justifying it.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Yes, she justified it to herself and my mother said to her, "Well, I wouldn't worry about it, because swearing, we --"

Q: To these people.

A: "-- falsely, that's -- God will forgive you." And I think she -- she sort of acknowledged that, but nonetheless she -- she had a very nice way to circumvent -- circ -- yes, to sort of get around it.

Q: Yes, which was?

A: That, well, they were Jewesses, after all. She was pretty wonderful. They were all very wonderful and they still -- the ones that are still -- are wonderful, the ones that we see.

Q: Now, how -- you -- I know that you've spoken about how many farming people hid Jews, but what were the numbers overall? I mean, was it a -- really a tiny minority of lives that were saved of the Jewish pop --

A: In the -- As to the Dutch -- the area where I lived, eastern Holland, and a fairly isolated area I would call it, there were quite a number of people that did save -- that did take in Jews. Some for mercenary reasons, because I had heard of cases where, money gone, you're gone now, too and that happened, but I don't know how many instances there were. I did hear about it, but all in all, after the war, or not even after the war, in recent years I learned that the Dutch percentage -- the Dutch people were not as helpful or as cooperative with respect to saving Jews, as some of the other countries did, but even some eastern European countries had a higher rate, shall we call it, of having saved or managed to help Jews, than the Dutch did. And part of it may have been the government, because when the war broke out, the queen hotfooted it over to England and the Princess Julianna and her children went to Canada. And I think Prince Bernard served in the -- in the English army or some -- in the Dutch division, I think, of the English army, I don't know. But, articles have said, or books have said, that Queen He -- Wilhelmina could have done more to help her Jewish compatriots than she did and apparently, according to literature, she had sort of said, yes, it's too bad what's happening, but has not made a real tremendous effort to help. And perhaps that set the tone, I don't know, but the NSB in Holland, the Dutch Nazi party, was quite active and again, more people could have been helped than were helped, as compared to the French, who had a higher record of having

saved people. Course, the Danes were amazing. Belgium and so forth. Holland came out very low on the list and I can't -- I don't know why.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I really don't know.

Q: And then you had your policeman friend, who was again, si -- he wasn't putting his life on the line or anything, but -- but wa -- seems to have had his values in order and what -- wh -- I mean, do you have any thoughts about why he would take the position he took, when other neighbors --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah, exactly.

A: Well, it's interesting. He lived next door and across the street from us were other people and they had a little girl who must have been my age. And shortly after the war broke out, perhaps a year after it, all of a sudden, the child was no longer allowed to play with me and then we learned that the father had joined the NSB. Now, Mr. Fisher, that policeman next door to us -- he was born in Germany, interestingly -- he had told us, he said, "Watch out for the neighbor across the street, he joined the party." He -- He was just a totally unprejudiced man, as was a neighbor two doors further down, who was also a low level official in the local government, who was also very pro-Jewish and also very interested in us and incidentally, I think that he too knew -- yeah, he knew we were going into hiding so he es -- he -- he was very helpful and very well aware of it. So there you have two people who were helpful -- didn't put their life on the line, but at the same time,

did not hesitate to have commerce with us, which is -- which was very brave in later times, when we were no longer supposed to be associating with non-Jewish people and they -- they did. Their daughter, incidentally, still lives in Holland and has remained a good friend of mine. So, it -- I -- I don't know and I also don't know in general what the -- what the beliefs in -- of the people in the village were. I knew there were quite an few NSB, but others, who were sort of invisible and I don't know what -- what -- what their beliefs were or what their support was for one or the other.

Q: I'd like to go back to your -- to your marriage and it certainly seemed to me that everything about Max was right and then that sort of, if you theorized about someone's background being suitable for a lasting, happy life -- even his -- his experiences -- you both survived the Holocaust and I know that neither of you feel that you suffered as people did who survived the camps and so on --

A: Right.

Q: -- but, I wonder if you've thought much about that suitability, compatibility?

