

WWII Deaf Holocaust Survivor

full interview  
Ingelore Honigstein  
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Interviewed by  
Patti Durr  
Tested by  
Berman  
voiced by  
Miriam  
Lerner

My name is Ingelore Honigstein. My maiden name was Herz. My mother's name was Amalie. Her last name was Hamburger. My father's name was Berthold Herz and we were from Kuppenheim. This is near Baden-Baden. I was born in Rastatt.

October 27, 1924.

My mother was from that town and when my parents married my father was working at a hardware store.

We were all Jewish. We were German Jews.

I remember Hanukah. We could not afford to buy a fancy silver Menorah when I was growing up. All we had was a very plain wooden Menorah, a long strip of wood with all the individual candle holders for the seven days. Each member of the family would set ours up with the ends touching each others.

There was a small temple nearby that we attended.

I have no siblings, I am an only child. When my mother was pregnant with me she contracted German measles, but the cause of my deafness they listed as 'unknown.' They do not really know if I was born deaf or not. My mother never really came to accept that I was Deaf. My Aunt Cora, however, told my mother that she really needed to take me to a specialist. She felt that it was important that they make sure they could find out what was wrong with me, and the doctor did indeed confirm that I was deaf. I could not speak. I could not yell or scream. I could not make any sounds at all. I was lonesome. I lived in a very small town.

My mother did not have any more children because of me. She said that I was equal, actually, to her having ten children because I was such a wild girl growing up. I was a tomboy.

Oh, I climbed all over everything. I would jump over brooks with all the boys. Whatever the boys were doing, I had to follow and do exactly what they were doing.

Well, my parents had to send me to a special teacher and put me into foster care with foster parents who would keep me in their home. This was in the town of Karlsruhe, Baden.

He functioned as my speech teacher and speech therapist. He worked on my voice box, which they said was paralyzed; that was the reason I was unable to talk. I could not say "A" or "B" or anything with a voice behind it. My teacher hit my back very hard and I let out a scream, "Ah." He said, "Yes, that is the letter "A." It is as if something in my mind woke up when that happened. I wanted to learn more.

For the letter "B," he took a strip of paper and put it in front of my mouth and encouraged me to blow on it and produce the letter "B" to move the paper. First, I did not do it strongly enough, then he encouraged me and I was able to produce a "B." One letter led to another and over the course of time, I was finally able to produce letters and words. The process took about two or three years, I cannot remember exactly.

Finally, I was able to speak in sentences pretty well, after a couple of years, but I learned nothing educationally during this time. What words meant or concepts behind them were not taught to me at all. All the energy was put into helping me with vocal production.

I did see Goebbels, the short one. He was sitting in a car and behind him was Himmler. They were sitting in a car together. Yes, Himmler had the glasses." Everyone was in a parade formation saying, "Seig Heil, Seig Heil" and making the salute. I had to follow with the crowd, of course, and do the salute as well as they passed by. That is all. They were the only people in that particular echelon that I saw. People were going back and forth.

Jews were not allowed to sit on the park benches. Nobody was allowed to go into museums. Jewish people were not allowed to go to the movies and I did see the signs prohibiting these activities. I saw those signs all around.

I saw a lot of Nazis, a lot of uniforms. There were brown uniforms and also there was a contingent of Nazis that were the SS, who wore black uniforms. They were terrifying. There were the ones who would torture people, those in the black uniforms. There were other colors, brown and orange that I saw, but Yes, there were people in uniform all around.

I was sent to Heidelberg School for the Deaf and once I entered that environment I was able to learn much more. There were pictures up on the walls with words written underneath them, such as "car" – a picture of a car with the word "car" written underneath it so I was able to put the ideas, the concept, the picture and the word together and was able to learn more.

It was mixed. However, I was the only Jew on the premises at the time.

I was there from the ages of 10 until somewhere between 13 and 14." At that time, I was curious about the behavior of my classmates. They began spitting on me and pulling my hair and I wondered why they were doing this to me. Why were they hurting me? I had never done anything against them. I was always nice to them so why were they torturing me. No one would give me an answer.

