

INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN MARX

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**Transcending Trauma Project
Council for Relationships
4025 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104**

INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN MARX

INTERVIEWER: Tuesday, October 11, 1994, and this is an interview with Mr. Nathan Marx, of Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Would you please tell us your name, your age, and your place of birth?

NATHAN MARX: Yes. Nathan Marx. Born Alsbach on der Bergstrasse, if they understand that.

INT: What does that mean?

NATHAN: That is the area.

INT: Of Germany?

NATHAN: Or I can say it Hessen, that's the state. And my age is 85 years old.

INT: What was your birth date?

NATHAN: September 11, 1909.

INT: And you are married.

NATHAN: We were married in 1942. I met my wife through a friend that I knew in Springfield. She introduced me to my wife, and she was from Northampton, Massachusetts, and we got married in 1942.

INT: And your wife, is her name Sadie? Sadie Marx?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: Your wife told us before that she worked at Smith College for many years.

NATHAN: Oh, yes, yes.

INT: And you worked...

NATHAN: I worked, at first, when I came to this country, I worked for Philip Sissitsky.

INT: What kind of company?

NATHAN: That was an individual store that had groceries. And that was in Long Meadow. But Mr. Sissitsky lived in Thompsonville, Connecticut, and coming as a newcomer, he took me

home with him in the evening, and he gave me something to eat. And then he had a son that wanted to learn to read Hebrew. In turn, I gave him lessons to read Hebrew. And later on I took the bus and came back to Springfield.

INT: And you were working for him, for Mr. Sissitsky?

NATHAN: Oh, yes, it must have been, he sold out after a year or two. I don't remember exactly. And I came with the Springfield Public Market, that was a man by the name Herman Eisenberg, and Louie Eisenberg, and of course the payment was a little better up there, which everyone, I believe, looks for. (laughs) But...it came so that even that Springfield Public Market sold out, and I came with, found a job with First National Stores, and I started in Amherst, Mass. There was a manager by name Honey. I forgot the first name. The first name I forgot.

INT: That's okay.

NATHAN: And he favored me. He liked to have me there. And then after a while, when I was there for a while, I was promoted by First National. I got a store, that's a smaller store, in Florence. Are you acquainted there?

INT: Yes.

NATHAN: Near right in the center of the town, there was a First National Store, and I enjoyed running it.

INT: So you were like a manager?

NATHAN: Yes. Well, manager, worker, whatever. (laughs) Everything. And I was there. When we got married, we moved in that area, so I didn't have to walk or ride too far. I couldn't drive yet. I had to learn driving in America. In Europe, I did not, in Europe we had good jobs, but we didn't drive automobiles.

INT: Did you work in Europe before you came here?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I was with a big company, clothing factory. We made men clothing and caps. And I was, there you have to go as an apprentice for three years, and during the three years, you don't earn much, but under, I don't know if I should say that, under the table?

INT: Yeah, sure. It happens all the time.

NATHAN: Under the table, I got a little extra. Knowing they could depend on me, and wanted me to have responsibility. And we produced thousands and thousands and dozens of caps, which were shipped all over Germany. And my brother, may he rest in peace, he was in clothing, the men clothing division. I can show you a picture. (Pauses while he gets a picture to show the interviewer.) I have it packed so full, it's hard to get out.

INT: Are those old pictures from...

NATHAN: No. Not exactly. But I have... (pause)

INT: This is correspondence with Germany?

NATHAN: They're different, different... (pause) Can you read German?

INT: A little bit. Can you, or if you want to read it for me, I could probably understand it. It says, "West Germany expected to sign last settlement agreement in October." So this was in...

NATHAN: That's later on.

INT: This is for reparations?

NATHAN: Yes. Yeah. Where did I put this? (pause, looking for letter) Oh, yes. (long pause)

INT: Was this company a Jewish company, by the way, in Germany?

NATHAN: Yes. We had seven principles. There was Izzie Marx, Solomon Marx, Bernard Marx, Leo Marx. They were distantly mishpacha.

INT: How were they related to you?

NATHAN: Well, on my father's side. As a...cousin. Distant cousins. But during that time of the apprenticeship, there was not such a thing, let me say, that I knew that they were related to me.

INT: You didn't get any special favors.

NATHAN: No. There was one man, by name Franz Secovitz. He was a Gentile. But he was as good as a Jew. And that man had to come into the factory, with the uniform on, with the Hitler uniform on, and show that he has nationalistic ideas.

INT: You remember that. Him coming in with that.

NATHAN: Oh!

INT: What was that like when he came in like that?

NATHAN: Well, it was not much changed. He didn't make any, but I left in 1938. And I had brothers. Where did I put that?

INT: Are you looking for a picture?

NATHAN: Yeah. More or less, it's a picture on it. I want to show you the place that we worked in. If you forgive me for a moment.

INT: Sure. Take your time. (pause)

NATHAN: I have two folders like this, unless it's in the other one. (pause)

INT: What does this mean, Nathan? Wundes (sp?). What is that? Can you read it for me?

NATHAN: That is Associated Insurance Institute for people who are...employed.

INT: Oh. I see.

NATHAN: Bundes (Speaks German). Angestelde. An Angestelde is someone more or less...more in an office, let me say.

INT: An employee.

NATHAN: Yeah. I don't think that's in here. (Continues to look) "German Memories." I think that I might have it in here.

INT: What does this word mean?

NATHAN: Suchten (sp?), search service.

INT: What were you searching for?

NATHAN: Well, that's here. Hannah. That is one of my brothers, Elias Marx, Jacob Marx, he has family. His wife is Sophie, and a son named Joseph. Jacob Marx. He's married to Frieda.

INT: That's what it says here?

NATHAN: Yes. And they have a daughter by name Marga. And then down here, this is my sister, Willi Wolf is her husband. This is my sister, Adelheid (sp?). She had five children. There was Erich, Ernst, Manfred, and Herbert, and Mariana.

INT: So this would tell you, this says here, that they were deported, for example, Elias was deported, they let you know that they were deported to Theresienstadt?

NATHAN: Yes. In Theresienstadt, they burned them in a fire.

INT: And here it says, "tzerik gekimin," they didn't come back?

NATHAN: They never came back.

INT: But their son, Yosef, what does this mean, befinden sich?

NATHAN: (reading the German) They couldn't find anything about their son. About their son. But I registered here in this book, where he is also...killed.

INT: So this is a book about your birthplace?

NATHAN: Heimartbuch (sp?). That is where I was born.

INT: Alsbach. Who put out this book?

NATHAN: Well, I suppose the community there.

INT: Oh, so it's not just about the Jews.

NATHAN: No, but here, "die Juden." This is about the Jews. Part of it, let me say, most of it is how Alsbach was created, how it was built, how he had land, and all this. You know, it was not, let me say, a big town. It was more a farmer's town. But there were some farmers. They had a little money. And they could buy, also they could buy anybody's land.

INT: How big was the Jewish community there?

NATHAN: The Jewish community was not very big. Not very big, Hannah. No. I want to find that. Here, I got it here. Right here are the names of the family. Here. David, Helene, David, Ludwig. David Berta. David, Beate. David, Rosel. I remember her. David, Felix. He, that Felix, he left Germany long before even Hitler. You know, some people had connection with American relatives. So for them, it was easy, so to speak, to come, because they vouch for them, and that was all that was to it. And helped them. We had to search for anybody that is related to us. My brother who used to live in Springfield, he died young. 53 years old.

INT: Was he sick?

NATHAN: He had heart trouble. But I never knew he had that, until this happened. So, you see, it's...it's a mixed, let me say, mixed-up affair. He came to a cousin of my father's (?), who lived in Bensheim, which was the town that we worked in. So he says, "Have we got any relatives on that idea in America that could help us?" And she said, "Yes, you have. There is a man by name Norman Goetz (sp?)." As a matter of fact, when we were youngsters, very young, he was out in Europe at one time. I can remember that. But I didn't think of him, how to write to him, how to approach him. Neither did he.

INT: Sure.

NATHAN: So he says, and he wrote to him, she gave him the address, and he wrote to him, and the answer came back favorable. But he wanted us to go to someone in Frankfurt-am-Main, and

interview us first, that we are material to live in America. Which we did, and that man, he wrote very favorable of us, and he gave me the affidavit.