A: Well, I th -- Compatibility, it's interesting, because in a way, we came from opposite backgrounds and opposite everything. What we had in common is, we were raised in the same country, we spoke the same language and we were both Jewish. We had survived the Holocaust, and that's another topic that I want to address brief -- albeit briefly. Yes, survive the Holocaust we did, but I never considered myself a survivor as I do consider those people that were in the camps and my husband feels very much the same way. I wish there were another word for it, becau -- in a way, it's a misnomer. Perhaps it should

be called, you know, concentration camp survivor, versus a hidden person or -- there must be another word for it, because I think what we went through was a snap, honestly, compared to what people suffered in all the different camps. And my husband feels very strongly about that, too. That people such as we, or some of the people that he has seen on tape because of his volunteer work that he does in the oral history, are not really that much related to the -- should not really be pegged as survivors. They may have played a role of sorts, but it's -- the people that survived the concentration camps should be in a category all to themselves, that's really, I think, an important thing to know -- to be aware of, because they are unique, I think. What I think is very sad, though, is, with all that has happened, with the awareness, with the education, with the -- the Schindler's List, etcetera, etcetera, man's inhumanity to man continues. So what has -- what has history taught us? I don't know. This I find very disturbing and very shocking. I mean, if you think about Kosovo, it's frightening. So, have we not learned anything? I guess not.

Q: We have to keep -- keep telling the story and re-reminding ourselves and each other and that's -- that's so -- analogous, because they're people just like us, enjoying the same way of life and so on.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm. But telling the story over and over, of course, is good and having the museum is more than good. It's a wonderful, educational thing and I think the more museums are created, the better it is. And I think people are very keen on learning about it, so long term, I guess it will -- hopefully it will have some sort of positive effect on people, but -- at least over here. I really don't know. It's an eye opener for many people. I

see people going in and out of the museum and if you look at their expressions they are quite shocked and astonished and it's very difficult for them and for the children it's very good to learn about it. That's one of the reasons I felt -- when my grandson wanted me to go to his school, why not? But I don't know how much of this education is being spread in other places, and in other countries, given the fact that so many atrocities are still taking place.

Q: And you know -- We know about them instantly.

A: That's right. As they happen. And that's -- That makes it all the more shocking. So, I don't know what the world will look like, 10 - 20 - 30 years from now, but I hope some of these killing fields will -- will be gone.

Q: Mm-hm. You -- Wh-When we mentioned the -- the Holocaust museum, do you think that that might be a phase of this great popularity, that it might be a passing fad, or do you think that the -- the institution and the message really are much bigger than that?

A: I would think it's not a phase. I would hope it is not a phase and I would think that the institution and the message are what -- something that will endure, because there will always be other generations with some curiosity about what was, just like there is still a curiosity about the Civil War, or any of these events that have happened in history. I think this will continue to be of the same interest as time goes on, I would hope. I think so, because as long as the textbooks and the -- the educators show that this was an important part of history, the likes of these museums will continue to be of interest to the -- to the public, I guess -- I hope.

Q: I wonder to what extent your own experiences have had an impact on your -- the position you've taken as a -- an American citizen in dealing even with -- we were speaking of the -- the war in Bosnia. Do you think that in all these cases -- I'm thinking of the -- all the things that have happened historically since you came here, do you want to comment on your perspective?

A: Too many. Too many things have happened since I came here, and the Kosovo and the African wars and so forth and so on. Remember when, in Rwanda, when there were all these problems, I kept saying, "Well, history is repeating itself, because the world is standing by and nothing --" and I felt so impotent, in -- in some ways I felt as if I should pack up and go and do something, knowing fully well, what can I do there? And then I s -- chide myself or deride myself and say, "Well, if -- that's not the right attitude to take, either. If you feel that strongly, you ought to go and do something. You are no better than people were at that time." So, I get very enraged, and very frustrated. Obviously, other than giving some financial help, I didn't do anything. And when I look on the television screen and I see what's going on in Kosovo, I feel the same way. Well, why isn't our government more active and why -- and yes, you can write letters to your congresspeople and we do, when we feel the need, but that's where our involvement then ends and in some ways, it's not enough. I get this -- this -- this feeling of indignation, how dare people be this way, still, after all that has happened? And I sometimes think we as a nation ought to get more involved in it, but it doesn't always happen that way.