I went to the director of the school to ask him. His name was Dr. Singer. I said, "Can you tell me why they are pulling my hair when I am always so nice to my classmates?" Dr. Singer told me, "You better just go home." They brought all my clothes and all of my

possessions down and they were going to send me home, but I said, "I have not finished school yet." "Sorry," he said, "You have to go home." I was shocked. I could not understand why this would be happening to me.

The supervisor took me to the train station and I was supposed to leave to go to my hometown of Kuppenheim. I got off the train when I arrived in the town and there was nobody there to greet me. Nobody picked me up at the station. I waited and waited. Finally, I just lugged all of my baggage behind me and pulled it all the way to my house.

In my hometown I was the only one who was deaf so in a small town everyone knew me. Everybody knew I was Jewish. Everybody knew my father had a hardware business. We were known all over this small town in which we lived. I was spit on. Stones were thrown at me. I just had to keep my cool, I could not fight back. I had to keep my cool and take the blows as they came.

I lived in a beautiful big villa and the first thing I saw was that all the doors and windows had been shuttered and barricaded with planks of wood. I went back to the backyard and I pounded on the back door and yelled for my mama. She finally opened the door and took me in. She said, "Why did you come home?" I told her about everything that had happened at the school and then I thought to ask her, "Where's Papa?" She said that my father had been taken away to Dachau, the concentration camp. This was located near Munich.

My father had been in the Dachau concentration camp in 1938 in November. That was just around the same time as Kristallnacht occurred. Doors, everything Jewish was closed. Nazis put swastikas all over the store fronts. Everything was closed down. They stole everything, all the valuable things from Jewish people and Jewish merchants. That is when my father was taken to Dachau. How he escaped from Dachau is a mystery to me. I do not know if he bribed someone. I still wonder about why my father attained his freedom from Dachau.

We suspect it was because the Nazis needed him to help them procure materials from wholesalers and distributors, the same people he got the products for his hardware store from. They wanted to know where he got steel and iron and other materials that they needed. We think that is how. He had a black and white uniform on, with a striped hat also from Dachau. He had a Star of David on the side of his uniform. He came home and took all of these prison clothes off and we found that his head had been shaven. After that, of course, he wore regular clothes.

Somebody took over the store without paying, without buying it. The store was just confiscated.

Even my house was confiscated by the mayor of the city where we lived. The mayor moved into our beautiful house. They just took it over.

Later on my Aunt Cora, who had been a teacher for quite awhile but was now unemployed, found a School for the Deaf for me. It was another school, a Jewish school, which was located in Berlin so I was taken to the train station. Along the train route, we had to stop halfway at Barnstadt. At that time, trains had to stop before 8 o'clock at night. The next day I was able to continue my journey all the way to Berlin.

I entered the school and saw very few children who were in attendance and there were only two teachers. The director, Dr. Kahn, had taken over running the school. There had been a previous director, but he had left to take many of the children out of the country to escape to London.

I learned a little bit while I was there, a little bit of Hebrew, but not much. The woman caretaker knew of a rich family nearby. They were in Potsdam, Potsdam Platz, and lived in a very wealthy house there. They would be willing to teach me how to cook, clean the house, and also how to sew and darn socks. It was arranged that I would take a streetcar there every day and after school I would work for this family. I always left every evening at 6:30. It always took over half an hour to get there and back.

One day the streetcar was running late, very late, and I was not supposed to get back to my school after 8 in the evening. I walked very quietly up the street. Two Nazi youth, military students from the academy nearby, came up behind me. They grabbed hold of me and took me to their room and there they raped me repeatedly. The first one told me exactly what he wanted me to do and that I had to do everything he wanted and then the second one did the same. I screamed and they clasped their hands over my mouth and told me not to make any noise. I suffered horribly. I had so much blood all over my legs, trickling down. It was terrible. I could not even walk. It was terrible, horrible pain I was experiencing. That happened when I was already 15 years old. It was just at the beginning of December.

I went back to the school, but they would not open the door for me. They refused. I pounded and pounded. I said, "Its Ingelore, let me in. Please open the door." All the lights were out and the building was dark. Finally, the door opened and I was allowed to come in. The door closed behind me and the caretaker saw all the blood all over me. She took care of me and cleaned my up and she said, "What happened to you?" I explained everything to her and I said, "I do not want to go back to that house. I do not want to go back to that job again.