INT: Where did this cousin live? The Goetz, is that his name?

NATHAN: He's not living anymore.

INT: Yeah, but then where was he?

NATHAN: He lived Central Park West. He was an attorney in New York City.

INT: But you didn't go to New York when you came.

NATHAN: I didn't stay there, no. No, I didn't stay there. He, the first thing when I came here, says to me, "Stay out of court." That was the first warning. I said, "I'll try very hard." Thank G-d, I don't have to go into court.

INT: Well, I see here some Marx.

NATHAN: Yes. There will be some over here, too. Marx, Augusta, was my mother.

INT: Who was Daniel?

NATHAN: Daniel was her husband. That was her husband.

INT: Your father?

NATHAN: My father, yeah, her husband. He died in 1935 in Alsbach. And at that time, there was no Gentile who would participate in a funeral, in a Jewish funeral. They looked from behind the curtain to see what is going on. But he got buried honorably, just the same. This was my mother's (?). She died here in America. She came, she went to Italy, and came over here.

INT: In 1940.

NATHAN: In those years, that Hitler did not let her take her own money to buy the ship ticket. She told us that, she wrote us, and from the little pay that we made, we saved a little bit, and bought the ship ticket, and sent it to her. She lived here 25 years.

INT: Really. With you? I mean, near you?

NATHAN: No, with my brother.

INT: In Springfield?

NATHAN: In Springfield. He had more, let me say, more room. Marx, Elias, that's a brother. He was an older brother. He moved to Frankfurt-am-Main. Marx, Sophie, was his wife. Marx, Joseph, was his son. Marx, Nathan, that's myself.

INT: There you are. You came in 1938.

NATHAN: Here it says on that Elias and his family "umgebracht."

INT: So from this book you knew that all of them had died.

NATHAN: I just detected that. I don't look in that book very much. I'm honest with you. Because I have no desire to read about all that.

INT: Is it painful for you, Nathan?

NATHAN: No, no, no. (shouts, strongly) Marx, Helmut, for instance, was that brother in Springfield, U.S.A. Those are different people. Sussman. David, David, David. That's Miriam, for instance. She gave him the address. Of that Goetz, of that Goetz on Central Park West.

INT: Here it says she left for Holland. So they left also, in 1939.

NATHAN: Well, yes. I guess that was her daughter, wasn't it?

INT: Her, too.

NATHAN: Well, they had to go there. They had to go there. In those days, they didn't want to, they sold their house in a favorable way, yet. That was earlier that they left. You see, they had relatives here. Her husband, one of her sons was a bachelor. He had in...Michigan, in Michigan, he had a shoe store. And he made good money. He, so to speak, supported them over in Europe. That was the difference. But I don't go to someone and say, "Give me some money. I need some money." That's not my idea. Or, that was not my parents' idea.

Here is Marx, Elsa. Adelheid. Oberglein (sp?). She lived in Oberglein with her husband Willi Wolf. "Im KC Ungekommen."

INT: What is that?

NATHAN: Concentration camp. Ungekommen. Who is this? Marx, Jacob. He went to Frankfurt-am-Main. Ungekommen im KC. Mayer, Rosa, Damstadt. Oh, she died in Europe. That's my aunt. That's also on the relations side. Marx, Goetz, and Mayer. Well, that probably bores you.

INT: Not at all. As a matter of fact, I was thinking about what it must feel like to see your names, and names of your family members, in a book about your hometown.

NATHAN: Well, that's all right. At least they listed them. That was later on. Later on, after the war.

INT: Have you ever been back there?

NATHAN: No. I tell you, Hannah, I had no wish to go back. Who would I go and see? There is not one Jew in that town left. I'm not going into, let me say, to my neighbor, say, "Mr. Goebbel, I'm here from America," to him? That is no, that wouldn't be for me.

INT: So these letters that you were showing me, so after the war, you wrote?

NATHAN: Oh, yes, I wrote. Yes. That's why, that is the Such dienst, that's what I was looking for in the first folder. This is on the same idea. It's all written in German. You probably cannot read it.

INT: No, not exactly. Want to tell me?

NATHAN: Yeah. "In answer of your writing, we are informing you untenstehen." Standing below, the result of our search service. (German) The inhabitants...where you report your...office, that's an office where the inhabitant can report in Frankfurt-am-Main, let us know that Mr. Elias Marx and Frau Sophie, Sophie's son Joseph Marx, since May 10, 1945, new arranged inhabitants, you see, they have a register so to speak, that you record, as a, that you are an inhabitant. (German) That it was not listed anymore in that town. That's what they said there. (German) Papers, let me say, reports are...

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

NATHAN: Since the war came on.

INT: So the papers don't exist.

NATHAN: Yeah. Who knows whether they were destroyed or not? Der Polizei Kommissar. The Police Commissioner of the fifth police...(pause) of Frankfurt-am-Main. Frankfurt-am-Main is the next biggest city. Make a report, that the house, Grinerstrasse 32, was destroyed. That's where he lived. (German) With the Jewish trust office -- I call it office, let me say -- is, they found out that a Mr. Jacob Marx, Jacob Marx, I should say, his wife, Frieda, and daughter Marga, 11 November, 1941, were deported nach Minsk on that date. Further...affairs about the ones that we look for, is there nothing.

INT: They don't know anything more.

NATHAN: No more. Right.

INT: So, now this letter is from 1947. So that means you wrote to them once the war was over.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Yes. I got somehow an address where to write to. How I could find them. Where they are.

INT: Were you hoping, what were you thinking, then, when you wrote those letters?

NATHAN: Well, listen, I know they were not living anymore. They were not living anymore, Hannah. But just the same, I wanted to, from them to here. That was on the Jewish office. Not the...

INT: What was it like for you to get these letters? Do you remember?

NATHAN: Well, it was not easy. Just the same, even so, I knew there were six million people that were destroyed. I could have been destroyed. I left just in time. I left in September, '38. Had I waited two more months, there was the Kristallnacht.

INT: Yes. November.

NATHAN: November. Where **everyone** was loaded up on a truck, and people were ready to go to bed in the middle of the night, and let them freeze to death. That alone is an affair. That could have happened to me, if I hadn't gotten out. Here is the whole list of my sister Adelheid's family.

INT: This is from the Gemeinde...

NATHAN: That is a community, yeah, Otzberg, im Odenwald. That's an area. Like I would say, Holyoke, there is, they have some nearer description.

INT: Right. Now this is from 1992. What does that mean? You were...

NATHAN: Well, later on, even in 1992 I had to write, either I did, or they had the form. At one time I wrote to someone in Hertz in Odenwald, and he wrote me back that I have in mind to inform me as soon as they get all the necessary information. And I still have to hear from him. The other day I destroyed that letter, because I didn't like it.

INT: The letter you got from them?

NATHAN: Pardon?

INT: You mean the letter they sent you?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: They still don't know, is that it? Is that what they're saying?

NATHAN: Well, now they know, sure.

INT: So they wrote to you...

NATHAN: "Dear Mr. Marx. Our search in the person, (German) they have books, and there are lists of all the people. In German, it's this one word. The person's official books of the gemeinde Oberglien. Jetzt Ottsburg." They make these smaller towns. They...how should I say that? They take care of that little town.

INT: Right. I understand.

NATHAN: (German) Having the following result reached: Willi Wolf, born on such a date in Oberglien, and Elsa Marx, geborn on this date in Alsbach, (German) they got married there.

INT: In 1920.

NATHAN: Yeah. (German) After search, after looking over the birth books, the books of birth, (German) is where the mayor is, the city hall. Oberglien, that's a small place. (German) Where, in the years 1921 to 1934, (German) the birth of the following children of the married people, Willi and Elsa Wolf were found. These are the names.

INT: Of their children.

NATHAN: Yeah. That hurts, when you see someone. Look at this. 1921 he was born, and in the thirties, that kid was destroyed. He was not even 15 years old. This one was even younger. This one was born in 1934. That hurts, when you see something like this, of a sister to happen. She was the oldest sister. The other two brothers were after that. And then we came on the very end.

INT: You know, Nathan, I'm struck with the fact that these files that you call, "German Memories," they span so many years, so that here, from when you came till now, and in a way, you still are living with these people in some way. Am I right to say that? Or trying to at least not lose some connection with them. I mean, here 1992, and you're writing to a small town. What does that mean for you?