Q: But it would have influenced your political position and so on?

A: Yes, of course. As a matter of fact, that's why I said, the only voice I have is by expressing it in writing, by writing to my representative or my senator. Unfortunately, my representative is not of the right beliefs, but the senators in the state of Maryland are and they just -- the only thing we can do is encourage them.

Q: Mm-hm.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number three, side B.

[Rest of Side B is blank]

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is an continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number four, side A. Tell me about how much of your experiences you shared with your children.

A: Well, as I started to say, this is interesting, because when my husband and I first met, of course we talked about our backgrounds and what happened to him, what happened to me and in general, and very much aware of each of our histories. And then we married and we really never talked about it any more -- very little. Perhaps alluded to it here and there. And then the children came, Tanya first, in '57 and David in 1960 and I think neither one of us ever really made it a point to -- to sit down and say, "Well, you want to know about what happened to us." We may have touched it, we may have talked about it here and there, but not in depth. And I think, as we got older, as the -- as we were less involved in the children's lives, namely once they were out of college and out on their own, if you will, I think much later we started to think more about it and to discuss it more. And even, you know, going more into details of what happened to us, particularly in my case, because my husband was always much more reluctant to talk about it because, you know, his parents, of course, had a very horrible ending. And, as we sometimes said, he never really had a chance to grieve for them and it was always a little difficult for him to talk about it. And as time went on, it wasn't as if we were hiding anything. We answered and they knew I was in hiding and where I was in hiding and so forth and so on. But I think it became very much topic A after I -- after we got involved

with the Holocaust Museum and after I gave my testimony and after my t -- my tape. And I think then, we started to talk much more about what was than we did in the earlier years. And I think part of it -- I really wasn't deliberate -- I think it was more we were very much engaged in working, bringing up children and making a life and did not really dwell on what was. And I think, as we got older, we thought back, more about what happened and it's a reminiscence, really. And again, as I said, the tape was sort of a -- a final presentation to them, as to the what and the whereabouts -- the wheres. Also, my sister-in-law in Israel just recently sent a little praysee on their trip from Holland to Geneva. She wrote it in Dutch and my husband is going to translate it, also, again, for all the children to have. But all this interestingly, happened really in our later lives and not early on and I think there's a good reason for it.

Q: How did you come to give testimony at the museum? Did they contact you or did you get in touch with them?

A: I got in touch with them. As a matter of fact, my cardiologist, his -- what was to be his daughter-in-law, worked at the museum and my cardiologist, I -- I had told him where -- where I had been in the war and he told me to contact her or I contacted her, I don't remember, but that's how I made contact with them regarding the testimony.

Q: And would you comment on what it's meant to you and your husband to volunteer at the museum?

A: Interestingly, my husband -- we were invited to the opening of the museum and he did not want to go. It was difficult for him emotionally and then I went and toured the

museum and I thought it was very well done, but he did not go with me. I took my mother, as a matter of fact. And he told me he couldn't, it was too difficult and too emotional. And then one day, I was out of town and when I came back he said, "I went to the museum." And he was really very impressed and he had spoken to someone in the photo lab -- I don't know how -- and coincidentally, she -- this lady in the photo lab -- can't think of her name right now, Genya -- Genya Marcon was her name, had -- her family name was the same as someone that my husband used to know in Amsterdam, and talked to her and she said, "Why don't you go and volunteer?" And that's how he became and he's been very involved and very, very much engaged and then drew me in, too. But it took a little while.

Q: Yes, I'm -- I'm sorry not to be asking him about this, but I wonder if that is something that he feels he's doing as a tribute to his parents?

A: Probably. I would think so. It's a -- Probably, yes, that is so.