When I was healed, it was time for Christmas vacation so I took a train back home. I was going to stay there for a while and then come back to school the same way. I got to my house and my mother looked at me and she knew immediately that something was wrong. I was not smiling. I had become very serious. It is as if I aged and become older, but my mother never knew what had happened to me. I was ashamed to tell her.

I was scared to tell anybody else. My lips were sealed. I did not utter a word. I told no one what had happened. I had become very serious. I just was not myself.

I had a great uncle who was living in Atlanta, Georgia at the time. He is the one in the family that helped everyone else get out of Germany." My parents could have left in 1937, but I was not able to go with them if they had made the choice to go. The priority was not high enough for me to be given a visa because I was deaf and so that is what happened and we were the last to leave.

Later on, my parents received a letter from the American Consulate. This was located in Stuttgart. Stuttgart is located in the south of Baden-Baden.

We went to the consulate and my parents wanted to be with me when I went into the office, but the person who was in charge of the consulate office would not allow them to accompany me. He shoed them away and I had to go in alone into this office with him. I said, "I would be so very, very proud to be an American. I want to go to school. I want to learn how to speak English. I want to learn some sort of vocational trade. I have not been able to finish school." He tapped my on the shoulder and he said, "Turn around. I want to give you a hearing test." I was terrified. I did not know what I was going to do, but I thought, "All right, I will try my best."

I could hear some sounds, but I was not ever able to discern words. I turned around and somehow God was with me that day. What happened was, on the wall that I was facing was a beautiful picture with a glass pane over it and this picture reflected the light as if it were a mirror. I could actually look at the reflection in this picture and I was able to lip-read what the man behind me was saying. I tried so hard to catch every word that he uttered. I turned to him and I acted dumb, like I had not been able to use this reflection, and I tried to say, "Please, please, don't do this to me. Let me be an American." He said, "Just one more word, I want you to hear just one more word." Quietly, I tried to control myself as I looked back into that picture again and I turned to him and I said, "I believe you said something" and then I told him the word I thought he had said. He did not even say anything more to me. He became very business-like and he wrote something on a paper and then I had to sign. I do not even know what I was signing to.

When we were done, he took me out to see my parents. My parents had been waiting for me and wondering what had happened and they asked me, "Did something get written down?" and I said, "Yes" and they said, "Fantastic! You have received your visa. You have got a passport now. You have it." Really! I had no idea what was going on, but we were overjoyed.

We took the train back to our hometown once more and now we just had a window of opportunity of 24 hours to get out. We could not bring anything with us. All I had was my backpack and my mother had a couple of suitcases. We took the train to the border of Germany and Holland. I have forgotten the name of that border town.

We had to undergo an inspection when we reached the border. They asked me if I had any money and I said, "Yes, I did." I took it out to show them and they said that I had to leave the money right there. I said, "I have no money. I have to go to school. I will not have money for anything," but it did not matter. They did not say one word to me. They just indicated that I had to leave my money on the table and that was that.

I had one gold bracelet that I had hidden in the shoulder pads of my jacket. I had this wonderful jacket with very big boxy shoulder pads and I had carefully placed it within the padding. They just did not seem to have thought of it that day so I was able to bring this bracelet with me.

I did not say anything about it. I was surprised that they did not think to check. They had detectors, but they did not check my shoulder pads. My money was out on the table. I had to leave that there.

There was like an electric device. It was like radar. I am surprised that they did not think to check my pads. They did not check my shoulder pads. They just looked from the waist down and I do not know why.

This was in the beginning of January. We entered Holland and went to town of Rotterdam. My great uncle picked us up at the train station and took us to the hotel. Before we went in, I saw the dining room and there was this huge bowl of fruit. Whow! I had not seen so many fruits in one place before. I had never seen a banana and I had never seen oranges either. Other fruits I had experience with, but not bananas and oranges.

Anyway, we went to our bedroom. My parents had one bed to themselves and I had the other and we immediately fell asleep. We were so tired because of the stressful situation we had been in during the day. My mother was the worse off with the three of us. My father was doing all right.