NATHAN: Well, I had to remind them of. You have to remind them of. You cannot just let it go. You want to know what...and she wrote me in a very pleasant way. She wrote me back at the moment she couldn't answer my question, but she will, and that came in 1992.

INT: What was your question that she didn't answer? What happened to them?

NATHAN: Yes. I wanted to know where they are. Her name is right here. Michel (sp?). Frau Michel. See? The office of service, they call it (German). Well, that's...it was so much for that. That's what I was going to show you. Oh, the guild of where we worked, the picture.

INT: You have newsletters from the Holocaust museum?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. I get, well, I send them sometimes a little money, and I get from them.

INT: Have you been there?

NATHAN: Where?

INT: To the museum?

NATHAN: No. Well, my wife is not well. How can I go?

INT: Would you go, if you could?

NATHAN: Well, (laughs) that's a different question, my dear Hannah. It's...what is this?

INT: That's your membership.

NATHAN: Membership, yeah. Oh, yes. There is something. Liberation of Buchenwald. There is something here that has nothing to do with me. They just sent me that. Here is Joseph Guttman, age 19. Survivor of Buchenwald. You have heard of Buchenwald?

INT: Of course.

NATHAN: Yes. They were terrible, terrible things. They arrested the people, it didn't matter what they ever did in life. They didn't do **nothing**. Nothing. You heard, every day you heard of someone, this one arrested. That one arrested.

INT: In your time, before you left?

NATHAN: Before. There was some in my town. Yes, before I left, yes. There were some in other towns that you're acquainted with. You can see this, that's how they dressed them.

INT: Yes. This is Dachau, 1945.

NATHAN: Dachau.

INT: So when you look at those pictures, do you think about your family?

NATHAN: Yes. (pause) Here is something. They want to ask questions after the history. After the history, and ask.

INT: Now this is from a newspaper.

NATHAN: Darmstadter Ecole (sp?).

INT: Where is that?

NATHAN: Darmstadt is also a fairly nice town, yeah.

INT: And this is a newspaper, and there's something here about Alsbach?

NATHAN: (German) To think of the Jews in Alsbach. (German) They put up a tablet in the mayor's, in the city hall. In fact, that helps. That brings the people back (sarcastically). Well, these are the people that went there. (German) Well...(pause, reading) They made a celebration over that. Over that tablet.

INT: What do you think of that?

NATHAN: Ha. Well, you think there is anybody there that goes in and says, "This one is not living? This one that Hitler..." They have other ideas. Today, they have ideas to come back with that Hitler business.

INT: The neo-Nazi stuff in Germany.

NATHAN: Yes. Oh, there were some, they were fanatics. Some of them were fanatics. I cannot say direct, there was one, not immediately a neighbor, when we lived here. There was a house in between, he was not a Nazi, but the next house, he was a Nazi. Or friends of mine were Nazis.

INT: Really? The people that had been your friends? People you had known?

NATHAN: That I had known. I used to play soccer ball, myself, with them. But when all this came on, you retreat.

INT: What did they used to, they used to...

NATHAN: They didn't do me anything, thank G-d. No one came to me. No one came to any of us, so to speak, except that they arrested these two older brothers, and killed them.

INT: Your two older brothers?

NATHAN: Yes. Elias and Adelheid, and she lived in another town, that was later on in the years, when that Hitler could, one in 1940, in the '40's he won already in France. If America hadn't gone in, he would be still here.

INT: Let's just see what else it says.

NATHAN: Yeah. (German) In the frame of a quiet hour, opened up, you know they have a cloth hanging over, and then they take that cloth off. That idea. The picture shows from left...

INT: This man here, who has a yarmulke on, looks like.

NATHAN: Yeah...He's a minister, Johannes Mingo (sp?) of the Evangelican Kristlichen Gemeinde, Alsbach. He's an evangelist.

INT: Minister.

NATHAN: Yeah. Rabbi Chaim Lipshitz. That's him.

INT: Where's he from, I wonder?

NATHAN: It doesn't say. And Mayor Reinhart Wenrich. That's this one. From the Arbeiter Darmstadter (German). To report it. It's too bad this is all in German. I would say to you that you can have that and read it.

INT: Well, you know, maybe if you wouldn't mind, I could take it and make a copy, I'd give you back, and I could try.

NATHAN: This? Why not?

INT: I'll bring you back a copy. That might tell me something else. Thank you.

NATHAN: These are more papers from a friend that later on also was on a search service. He's from Freiburg. Gerhart Beer. You ever hear of him?

INT: No, is he from here?

NATHAN: Yeah. No, excuse me. He's not from here. No, pardon me. He lives over there, yet, in Freiburg. Freiburg, Germany. That's a big city. We used to do big, big business there. Big business. Heavens, I can't see that...

INT: You're looking for the picture of the business?

NATHAN: I want to show you. For the begleitungs, where we...(looking through papers) Here, this you can read.

INT: "Germany to Pay Jewish Victims." (Pause) This is something new that's going to start in 1995 for people who didn't receive before.

NATHAN: What's that?

INT: That's what they say here. That they will receive 500 German marks, if they didn't get before.

NATHAN: Oh, they have to.

INT: Well, weren't you eligible for...

NATHAN: I am. Oh yes. I don't know where I stuck that. I'm honest with you, I have to look.

INT: That's okay. But what I see from this, is that you did, from the start, you were writing and trying to find out about your family before.

NATHAN: Yeah. This is, this girl here, she is a daughter of one of the Marx's brothers. He was in the leather business. Edgar Marx and Simon Marx. There were ten children.

INT: From your father's side?

NATHAN: Yes. The Marxes that I worked for, that manufactured men's clothes and men's caps. I used to go out, and they sent me out to see haberdashery stores after the three years were up, and sell them some caps.

INT: After your three years of being an apprentice?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: Tell me, if we can just go back to that time for a moment, what kind of schooling did you have there?

NATHAN: I went to the Oberrealshule. Previous to that, Hannah, Oberrealshule, previous to that, I was in the regular community school. And the Oberrealshule I went for seven years. No, (German) that's six years. Six years.

INT: Are those numbers that you're saying?

NATHAN: No. Over there they call it, in the Oberrealshule they call it "Sexta, Quinta, Quata..."

INT: What is that? Is that like what grade? Like sixth grade?

NATHAN: That was the grade. Yes. You start with Sexta. Squinta is the second. Quata is the third, Underterzia is the fourth, Oberterzia, that's the higher, a year higher, is the fifth, and Secunda. And then previous to that, we had a terrible, terrible inflation. Where my parents unfortunately lost all their money. And schooling cost money. My father was already an older man. I said to him, "Dad, I don't have to go to school anymore. I'll see if I can get a job somewhere, where I can learn, and earn something." And...he says, "You want to do that? You

want to step out?" I said, "Yes." He was strictly for learning in school. But he says, "I can't pay it." You see, the inflation went up to a thousand dollars for a loaf of bread. A thousand marks, I should call it. A thousand marks. And the schooling went up also. I said, "Let me step out. It's perhaps easier for you." And I found this job with this Bekleidungswerke.

INT: How old were you then, Nathan?

NATHAN: How old? About fifteen years.

INT: So you went through school up until about fifteen years old.

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: But you said before something about teaching Hebrew here when you came.

NATHAN: Oh, that, the Hebrew we had to learn every Sunday, even when I was younger.

INT: You went, what kind of a school? Or was it a school?

NATHAN: That was...

INT: It was a cheder? What did they call it?

NATHAN: That was, call it a private school. Almost private. There were not many Jewish children, either. Not many Jewish children. It was all...

INT: So that's where you went to study?

NATHAN: Yeah. And through this...through this Miriam Goetz, I got the address. She says, "Go to the Begleitungswerke. They'll take you." They did take me. And I must say, I had good principles. Oh, I've got to find that. (pause) There is a letter that I got in the end from them.

INT: From the company?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: Before you left for America?

NATHAN: Before I left.

INT: What did the letter say?

NATHAN: Like, let me say, so to speak, like a certificate. Over there we call it (?). That's what I wanted to find.

INT: Would it be in some other file, maybe?

NATHAN: I don't know. (continues to look) This is all here from in America. All this.

INT: So I know from this that you're a member, or you were a member of the Holocaust Museum in Washington. You must have given them some money.