Q: I wonder if you have any thoughts, too, about the ways in which the -- all the Holocaust survivors, of the camps and of -- those who were in hiding, or -- those who came to America, do you have any thoughts about ways in which they have enriched life in this country? Wh-What they have given to the United States?

A: That's difficult to answer, because I have not really thought about that, so it w -- it's going to be a pretty superficial answer. There are many of them who have made significant contributions to United States and life in the United States, I think. As witnessed by the people that are very actively involved there, Mr. Lerner, and --

Lehrman, I mean, Miles Lehrman and so forth and Benjamin Neeves. They have done wonderful things. And I'm sure there are very many others. I want to add, though, something else. There is the hidden child -- it's -- what is it called? Fonde -- no, not. The hidden child -- can't think of the other word. It's a group of surviving children that were in hiding. I have been -- They were in touch with me, I know someone who's involved in it. and I don't very much believe in all these organized, you know, th-the children of survivors and the hidden children, how helpful that is or how meaningful all that is. I guess, to join together and to discuss what -- what happened, I don't think it's very productive.

Q: You mentioned speaking at your grandson's school.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you do much speaking about your experience, or was that a rare occasion?

A: No, that was -- No, ac -- as a matter of fact, it was at my grandson's school and then I met a lady who belongs to a church and she asked me would I speak to her church group and I did and as a matter of fact, the church group was so awfully nice, they send a donation to the museum, which was lovely. Other than that, no, I haven't.

Q: I want to ask you what -- what your views are on this quotation, it's just something that I think the Holocaust museum thought was of interest and it's Prime Minister Netanyahu saying, "This is the lesson of the Holocaust, this and only this. That the existence of the Jewish people is tied to Jewish sovereignty and a Jewish army that rests

on the strength of Jewish faith." And that's something that Netanyahu had said in ceremonies after a -- after the march to remember the Holocaust.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: But, do you have any comment on that?

A: I think that's hard to comment on. In other words, what he's saying is really it's the Jewish faith and in a way the Jews bonding, sticking together, that helps us survive. I think the state of Israel has been -- the creation of the state of Israel has been a very important milestone for the Jews and I think without the existence of the state of Israel, I think we would be far more vulnerable than we are now. Desperate you mean, while in hiding?

Q: Yeah. Really, I'm interested in knowing the -- since there were times when, in your testimony, you really are using a -- a real sense of humor that perhaps your mother used.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Calling your hiding place the palace and when there would be a knock on the door, which was the -- the panel, it was really --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: -- showing that humor was keeping you going, but I wondered what the funniest times were and the most -- and the most dreadful. The most anguishing or desperate.

A: Well, I think the most desperate or anguishing times was when I was fully aware how very ill I was and it was frightening, because my hearing at that time was impaired. So that was very, very -- and -- and the frustration of being indoors all the time was very,

very difficult, where I couldn't see the sunshine and had a real longing for the sunshine. And the happy time was that one and only time when they carried me out into the wheat fields and I did see the sun. Funny, no. There was not very much that was funny. The mice procreating above us, maybe it was funny. Oh no, no I can't say there was anything really light, no. And anguishing, yes, to me there was always a certain fear, notwithstanding my mothers constant optimism, are we going to get out of here and what's going to happen once we get out of there. No, I can't really address that too well.

Q: Are there times in life now when you're suddenly -- you spoke of your dreams before, but I wondered if there's a fabric or a smell or a situation which will suddenly take you back to that time?

A: No, not -- not really. It's interesting, I can store it away. I really think very little about the time and there is nothing that, as you sa - -ask, fabric smell or smell -- maybe if I drive past a silo, I will suddenly say, "Hm, that smells familiar." But other than that, no. It's a part of life that's finished. Not forgotten, but not with me every day, because there's too much every day that is with me and that I need to look forward to and want to look forward to, so no.

Q: Thank you. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. It seems worth mentioning, that Susie Schwarz lives in a home that's full of space and light and openness, in contrast with her hiding places years ago.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Conclusion of Interview