We fell asleep and my uncle was still downstairs waiting for us to come down and eat with him. He was waiting in the dining room and we never showed up. Finally, he went upstairs and knocked on our door, found us asleep, and he roused us to bring us down to the dining room. There was so much food in that dining room, all different kinds of cold cuts, several different sorts of cheeses, and huge rounds or cornbeef, which I just love.

I immediately concocted myself a huge sandwich and I ate it and was so full I could not eat anymore. My stomach had shrunken so badly by this time. Everything at that time was limited in Germany." The food you could get was not very good quality. We had to use – what are they called – ration cards, ration books. There were stamps in them and you would have a stamp that was good to exchange for meat, another stamp that was

good for milk, and the quantities were severely limited as to how much you were able to get. What you could get was a terrible grade of meat, sometimes just the bones. You would get a bone with just a little bit of meat left clinging to it. Other people had the better cuts of meat, but the Jews got the worse of it. We would get soup bones with barely any meat on them anymore instead of something that was a higher cut.

I remember that any German ID card that had the label "Juden" affixed to it, indicating that you were Jewish, would have to have a certain middle name for males or females. Since I was a woman, I was "Ingelore Sarah." All girls had to have a middle name of "Sarah" and all males had to have the middle name of "Israel".

The hotel had the most marvelous food. We stayed for two days and then my uncle took us to look at the ship. The ship was called the Volendam I. There was an actual series of these ships, there was the Volendam II and III, but we were on Volendam I.

All the Jewish people got onto the boat and found their separate bunks. The men had separate quarters from the women so my father was in a different area of the boat than where my mother and I were. I went upstairs to the dining room to look around. I wanted to know where everything was.

I took a little tour of the boat and then we left to cross the English Channel. It was a terrible crossing because the weather was awful. There was a bad storm and the waves were rolling back and forth. Over the edge of the ship I could see these huge round mines bobbing on the waves. They were huge with these spiky configurations coming out of the sides of them. The waves would toss these mines around back and forth. I prayed that they would not hit the boat.

All of the passengers were required to wear life jackets. We had to, "it was terrifying." It might seem funny, but I stood on the side of the boat and I tried to blow the mines away from the ship. I just blew as hard as I could hoping that I could blow them away. Everybody else went downstairs, but I stood at the deck and watched these mines. Finally, I went downstairs too.

Twenty-four hours passed and then an announcement came over the speakers that we could take our life jackets off, but I would not, I was too afraid to take mine off. Finally, everything quieted down. It took ten days to make the crossing. On the tenth day, I woke up and went outside to get some fresh air and I saw these lights twinkling on the horizon and thought, "What is that?" At first, I thought it was some stars, but there was something about it that did not quite look like a star. I asked the sailor, who was standing nearby, "What are those lights?" "Is it America, perhaps?" He said, "Yes, that is America." I ran downstairs as fast as I could and got my mother to get up. I said, "Get dressed. Come on, we are approaching America now."

My mother and everybody else went up onto the deck to look at the shoreline. Everybody stood as we got closer and closer and we passed the Statue of Liberty. I had seen pictures of it and I had heard of the Statue of Liberty, and I knew that she

represented freedom. I turned to look at all of the other passengers on the deck and every single person was weeping. We wept for three things at the same time. We wept from joy, that we were finally free. We wept because of the homes we had left behind, and we wept with worry, the possibility of not being able to find jobs.

We got to the United States on February 22, 1940, Washington's Birthday. Now the ship docked and my mother started to disembark from the ship, but somebody pushed me back and separated me from my parents. I said, "My mother's going down there," but they kept me back because I was deaf. I started crying. I cried so hard that they thought I had the chickenpox because I had developed hives all over my face. I was a very heavy crier. I gave up after awhile and sat down on the floor. I cried so hard, I cried myself to sleep and as I slept these modeling red blotches on my face went away. Somebody noticed that they had gone away and realized I was not sick, which was good because they would have sent me to Ellis Island. Once they ascertained that I was fine, they let me get off the boat and I could go to my new home in America.

Once those blotches went away, they realized that I was not sick and they could let me go." Now, on my passport it indicated that I was deaf so people knew that already.

Everybody on the boat got sick on the way over, everyone." They were sick because of many different reasons, stress and worry. I would go into the dining room and there would not be one soul in there eating dinner. I asked a sailor, "Where is everybody? There is nobody here. I am the only one coming to eat." He said, "Well, come with me. You can join us sailors over in the sailors' mess hall." That was really fun, I enjoyed that quite a bit.