NATHAN: Well, yeah, I gave them some money.

INT: Are there other Holocaust organizations that you affiliate with? Is there any kind of organization of...or...

NATHAN: Here in this area? No, there is not many. There is a few in Springfield.

INT: German Jews?

NATHAN: Yeah. That I know. But otherwise, I... (long pause)

INT: That's a letter from the museum?

NATHAN: That's from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. You can read that.

INT: This is from November 10, 1992. "Dear Mr. Marx: It is not possible to have thirteen individual names listed under your...each donor has eight line memorial in his or her account." You wanted to put some names on the roll of remembrance? (long pause) This was about, you were placing names of your family members in the hall of remembrance.

NATHAN: Yeah. I don't know where I stuck that.

INT: Maybe you'll find it the next time when I come. I'd like to see that. I really would.

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: So...I was trying to just ask some other questions about your situation now. Your religious affiliation here in Mount Holyoke, in Congregation Rodfei Sholom. And are there any other organizations that you belong to, besides the synagogue?

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

INT: Tape number two, on October 11, with Mr. Nathan Marx. I was asking you about other organizations. So this synagogue, which I know you're quite active in.

NATHAN: No. I don't belong to anything else. No. Look, I'm 85 years old. I...I have to, let me say, turn down instead of up.

INT: (laughs) You have a daughter?

NATHAN: I have a daughter, yeah.

INT: You mentioned her name, Esther?

NATHAN: Right. Esther.

INT: May I ask how old is Esther?

NATHAN: Esther is 47.

INT: And she's married.

NATHAN: Oh, yeah. To Fred Wiconda (sp?). And they have two children. Eric and Kristen.

INT: And does your daughter work?

NATHAN: She's a teacher.

INT: She's a teacher.

NATHAN: Yeah. She teaches in Westford, Massachusetts. Fourth grade, I believe. I believe it's fourth grade.

INT: So she completed college.

NATHAN: University of Massachusetts.

INT: And she lives in Chelmsford, you said.

NATHAN: Now. Yeah.

INT: When she got married she moved there?

NATHAN: When she got married, she moved to, they lived in Washington for a while, and in Maryland, because her husband was studying, yet. He studied in Winston-Salem.

INT: What kind of work does he do?

NATHAN: He's a doctor. Internal medicine.

INT: Your grandson, you told me, just graduated Syracuse with honors.

NATHAN: Yes. With honor. I can say that truthfully. You see, my wife, she puts these papers away. I like to keep them. That's not wrong, for a grandfather to show.

INT: Absolutely. And I see you're a keeper of papers. You have very organized files.

NATHAN: Well, I have, but I can't, they're organized to a certain extent where I don't find that paper that I really want to show you!

INT: I know. I know. And I've taken just this one, that I'm going to bring back to you.

NATHAN: Yes, that's okay. I'll find it yet. Don't worry. It didn't get lost.

INT: Do you still have some more time for me to ask you some more questions today, or would you rather stop?

NATHAN: We can go till about 12:00.

INT: Okay, great, because I wanted to ask you...

NATHAN: You probably want to see your children.

INT: That's right. I'll have to come back here another day. So we've talked about your place of birth, and your family stayed. You mentioned those members of your family who moved to other places. You mentioned that this business you worked in was run by people related to your father. Did your father work in that business, too? What kind of work did he do?

NATHAN: He was in his own business. Hides and skins, and raw material, like old iron. And as it happened, he one day had a lot of stock and he sold it all. Because he felt he got a good price, and he sold it. All right, the guy, I still correspond with the guy's wife. She lives in Connecticut. Bristol, Connecticut.

INT: Jewish people?

NATHAN: Jewish people. And he sold it to them, all the hides. Anyway, they bought them. The raw material, somebody else bought. So he sold it. Got a good price. The next day, he went into the bank to cash the check. And I can see him forever, coming up with a burlap bag full of money, coming up the street. And the next day, he couldn't buy a loaf of bread for it. It was drastic. What do you think, how do you feel when you have such memories in your mind? Huh?

INT: How **do** you feel?

NATHAN: (crying?) I felt bad. It was an unfortunate thing. An unfortunate thing, to sell everything, and it should happen that he doesn't get anything for the money. I can see him. He used to be very...Orthodox, let me say. And I can see him standing, saying his prayer, daven Minchah, daven Maariv, daven this, daven this. But I couldn't say to him, "Don't do that." I would never.

INT: You wouldn't say to your father, "Don't," you mean, don't sell all the stock, is that what you mean?

NATHAN: No, no, no. Don't daven.

INT: Oh, don't daven. I'm sorry. Why would you say that to him?

NATHAN: No, I mean, I can see him like this, forever doing that.

INT: So he was an Orthodox man.

NATHAN: He was. On Shabbas, he wouldn't take five cents from anyone. When a goy came, and wanted to pay a bill, "Look, John. Would you mind if I come to your house and you give it to me? Tomorrow or another day? Not today." That's how he sent them away. He wouldn't handle any money.

INT: Were you raised Orthodox, would you say?

NATHAN: More or less. More or less. That's why my wife, she always says about me, I was Orthodox. I do a lot of things that are not as Orthodox as the, a **real**, real Orthodox man does. That's hard for her to understand. She thinks I'm Orthodox. I'm not that...What else? (pause)

INT: Did you have grandparents in your town?

NATHAN: Not in my town. They lived away, near this Otzberg, there, in that area. They lived away. When the grandmother died, early, very early, and the grandfather, I can remember a little better. He lived later on with an uncle of mine in that same town. (?) that I was speaking about before, (?) where that guy wrote me to, he would notify me as soon as he got all the necessary information on that idea.

INT: That letter that you threw away?

NATHAN: That's right. That I threw away. Because that upset me, I think that was a real Nazi. Because other places that I wrote to, to the mayor of Alsbach, when I wrote to him, gosh, there was never such a thing. He always wrote me back friendly. And I got the necessary information.

INT: How would you describe your relationships, let's say, with your parents, and your siblings? Here you were saying to me, you know, that you offered to not continue your

schooling. You wouldn't tell your father, "Don't do this, or don't do that." How would you characterize the relationship between you as a child, and...

NATHAN: It was fine. Very, very good. We were very close. Very close. We...we let the first five dollars that this Begleitungswerke paid me, I gave it to my parents. They stood there and **cried**. Do you think that hurts? (pause) That's how it was, believe me. We helped our parents. Yeah.

INT: And your siblings? You had your brother that you came here with.

NATHAN: Well, he came two years sooner.

INT: Right. He came two years sooner. And what do you remember about your relationships with your other siblings?

NATHAN: With who?

INT: With your other brothers?

NATHAN: I was...we were good, in good standing. Yeah.

INT: How many were you all together?

NATHAN: We were all together five.

INT: Five. And would you mind telling me again the names and their ages, not ages, but who was first?

NATHAN: Yeah. Adelheid was the first. Adelheid, or Elsa, some people called her Elsa. Then was Elias, like Elias in Hebrew is Eliezer. Jacob. Then me. Then my brother Helmut. No, we were in good relations.

INT: And...how would you describe a typical day before the war started? What would your typical day have been like for you?

NATHAN: Oh, normal. We had to walk from the house to the railroad station in order to get to the place of work. That was about fifteen, twenty minutes' ride. It wasn't far. And after all, we took a bicycle in the summer. That we could ride the bicycle. Especially after my father was not living anymore, then we had to say Kaddish. And in the town where we lived, exactly direct lived, there was no minyan, so we went, took the bicycle after work and bicycled up to Bensheim, in order to say the Kaddish.

INT: Where would your father, when he lived, where would he have davened?

NATHAN: He davened more for himself during the week. Unless someone arranged to have a minyan made. Or on Saturday, he went to synagogue.

INT: Then there would be.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Was there one synagogue?

NATHAN: One synagogue. Yeah. They wanted to destroy it, the Nazis. They wanted to destroy that. And there was one neighbor who had a lot of dry hay and straw, who knows, who prevented them, not to destroy the synagogue, it would affect his property. So they stayed away from it. That's what I heard later on. But the books, like a Hebrew book, they went out, they burned them in the fire.

INT: On Kristallnacht, you think, or later?

NATHAN: Which night that was, I don't know. The Kristallnacht was something by itself. Then had I left in September, early September, and this was November 8 or something.