You know what, something came as a big surprise to me that I forgot to tell you before, I was later told something that was quite shocking. This boat turned around after it let us off in New York and went back to Holland. On the way back to Holland, it was sunk. Well, evidently it hit a mine, but that is all that I know about it.

We went to my cousin's house. They said that we could stay there until we found jobs. They took me to the "HIAS." This is an organization that was for people to find employment. You would fill out applications and they would try to find a place for you. As for me, they helped me find the Lexington School for the Deaf. I had a room to sleep in. I had food, everything provided for me there. I was 15 at the time. It was great.

Time went on and my mother procured a job. She became a chamber maid. She was working at a place on Park Avenue and my father became a gardener at Mount Vernon. I would go home on the weekends and all of my family would be working. I would be left alone, with nothing much to do. I would just look out at the street.

I saw that across the street there was a "Dr. Vogel." His sign was hanging out of the window. He was a middle-aged gentleman of about 55-65, somewhere in there. I approached him one day and said, "Do you speak German?" He ushered me into his



office. I said, "I have not had my period for the longest time." Now, I got my period when I was 10½-years-old.

Well, what happened was I got my period and I thought that I had done something bad because my pants were dirty. I washed them and changed my underwear to something fresh, but again they became soiled. I washed them again. Well, the third time this happened I was afraid that I would get beaten because my pants kept getting dirty. I told my mother and then she hit me on the cheek and went to the drugstore. She brought me something similar to Kotex, not like American Kotek. This was something that you washed, like a cotton pad. It actually had my initials on it, "IH" at the top, with a little button that you would be able to button this pad to your underwear. You would soak these in cold water and then hang them up to dry in the attic every day. This is what we would do in school. We would hang them up in the attic at school.

My mother did not explain anything to me. She did not explain anything about what this meant. I went to my grandmother and asked her what it was all about. She said, "Sit down. You are a big girl now. No more playing with the boys. You cannot be a tomboy anymore. You cannot climb mountains. You cannot jump over brooks. No more, you have to be a lady now. You are not a girl." I thought, "Oh that does not sound like any fun at all. That will not be any fun. I have to be a lady." "Hmm," but that is what happened and how I found out.

Anyway, I had gone to this doctor and explained that I had had no period for quite a while and that I seemed to be gaining weight. He gave me a urine test. At that time, they called it a "rabbit" test. This was years and years ago. The doctor found out that I was pregnant and I said, "Pregnant. What do you mean? A baby, I have a baby in there?" I was so surprised. "Where did it come from? Where did this baby come from? How did it get there?" He said, "Have you been with a man? Was a man in you? That is what gave you the baby." "Really, all that bleeding and that thing that happened to me?" I told him and he said, "Yes," but I did not know. I had no idea.

I told the doctor everything. I told him I was so afraid to tell my parents because if they knew, I was terrified that my father would beat me or punish me in some kind of way." The doctor said, "Don't worry about it. I will get a hold of your mother after work, and we lived right across the street of course. I will talk to your mother after work and I will tell her." I said, "I want to get rid of this baby." Now, I did not know the word "abortion" at the time. I said, "Get this out of me. I want this out. I do not want this baby."

I knew that it would always haunt me as this pregnancy progressed, but this had come to pass because of what the Nazis had done to me, that they had been so cruel to me, and I did not want this reminder, a baby living and constantly reminding me of what had happened. I would rather have taken poison. I would rather have died. If this baby had lived, I would have poisoned myself if I could not have obtained an abortion. I did not want to see this baby brought into the world and grow up. However, abortions were not legal without a parent's consent. They had to sign a form giving permission. The doctor

explained that they were going to have to sign this. I also did not have any insurance or any sort of sick benefits or anything so I did not know how I would pay him.

Dr. Vogel's wife was in another room and Dr. Vogel told my parents what happened to me. He told them not to hit me, that that would not be permitted. It would not be right after what your daughter has gone through. You need to support her. Your daughter is terrified that you are going to beat her and that is not right.

When he found out, he cried, and then he signed the permission slip. Then I was able to get the abortion.

He performed the abortion in his office, which was located in his home. It was private. His wife acted in the capacity of a nurse and helped out. Everything was boiled and sterilized, as clean as it could be, and they went ahead and aborted the baby. I was two months pregnant at the time. I did not want to know if it was a boy or girl. I did not care.

After the abortion, I stayed in bed for two weeks recuperating and resting. The nurse visited me fairly frequently. My parent asked, "How much do I have to pay you? Should I pay you weekly or once a month and the nurse said, "No, this is my gift to you because I feel so terrible. I feel so sorry for her, for your daughter. We spoke German with each other." That is that story.

In Heidelberg, Germany I had a good friend. I knew her and I knew her family. Her father was a shoemaker. I met my husband at my friend's house years before I married him. This was in the town of Veinheim."

My soon-to-be husband would bring samples of materials so that the shoemaker would decide which sort of materials they wanted to use in their wares. I was visiting one time and I was a little girl of about 13 or so. He saw me and pinched my cheek and pinched my ear and patted me on the head and was very sweet to me. We were 15 years apart in age. Then I came to America and one time was visiting my cousin at her home and this same gentleman walked in the door. I said, "You look so familiar to me. I have met you somewhere before. Let's see now, you are deaf. Oh wait, I remember you. You kind of pinched my nose and my cheek and pat me on my head one time, way back when." He said, "Oh, I remember you, 'You are Ingelore,' and I said, "Yes."

Well, what did you come here for today? I said, "I have come to pick up your cousin, whose name was Edith and Edith was hearing." They had known each other because they were from the same hometown in Germany. A lot of people from the same area in Germany were living in this one particular neighborhood. Anyway, he had come to take Edith out on a date. I said, "What are you going to be doing this afternoon on this date?" "Well, we are going to the theatre?" The theatre, I said, "Oh it is going to be singing and you cannot even hear it." "Why are you going to go with her for? I do not think she is the one for you. I think it would be better if you and I dated. Don't you think I would be better for you? Come on, darling. Don't you think I would be more your type?" We started dating.

I was 16 at the time and he was 15 years older, maybe it was less than 15 years older." Anyway, we attended sports events together. We went to movies with captions. They were – what do they call them – news reels. They had the captions across the bottom, telling you what was going on. We saw a lot of those. We attended those in Times Square in New York City. We saw each other more and more. We went to beach together, and as time went on we felt more and more as if we were falling in love.

After a while, I told my father that I was dating him. There was this one day I said I was going on this date with Herb. He said, "Well, you have to polish my shoes first before you go out on this date." I said, "I will, I will polish your shoes, I will do it tomorrow morning." We were talking about Saturday. I said, "I will polish them Sunday morning. I will make sure I will do the first thing tomorrow morning. I promise I will tomorrow." He was so angry at me that he hit me really hard on my back. I felt the force of that blow go all the way through, right through my sternum. I could not even yell. I could not even breathe he hit me so hard. It went right through me. I went into my bedroom and locked the door.

Herb was outside waiting and waiting for me to show up for our date. He came upstairs and I heard his knock on the door, but I refused to answer. The next morning, I polished my father's shoes for him and Herb later said, "What happened?" and I said, "Don't talk to me, don't talk to me."

The following Sunday Herb came again to see me and wanted to go out. We went out that afternoon to the park. He tried to put his arm around me. I said, "Please do not touch my back. It hurts too much." I think at that time, I was 17 or 18-years-old, somewhere around there." He said, "Why not touch your back, what is going on?" I said, "It just hurts too much." Herb said, "I want to see what is up with your back." I said, "No, no, no, it is nothing." "Please let me see," he insisted, and then he pulled my garment away from my back and looked down and was shocked to find that my entire back was black and blue from the blow that my father had given me. He said, "Why are you black and blue? What happened?" Now, I did not know what it looked like. I could not see behind me. I had no idea. He said, "What happened?" and I explained that my father hit me. Then he was in a big hurry to marry me, just to get me away from my father. That is the reason we got married. Once he saw what had happened on my back, from my father hitting me so hard, he wanted to get me away.

Now, he had suspected that this had gone on, Herb did, and he had been making preparations. We were married June 10, 1944.