INT: November 9th.

NATHAN: November 9th. You remember it better than I do.

INT: Well, you have a lot to remember.

NATHAN: No, it's...the mind, Geht a weck, you know what they say in Jewish?

INT: What?

NATHAN: "Geht a weck."

INT: Geht a weck. Well, you remember a lot. You do.

NATHAN: (laughs) I try to. I try to give you the right thing, not...

INT: When you think about your family before the war, if you had to think of five adjectives to describe them, what would you say? You said close. I know you said you felt the family was close. How else would you describe your family?

NATHAN: Well, and they were honest, and truthful. They were good citizens. They were, there was nothing wrong. They didn't do anything wrong. I have to tell you, my brother Elias was in the First World War. He had to fight the Russians.

INT: He served in the German...

NATHAN: For the Germans. That didn't help. No matter how much a man showed his awards, medals, that did not help. That did not help.

INT: Because at the end, what counted was that they were Jewish. That's what, it didn't matter to them.

NATHAN: That's right. I can remember men, they were lieutenants. They were in the higher ranks. And get the same business. So during this, normal times we lived a normal way of living. Not...making any disturbances. Like I said before, I played with the Gentile boys soccer ball. I enjoyed that. And...

INT: And what was the role of Jewish identity in your family, and for you? How did you think about being Jewish then? You were living in a small town, you were...

NATHAN: Well, we still thought of, when that Hitler came, we used to sit in our four walls, and were (?). You know, over there, the house is closed in with a door outside, not like everything is open. Like it is here. And there is shutters, you close your shutters, and you can't, you don't, when they were marching, the houses were shaking. They stepped on the street like there was no, honest to G-d, no tomorrow.

INT: You remember that feeling, of the house...

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. When you, listen, Hannah, when they come through the street, and they put (stamps his foot) their feet down like this, what do you think it does? It shakes a house.

INT: So the whole family congregated together?

NATHAN: Well, we all, my mother. The others were married.

INT: Right. The older ones.

NATHAN: Each one had his own place. But when that came on, it was terrible. And so you worried and worried and worried, that nothing should come to yourself. That's how I can only speak for myself. I don't know how others. I only imagine others felt the same way. A lot of people had gone away already. Even my teacher, who taught me the Hebrew. He had sons and daughter here. I correspond with her daughter yet. She lives in Chicago in a home, in Chicago, 908 Argyle Street. Are you acquainted there, perhaps?

INT: No. No.

NATHAN: He came after I came. They flew over. They flew over to England, and from England over to America. David Frank.

INT: That was his name, your teacher.

NATHAN: David Frank. A good man. He wouldn't do you any harm. The opposite.

INT: Good people.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: So you could feel, you could feel the winds of war coming, would you say? You could feel that something was happening.

NATHAN: When the war broke out, I was already in America. That was in 1938. I believe, when did it break out?

INT: '39.

NATHAN: '39. Yeah.

INT: September.

NATHAN: But he was there, that friend of ours, in 1932. And he came in power through Hindenburg. You heard of Hindenburg? He was a good man. He had nothing against the Jews. But the people voted nationalistic. Nationalistic, meaning, that is the Nazi, Nazionale Socialistiche Deutsche Arbeiter Partei. Is that long enough?

INT: So you felt that things were beginning to change.

NATHAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes. Oh, yes. We were, there was something, that's why we looked around where we could, how we could get someone in America. Everybody goes to America, why can't I go? Why can't I go? Well, ask Marchen Goetz. Marchen Goetz, she had a son here in Michigan, and she didn't have to worry because that son would bring her over any moment. But we had to look first for some help from somebody who gives us an affidavit of support. And this man, thank G-d, it turned out favorable.

INT: So you got the affidavit to come here and you and your brother, your brother came first. What was that like for you when he left? What was it like for the family?

NATHAN: Well, it hurt, when you're together for a long time. It hurts. But then you have to say: He's going to a better place. And he came to America. He had to look around, also, and he found a place with Asinoff (sp?).

INT: What is that?

NATHAN: Asinoff, he wanted to stay in the same line. They're making clothing. They used to manufacture in Chicopee. But there was an office in New York that he had, and he stepped in,

and somehow he saw that exactly, I don't know how he found that. But there must have been something, some kind of a sign up, for clothing sign. And he went in and introduced himself, and he told him what he was looking for. At very first he did not go to them. At very first he had to work in some lamp factory. Had to shine up the posts, the, whatever, the posts, but somehow he got hurt. He burnt himself. And he was laid up for a while. For two or three weeks. But that's gone by.

INT: Do you remember when he left, because he was the first one to leave, do you remember at all what words were said, or what you felt, or what you were thinking?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. I went as far as Frankfurt-am-Main. There he gets an express train, let me say a fast train, to come where he wanted to go. We went over to France. Through France, he took a boat there at Le Havre, he took a boat, and there was a friend with him from Darmstadt. They both travelled together. Of course, it was hard to see him go. Yet, I said to myself: he goes to a better place. He will find a job where he can earn something. You know, that is the major part. When you are without money, you come without money, and you cannot go to anybody on the street and say, "Give me a dollar, or give me fifty cents." You can't do that.

INT: You felt like, you've said that before. It sounds like you believe that you need to do it on your own. You need to build your own.

NATHAN: Yes. Yes. He went to some lamp factory, and he got burnt, and he was laid up, and during this lay-off that he was out sick, he went around, looking around New York, and found that office, Asinoff, big sign, must have said clothing. Then he introduced himself, and...they told him, "Well, would you go to Chicopee?" "Where is Chicopee? Where in the heck is Chicopee?" You know we in Europe, we didn't hear anything for a few weeks, either, from him. We were worried, especially the mother. The mother, she was worried. She was saying, "Where can that Helmut be? What can be? There is something that isn't right. Because he usually writes regularly." So I have to make her comfortable. "Don't worry too much. He will write." I says, "There is nothing...he will write in time." "Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what **you** say." That's how the conversation goes. He was as close to her as I was. Our father didn't live anymore. So how, he says, "Chicopee, where is that?" And they explained it to him. "You go from here to Springfield, Massachusetts. And from there you have to ask someone how to get into Chicopee." But he had the guts to do that. That Asinoff, they were very, very friendly with him. And you know, I tell you, people, they look for help, they do not take the last cent. They want it for, also for a little price. Like Sissitsky, when he heard of me, he wanted me to do the work, all that work that he cannot pay out too much for, you know what I mean? So that's how it developed. He was with Asinoff two, three years.

INT: In Chicopee.

NATHAN: In Chicopee. And he lived in Springfield with a woman by name Erlin. She lived in an apartment, and when I came, I moved in with him. So we lived in one room together. It was...it was for two boys all right to live, but after our mother came, of course, then we had our

own apartment. There was an apartment in the building empty down, right down from her. And we rented that. That we could stay there.

INT: When you brought your mother over.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: In those two years, before you were able to come, did you feel a special responsibility for your family? Were you the kind of caretaker for your mother, let's say?

NATHAN: Well, my mother, I gave her the money that I earned. I had to go for the company up to Berlin and start breaking down the branch. There were some help, and I helped along. With all the work that I am acquainted with. She was worried, she was all by herself. She worried about this one, she worried about me. But that was only for a short time, about three months. In three months, we packed everything up and moved it to the headquarters.

INT: The business, you mean?

NATHAN: Yes. So I cannot say I have to, I refuse what they offer me. I did not refuse that. That I stay home, and I told them I cannot earn anything.

INT: You continued to work for that company until you left?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. That I left, I was with them about fourteen years. I wish I'd found that letter.

INT: Nathan, just before we move on to your experiences here in this country, just in thinking again about your experience in Germany before...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

INT: I wanted to ask you what your feelings were, your emotions were in those years when you were, when it was clear that something had to be done. When you knew that life could not be as it was.

NATHAN: No. As long as I had the affidavit, I had confidence in America, let me say. I had to go along as a regular guy. I went every morning to the train, and took the train to work. Nothing came up. But there were affairs that were disturbing.

INT: Anti-Semitic affairs? Anti-Semitic things?

NATHAN: Yes. They happened, they come into the place of business, with the high boots on, and the uniform on, and they come in, even the young fellows. They came in, they didn't say nothing. We didn't say nothing. And he worked there. Just as he was, that is all right, that is

normal. You say something, you make a great mistake. You make a great mistake, to say anything about that dress-up, the way he comes in.

There was a man by name Stein, I can remember. I can remember a man by name Yeck, I can remember. They were more in my brother's department, they were so tough and anti-Semitic, than in the cap department.

INT: So he experienced that.

NATHAN: Pardon?

INT: He experienced those anti-Semitic...

NATHAN: Yes. There was a man by name Stefan...that's the only thing. That's the only thing. "Heil Hitler!" (shouts it) Like this. That went on all the time, all the time.

INT: And how did it feel to you, knowing that you have to leave your place of birth, your country of origin?

NATHAN: Well, I didn't feel...I didn't feel...I was glad I could come, and I had someone here that I could go to. The company, they reimbursed me. They gave me money. I can tell you that they only treated me very well. But they didn't stay long after I left. They had to go themselves. Even, there's a son living in California. Horst Marx. His father was my immediate boss. Bernard Marx. He always, I always corresponded with him, as long as he was living in California.

INT: Nathan, how is it for you as you tell me these stories? Is this difficult for you? Are you okay with it? As we talk about it...

NATHAN: No, no, no. Not difficult. Listen, after so many years, what is it now, sixty years? No, it is not. But it, at the time it hurt. Believe me, to read all these letters, that they're not living. That they were put in concentration camps. And I know what happens in the concentration camps. That no one came out. Hardly. There was one picture I showed you, from Buchenwald. One picture. How many, there was not many. They were broken-hearted. Thank G-d, I never seen one.

INT: You said before that sometimes you think: It could have been me.

NATHAN: It could have been. Like, September, 1938, I went. I got the train to Hamburg. I took a German boat. To come over here. At that time, he didn't make the restrictions that you cannot buy ship tickets with your own money.

INT: Like your mother.

NATHAN: Yes. But then in 1940, when she had her affidavit, and she wanted to come, she had to go across Italy, through Trieste, and get a boat and we sent her the ticket. I mean, that wasn't...today it would be chicken feed, of course. I mean, two hundred dollars at that time. But for us at that time, was big money, two hundred dollars.

INT: Of course it was. Plus, to think of your mother making that trip alone.

NATHAN: Yes. No, she came with a cousin of mine. And the cousin, unfortunately, is not living anymore. She died young.

INT: How old was your mother when she came here?

NATHAN: My mother? She was about 60, 62. And she succumbed at 87.

INT: Well, I'm thinking maybe we should end for today. Because I feel like I've asked you so much.

NATHAN: It's all right. You can ask me. Unless you're hungry.

INT: (laughs) Well, what I'd like to do, is if we could, I'd like to come back and ask you some questions about life in America.

NATHAN: Life in America, was, as I said before, you had to work for little money first. And try to get more. The biggest amount of money I did not earn.

INT: Well...

NATHAN: I started in Amherst, came to Florence, Mass. I told you that. And in Florence, there was a man by name Fabersack. He was the superintendant. Previous to him there was a man from here, Holyoke. What was his name? (pause) Jeepers. I just had it on the tip of my tongue. (pause) Maybe my wife...

INT: Do you want to go and ask your wife?

NATHAN: Did it put something off?

INT: You remembered the name.

NATHAN: Mike Donahue. He was also superintendent. And the man was transferred in another area. And there was a man by name Fabersack who came in, who was, I can say, very, very good to me. He moved me up to Turner's Falls. And in Turner's Falls, then, that was a bigger store. At that time they called it...supermarket. And I had the responsibility of being the grocery manager. I enjoyed it. I was there for ten years.

INT: Wow. And that was when you were living in...

NATHAN: I was living in Northampton. Yeah.

INT: Well, if it's okay with you, when I come back, we can talk about that part of your experience.

NATHAN: All right.

INT: That would be great. Thank you very much.

NATHAN: That's quite all right, Hannah.

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(Inaudible for quite a few minutes. Interviewer's questions continue to be inaudible)

NATHAN: Oh yes. In Europe, we call that a Sochnes. Sochnes. Here in America we call it a certificate, which I never used it. I never had to. (laughs) I never needed it!

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Yes, that was a big place. There were about five, six hundred people employed there.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Yeah. I can show you. I have made lists of these men. (pause)

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Oh, yeah, somewhat. Let me say from far back. (pause)

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Like here. Here are the names of these proprietors.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Bernhard Marx. And Leo Marx. Are the two that married daughters of Max Karlheimer. Karlheimer was an elderly man, but he lived a long, long time, a few years. He enjoyed himself quite often. (laughs) He went away to some recreation place, and took care, and this Karlheimer is his son. This is Franz Secovitz. All together there were seven proprietors.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: (laughs) Well, you know, they all got pat on the shoulder and said, "You're arrested." Put them in concentration camps. And let them die in Buchenwald, or in Auschwitz, who knows where? (?) let them die, I did not just let them die. I had a brother Jacob who I tried at the time that my mother, may she rest in peace, came to this country. That I asked my boss, I should say, Sissitsky, if he would give me an affidavit for Jacob. Yeah, yeah he would. And there was a rabbi in Springfield. He even helped issue that. But when it came to the consul, I was only relative that was here. So...

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Oh, yes, I remember that. I remember that. You know, after thinking all these years over, a little bit, some come to your mind. But that rabbi's name, I can't remember. I don't know. I was in his house, they entertained us, at the time, when we were, let me say, helpless. For a dinner for Thanksgiving.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Oh, yes. I visited with Solomon Marx, in New York. He came here, too. But he was very, very sick, I understand, afterwards. He was not too well. I'd never seen him. But his daughter, Isadore Marx, I correspond. She lives in Chicago.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Yeah. All right.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: No, no, no. As I said, when you have money, you can go anywhere, or buy anything that is not permissible for us. We had to be careful how we spend our money.

INT: You also tried to save some money so that you could bring someone over.

NATHAN: Bring someone over.

INT: How do you think you coped with that experience during the war?

NATHAN: Well...

INT: In other words, what were some of your feelings about all of that?

NATHAN: Well, knowing what was going on, we were glad to do it. Glad to help. But there was not sufficient time. I had no, let me say, a lot of money that I could say, I am a rich man, I

can bring them over any time. I had to collect all that. When you make...small pay, you put some away, with the hope that the day will come that you can do it.

INT: I wanted to ask you, talking about money. You told the story last time about your father going to the bank, that he sold his business.

NATHAN: Merchandise.

INT: Merchandise and stock, and then him coming with sacks of money, but then they were worth so little. They were worth almost nothing.

NATHAN: It was nothing.

INT: Now when was that, and why was that?

NATHAN: They said whoever has a thousand dollars, a thousand marks, I should call it, has one mark.

INT: When was that? What year?

NATHAN: That was in the early 1920s. The early 1920s. '22, '23. I don't exactly remember the year. That was terrible. That's when I said I'll...go and find a job, a little, where I go as an apprentice, and when the three years are up, then I will earn some money.

INT: That wasn't...

NATHAN: Yeah, that was earlier.

INT: As far as your loved ones still in Germany, you showed me some of the letters last time. When was the first time that you learned about their fate? When did you first learn about what happened to them, or how did you find that out, or when?

NATHAN: Oh, we knew that was. When we came over, I knew about it. That it would be something like this terrible to happen. That it didn't happen till let me say, they arrested people during the time that I was out there. All the time. All the time. They, like I told you, like I said, they came...surprise, they didn't surprise you, they come in, "You are under arrest." It was the Nazi way of doing business. Not...well, they put them in the next concentration camp. No one feels good about that. I doubt it.

INT: What do you think helped you to get through...

NATHAN: Well, what helped me? Knowing that I had at least one brother here. And he was willing to bring the mother over. That was a big satisfaction. Which he was here, that we could establish an apartment and be for ourselves. That was sufficient, already. We were, we were glad to do that. Yes.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: No, after you.

INT: Well, my question is about what do you think happened to your faith? What happened to your faith...

NATHAN: My faith? I was always going to synagogue. Even in Springfield. I had to work on Saturday, but otherwise, whenever I had a chance to go, we went. Helmut did the same thing.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: Oh, when I lived in Lawrence, Mass, it was on the same idea. I was a member in Northampton.