Herbert Stiefel. Herbert was in Berlin, I mean Germany too. He was from Weinheim. He was president of a Jewish Deaf Club that was located in Frankfort. On Main, it was on Main.

He sent a flyer to all of the deaf Jewish people telling them to come to a very important meeting. He wanted to make an incredibly important announcement to them this one

particular time. He had a best friend named Fritz Herbst. This was his best friend, very tight pals. Fritz was not Jewish, but Fritz had warned Herbert. He said, "You must leave Germany immediately. You have got to get out as soon as possible." He said, "I have heard plans. I have heard things that are going on and you have got to get out of here. Any friends or relatives you have in America or England or Israel, please get hold of them and leave now."

Herb made this announcement to all of the deaf people who were members of the Deaf Club. They said, "Why, what about our jobs? What about our money, our savings?" Herb said, "I have the same problems. In America we can get money, we can get jobs, but we need to leave. Germany is no more for us." This is what he announced to all the members of the Deaf Club, and then he said, "Some day, all of us here will see each other again." Those were the last words that he announced to the Deaf Club of which he was the president.

Years later I was married to Herbert and I bore two beautiful sons. The older one's name is Frank and my second son is Lester, who was born four years later. We raised our sons together and Herbert became very sick. He had a growth in his throat removed. Then the doctor found that he had difficulty with his bone marrow and that cancer was growing there. The cancer grew in his body like a tree. His back became hunched over and the front of his body protruded. A growth actually burst through the skin and grew outside of his body. They had to cover it with a patch. Growths of cancer came out everywhere, on his hips, his legs, just like a tree. Eventually, he died from cancer.

My husband was looking for a job and heard somewhere that there was someone who specialized in designs for custom-made suits. Perhaps somebody had unusual measurements and needed something very specifically tailored for them. It was very, very difficult to measure for people, especially if the material was plaid. It was hard to match it up. He became foreman at this business because he was very, very good at it.

One day, he was commissioned to make a uniform for General Eisenhower and also he was asked to create a suit or a uniform for General Patton. He was also commissioned to make a suit for Clarke Gable. Whow! He got to measure Clarke Gable and then one of the workers said, "Do you know him? Do you know who this is?" I said, "Nope, I have never seen this man in my life." Clarke Gable even wrote his name down. Somebody said, "This is a movie star." He said, "No, I still have not heard of him." He brought it home and showed me and I said, "You have to go get the autograph."

He came home from work and asked me if I knew who this was. I said, "Yes, of course, we saw the movie, do you not remember?" "Gone with the Wind," we just saw it like a couple of days ago. You do not remember this?" He said, "Well, he will be coming back for a fitting sometime soon." I said, "Great." If he comes back you have to tell me so that I can come meet him, but he never came back because he received a tragic telephone call.

The suit was ready, but he had left and gone to England to join the Air Force. He had just lost his wife in an airplane crash. Her name was Carole Lombard. "Yes, her plane crashed so then he joined the Air Force." That is what happened – that was like in the 40's – '41, '42 while the war was going on, I believe. Something like that, I am not sure of the timing. Remember, I was married in '44 so it had to have happened after that time – '45, '46 maybe. I do not know exactly what year it was.

Also General Nimetz, he was a Navy Admiral. I believe there were ships named after him. That was the ship that was sunk and he was on a raft that he was stuck on for a few days before he was actually rescued. He lost a lot of weight, become very thin, while he was waiting to be rescued, but anyway my husband made a uniform for General Nimetz, as well.

We always called on my son Frank to come on Saturday and make telephone calls and help out with customers, but Frank did not want to come to the store. He did not want to miss out on his playtime and being with his friends. He was very young at the time. I would say maybe 10 or 11, somewhere around there.

Twenty-five years we were married." He died and later on I married for a second time. My second husband's name was Jonas Lipkin. We were married a very short time, just four years. He is the one who made me learn how to drive in New York City.

He made me learn how to drive and he brought me to Florida. We lived in Florida together. He died in his sleep. We had only been married four years.