INT: These are some of the questions I wanted to ask you about life after the war, life after the war, this has to do with.

NATHAN: Life after the war? Well, then I was here, settled in America. I had, where was I in 1947. Well, we were glad the war was over, that is for sure. But that's when we started to look, to look where the rest of the brothers and sisters are.

INT: You mean the letters that you sent. Or did you find out in some other way? How did you find out?

NATHAN: No, no, no. I had to. Some other way, I couldn't find out. It was all this search service here. It's all written in German. And not in English, this part. Some...see, like he was deported to Theresienstadt. And Theresienstadt was a terrible place to be encamped.

INT: That was in 1947?

NATHAN: Yeah. That was August, '47.

INT: Do you remember, Nathan, how you felt when you would get these letters?

NATHAN: (laughs) Not very well.

INT: How did you cope with those feelings?

NATHAN: Well, it's not easy to accept these kind of letters. It's not easy, believe me. It's a hard thing to do. Like Jacob, he was...arrested, for no reason. He didn't do anything. He was transported to Minsk. (pause) And also not returned. Nor was his sister, Adelheid, and her family with five children. It wasn't pleasant. (long pause) He didn't care who he put...through all this. That...he was terrible. (pause) All the same, they're all the same.

INT: They all felt the same.

NATHAN: Also the same, yeah.

INT: Nathan, do you feel like you've had a chance to mourn for those that you loved?

NATHAN: Well...

INT: Do you still mourn...

NATHAN: That is still on my mind. Yes. It's on my mind. But I'm not going to say, today it's no sense, after they're destroyed, that I go and say, like say a Kaddish. No. That I didn't do.

INT: But in your heart...I mean, you don't say Kaddish.

NATHAN: I felt very bad about them.

INT: What do you think happened to your faith in G-d after your experience?

NATHAN: I'm going here to synagogue. I'm going every Saturday. I used to go in the morning on a Monday and on a Thursday. I used to get up at quarter to six, and was there quarter to seven, when they go to synagogue. They had the service. But lately, with all these disturbances that my wife don't feel good, I cannot allow myself to get up at that time and go to synagogue and leave her all by herself. On last Saturday I didn't go to synagogue. That was one time I can register, for sure, that I couldn't allow myself that to do. She was all by herself. She cannot walk. I didn't do that. Yeah.

INT: So it seems that Jewish identity for you, Jewish identity remained.

NATHAN: Oh, they all know me here. They all do. The Jewish identity. It is...there is hardly anyone that goes here to Rodfei Shalom to synagogue knows who I am.

INT: So being Jewish has been very important to you.

NATHAN: Oh, yes it is. But things...sometimes come up where you have, you cannot always say, No, you can't do this. No, you can't do that. Like my daughter married this Wiconda. If he didn't convert, he knew himself that I wouldn't give in.

INT: You felt strongly about that.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: What was it like for you in this small community? What was it like for you? Was it similar to what it was like in...

NATHAN: (laughs) Here? The Rodfei Shalom is just like I used to daven in the synagogue here. Like this man davened.

INT: Just like it was in your hometown.

NATHAN: That's it.

INT: In what way?

NATHAN: Well, in the way that all these reading the Torah, and go through, some of them only go through, let me say, they say part of the Torah once a year, and the next year they say the second part, the third year the third part. That, I'm not used to that. Nevertheless, when I was in Northampton, I had to accept the way it was done. Here it was done, in Holyoke is done just like he used to do.

INT: He, meaning your teacher.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: You showed me a picture of him.

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: Let's talk a little bit about your life in America.

NATHAN: In America? Well, I had to work. Let me say I came, when I came to First National Stores, then I, we were unionized, and the unionized the union, actually, battled for our salary. I mean, in the class that I came in. So that the managers get a little more than anyone that just walks in.

INT: How did you and your wife meet? How did you two meet? Can you discuss it?

NATHAN: Oh that was...how did we meet? I knew a girl in Springfield. And she actually introduced me. She said, "We had company today." I said, "Yeah? Who was it?" "Sadie Allen from Northampton." "Oh," I said, "I believe I met her one time." How I met, that was...and she wanted to introduce me to her. So I...I don't remember that exactly, how we actually met. She wanted to introduce me. And she did introduce me, so to speak. That I could go on the telephone and call up. And ask if she would like to meet with me. And she agreed on that idea. That's how it was.

INT: And then you were married...

NATHAN: We were married, well, that was in '41. '42 we got married. The war was still on. But...I didn't get any younger, so I said, if it goes all right, we'll see what I can do.

INT: And your mother was here when that...

NATHAN: Yes. Oh, yes, my mother was here then.

INT: (Inaudible)

NATHAN: They had a little ceremony in Northampton in their house.

INT: In Sadie's parents' house?

NATHAN: Yes, there was a Rabbi Forer from Holyoke, who we hired to come up to take care of the ceremony.

INT: How did that feel to you then, knowing (?) In terms of not having any of your family, obviously, so many of your family around?

NATHAN: Well, it, that was a little bit different. You know, living with a mother, and then live with a wife, that is a little bit different. My mother and wife didn't hit it off too well, unfortunately. So we had to, she didn't want to go to Northampton.

INT: So they didn't get along that well.

NATHAN: No.

INT: Was that hard for you?

NATHAN: Yes. In a way, it was. But the other brother took her over.

INT: Your mother?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: And then you had one daughter, right?

NATHAN: Yes. One daughter.

INT: How did you deal with the war with your children? Your daughter was born after the war, right?

NATHAN: Our daughter was born...yeah, oh yeah. 1947. The war was over.

INT: Did you have some ideas as she was growing, about what she should, or what you might want her to know, or not to know, or what did you let her know about...what your life was like?

NATHAN: Well, my daughter knew that she couldn't just come and say, "I'm going with Fred Wiconda, and I have intention to get married." I said, "You want to get married? How? He's not Jewish." Well, and I had to, she was convinced that he had to convert. He went to a rabbi where he was studying in Winston-Salem, to learn the necessary things.

INT: You get a sense of your daughter knew that that would be your answer. She knew enough about you to know that.

NATHAN: Yes. Well, I told her. I mean, she knew that I was very...attentive to Jewish religion, yes.

INT: And what did you think she knew about your life in Europe before the war, and about aunts and uncles?

NATHAN: Oh, I have told her, and I have told her children, about all what I speak about here. That was, they were astonished. Oh, they were very astonished. They wanted to know all about what that Hitler did. Yeah.

INT: Did she used to ask questions?

NATHAN: No. One day, or she came with her children, and the children...

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

INT: Your grandchildren were the ones that sparked this interest?

NATHAN: Yes. They were very interested. I think they keep it.

INT: What was that like for you to tell your grandchildren?

NATHAN: Well, it was heartbreaking. It was not easy. Because we had a good living in Europe. I never had thought of coming to America. Before. Well, but when you have to leave your country, you see the next best thing.

INT: Do you think that seeing what you saw in Germany before the war, and knowing what you knew about what happened to your family, do you think that had some effect on the way you raised your daughter? Do you think that that had some impact on your fears for her, or your child-rearing practices?

NATHAN: Well, she went to Hebrew school. She went to whatever was necessary to teach a child. Oh, yeah. She can read Hebrew. And...even the grandchildren.

INT: They go to Hebrew school?

NATHAN: Yes, indeed. They go there.

INT: So you were pretty clear that this was important.

NATHAN: Oh, yes, that was. Yes, always.

INT: What goals did you have for your children, for your daughter? What did you hope for?

NATHAN: Well, my daughter, she, more or less, she went to school in Northampton, and she always had good marks. She graduated with honors in Northampton, and then she wanted to go to college. She came to college. She selected the University of Massachusetts. And there she also graduated with very good marks.

INT: Are you proud of her?

NATHAN: I am. I certainly am.

INT: When you came to America, and obviously you built a life here for yourself. You worked, you got married, you raised a wonderful daughter. You have, thank G-d, two wonderful grandchildren. When you think about it, and you know, again, you came to a strange land. A new land, and you learned so many things. What was it like coming here...

NATHAN: Well, it was comfortable here.

INT: It was.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Like I said, no one disturbed me. When a Hitler comes, yes, that is disturbing.

INT: You didn't feel those sorts of anti-Semitic...

NATHAN: No, no. That I didn't feel here.