One year later, I met Paul, Paul Honigstein, and married him. Altogether, 29 years. He was 96-years-old when he died. He was very, very sick. He had cancer also. He had five bypasses; three were down below his rib cage on his left side, and then he had to have one of his carotid arteries on the side of his neck on the right side, then he experienced an aneurysm down in the lower part of his body – an aneurysm. He also fell at home and broke his hip so he had to receive hip replacement surgery. Three weeks after that he fell again and he smashed the nerves on the side of his leg. One thing led to another. He also had very narrow valves in his heart. He just died five months ago. "May God let him rest in peace."

His daughter's name is Ellie Levy. She was an itinerant interpreter for a while, for an agency, a deaf organization. I joined her at one point to go on a trip to Israel. What year was it? I cannot remember. I cannot remember the exact year. I think it might have been '86. Ah, I just cannot remember what year it was. We went to Israel together to Tel Aviv. There was a large deaf group from the Helen Keller Society there.

One woman came up to me and asked me where I was from. I said, "I was from New York, but then I had moved to Florida." She said, "What is your name?" I told her my full name and I used Stiefel as my last name, "Ingelore Stiefel." She said, "Herbert Stiefel?" I said, "Yes, that is my husband." She said, "You know Herbert Stiefel?" "Yes, that was my husband." Your husband – she hugged me and started kissing me all up

and down my arms and all over my face and I had no idea why. She said, "I will never forget Herbert was president of the Jewish Club in Germany and he was the one who warned all of us about getting out of Germany." The last words he said to us are that "We will all see each other some day, somewhere, again." She was the one to see me and remind me and tell of the last words that Herbert had said to them. "I will never forget that."

I wanted to see my old house, to see if it were still standing or not. I wanted to see what kind of condition it was in. It changed a little bit, of course, on the outside and then out back there were some new cars sitting in the garage. I had the nerve to knock on the door to ask if I could go in. A little girl came to the door and I asked, "Is your Grandma here or your Mommy? I would like to see them please." Her grandmother came to see me at the door and I told her, "This house belonged to my father, Berthold Herz." She became extremely red in the face. It was my father's house.

I asked if it would be permissible for me to come into the house and take a look around and she ushered me in. The dining room had a beautiful chandelier that was still there. It was still there, exactly the same. A lot of things had been stolen, fur coats and silver, jewelry. Beautiful things that I recall from that house were gone, but I saw something that was still there and I became very emotional and I had to leave. I just took my leave without saying a word of good-bye. I just left the house, sped out as fast as I could. I told Paul about that and he just could not even believe it. That is what happened.

My Aunt Cora got to America in 1941 or 1942, I do not remember. She came through New York one time and stopped by my home saying she was on her way to Germany. She wanted to see her grandparents' graves and what had happened to the cemetery there. She went to the town of Rimbach, where they were buried.

She just wanted to see what happened to this one particular cemetery there in the town. I told my aunt that it looked awful and that all of the stones were toppled. She had gone to the mayor of the town and complained. "This is a disgrace. The grass needs to be mowed and the stones need to be cleaned up and set upright again. Everything needs to be cleaned up." After a while I came again to see what the cemetery looked like because at this point it was about '87 or '86, somewhere around then. I went to see the cemetery for myself and the grass was overgrown yet again. The stones were still toppled and nobody had done a thing to right them. I looked for my husband's family and great-great grandparents and I was not even able to locate the stones. My husband was trying to find them, becoming very emotional, and I finally stopped him and said, "Let's just give up."

I spoke for the first time about this in Washington, D.C. It was a Deaf Jewish Convention. I believe it was 1992.

I was on a panel discussion where people were telling their stories about what had happened to them. They were all survivors. I was listening to everybody and Ruth Stern was sitting next to me and poked me in my side and said, "Get up. You tell your story, tell them what happened, please." I said, "No, no, no." She said, "Well everybody's got something similar. Tell your story too."

She finally got up and pointed at me so that everybody would look at me and she made me get up. Of course I had to stand and all eyes were upon me. I had to stand, in the middle of this forum, and I did not even know where to begin. I told them my name. I told them what had happened to me and as I told the story and kept going on and on, it was just a torrent of information. I looked in the audience and everyone was crying. Everyone was crying as they looked at me. After that, I felt so much better. I felt I had finally gotten it off my chest; somehow a weight had been lifted off of me. I felt so much lighter and I have to give thanks to Ruth for that.