INT: And do you feel like you've adapted to America?

NATHAN: Oh, I should say so, yes.

INT: What was your support network here? Who were the people that you turned to when you needed help? Who would you say were your friends, your support people who understand you? Was there such a group?

NATHAN: I didn't contact too many that I could say. I contacted this one or that one. I didn't, in general, my wife was an American. She more or less gave me tips what to do. Yeah.

INT: And you say, you felt that you needed to really rely on yourself.

NATHAN: Yes. Oh, yes.

INT: And do you feel like you've trusted this community? I mean, you said you felt comfortable.

NATHAN: Well, when we came here, yes, it was, and it is here in the synagogue, it is comfortable as far as that goes. But not many come. That I cannot say to them, "Look, why don't you come?" I don't do that. That's not my business. I speak to them, whoever, they know me. They say...they are friendly.

INT: Well, so the synagogue was kind of an anchor, you would say, it was kind of a place where you could feel comfortable in.

NATHAN: Yes. Well, in the beginning I was in Northampton. I was in Northampton for quite a few years. And there I knew several people, like, the Alpert, Mel Brouser, Dr. Blumberg. There's another doctor who is a psychiatrist. (pause) There is other people. There was a man by name Smith. He had a glass business. Office, there was a lot of people. They had a big store. But I did not go to any of them and contact them and say, "Listen, what shall I do here, or what shall I do there?" No, I didn't do that. That's not my way.

INT: You really did it yourself, didn't you?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: You really did it. As I think about it, here you came with this certificate, having worked so hard, and learned this skill, and then as you say, you never used it. You ended up doing a whole other line of work.

NATHAN: Then in 1969 we came to Holyoke.

INT: Were you working, then, still?

NATHAN: I worked in Holyoke, oh, yes. I had to go to Turner's Falls. Yes. And I had a store in Springfield for a while. And you know, when you work for a company like I did, they shipped you around. They let you, they'd say, "Would you go here, or would you go there?" If you refuse, you have no job.

INT: So you really worked yourself up.

NATHAN: Yes, yes.

INT: That's really no small thing. That's quite admirable, I think. Do you still ever have any regrets or disappointments about what you could have been, or what you could have done had the war not broken out?

NATHAN: Oh, well, that was water over the dam. I had to forget that. That was, of course that was hard to lose. It was a...this company was excellent to me. They didn't let me go empty-handed, let me say. After all, I, and Mr. Hitler was so kind. He let me take sixteen marks. So what could you do with that? I gave the money to my mother. She had to live. She lived with a sister for a while. Crying day and night. I can see her, crying day and night.

INT: Why?

NATHAN: Well, she loses two boys. That's her way. They wanted to get away from that. They all wanted to get away, but I couldn't, as a newcomer, I couldn't do it. Unless someone would offer. Sissitsky, yes. He would come. I'll give you it, sure. And this rabbi, like I said, he filled out this...

INT: The affidavit?

NATHAN: The affidavit, to, that had to go to Germany, to Stuttgart, and there it was examined, well, even so, I was a brother, but what could I show? I couldn't show nothing. That was tough, yeah.

INT: And as you say, there really was, you didn't know anybody here in America. So there was really nobody to turn to.

NATHAN: No. (laughs)

INT: And in fact, how did you take care of yourself? You did manage that.

NATHAN: Oh, we had a woman that we lived with, she cooked once in a while. Then you go somewheres for a lunch. At that time, at that time they had kosher, they had kosher places in Springfield where you could go in and have a sandwich, or let me say, something to eat. Not like it is today. Most of the people, they eat anywhere.

INT: Now there isn't any place. There's no kosher place anymore.

NATHAN: No. Not around here. You have to go to New York, or Boston.

INT: So you really worked hard.

NATHAN: Yes, I did.

INT: Did you also do anything, did you at least have fun, what would you say...

NATHAN: Oh, we did. Let me say, on a Sunday, that we were with other fellows together that came over. We went to Boston. And I can remember, let me see, that must be in this album here.

INT: These picture albums?

NATHAN: I have a picture, I think, where we stayed. Because we went to Boston. Several people. Oh, yes.

INT: Were there other German refugees living here?

NATHAN: Oh, yes, there were some. But I can show it to you. Here. This is our mother.

INT: Is this here, or in Germany?

NATHAN: That was here, I believe. No, this is in Germany. And this was in Germany.

INT: Oh, how handsome.

NATHAN: (laughs)

INT: Elegant.

NATHAN: Here, this is a brother. That's his family. That's his son. This girl, she was a relative of mine. Of this brother. A sister-in-law. This is a cousin. She doesn't live anymore. He's in Florida living. This one, and this one are brother and sister.

INT: So you were able to have some pictures when you came here? You had some pictures when you came?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. These are the children of the sister. One, two, three, four, she had five. The fifth one I didn't get. That's her husband. This was an acquaintance. See, here. That is in Europe. (Pause) Here, these three boys, they live in Africa. They were great friends of mine. Very. This one, he came to America several times. He goes over to Europe several times.

INT: This is the town where you lived?

NATHAN: Yes. That's the town I lived in. This one, he just died. He was over 90 years old. Ninety years, I couldn't believe it. That's his wife. This girl is the same as that. That's myself. There was a picture when we went. Well, he had an operation at that time.

INT: This is a picture when your brother left to America.

NATHAN: Right here.

INT: So who is there?

NATHAN: That's Elias. When this one left, when Helmut left, he helped us with the luggage at that time. He is not living anymore.

INT: Was he in Springfield?

NATHAN: Was that in Springfield? No. That was in Europe. That's how he left, like that. Early sixties. '35, '36. That's on the boat. See, here's, when you, at that time, there were a lot of acquaintances that came together.

INT: Everybody's having ice cream.

NATHAN: Yeah! Here, you can see Helmut and his wife better. That was on the boat. Here, this is a picture where we went. That's what I look for. That is Helmut, that's myself, these are friends that we went to Boston.

INT: Now were these all gentlemen from this area?

NATHAN: No. They were...well, they probably, they lived here. For a little while. But they came from Germany.

INT: Yes.

NATHAN: Here, I got the name of the rabbi who was, where we were invited. Rabbi Price. He stood in Germany, he had a job as a rabbi in our neighborhood. (?) was the name of the town. He told me.

INT: This is your mother?

NATHAN: Yes. That's the grandson. He was here the other day. He was here Sunday.

INT: Yeah? Where does he live?

NATHAN: He lives in Springfield. Yeah.

INT: What does he do?

NATHAN: That's his father. Neither one of them live anymore. And he, he wants to buy, he bought a lot in a cemetery already. He's a young man, near where his parents are buried. That's where we were, at Rabbi Price.

INT: Now you had told me that your brother had heart trouble, and died. Wasn't it because of heart trouble?

NATHAN: Heart. Yeah.

INT: And you didn't know that before?

NATHAN: No.

INT: Nobody knew?

NATHAN: Nobody knew. I don't know, whether his wife knew or not, I couldn't say. But I said the other day, I think he could have been saved, if someone had helped him when he...

INT: He had a heart attack?

NATHAN: He had a heart attack, and he, if someone had come to help him. But they let him lie there until the ambulance comes. You know, when the ambulance comes, and sometimes, it's not early enough.

INT: Is he the only child? Danny.

NATHAN: That Danny is also the only child. Well, you recognize this pair?

INT: Oh, what a beautiful pair!

NATHAN: (laughs)

INT: Beautiful, beautiful.

NATHAN: (?) That was when we, in Northampton when we were invited to their house. They had a...nice place for luncheon.

INT: Beautiful, beautiful. She must have fallen for those eyes! (laughs) This was your wedding.

NATHAN: Yes, wedding. In Northampton. That was outside. That picture was taken outside their living quarters. Here, here is the teacher Frank again. That's the house on the cemetery. And I believe...this is the gravestone of my father.

INT: So your nephew was named for him, for your father, Daniel?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. He's named after him.

INT: Who was your daughter named after?

NATHAN: Esther, after my wife's mother. These are just friends.

INT: It's a wonderful album. Just wonderful.

NATHAN: Well, here you see more of the cemetery.

INT: And these are newer pictures. Who took these?

NATHAN: See, can you read this?

INT: Yeah. Daniel Marx, Alsbach.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Who took that picture?

NATHAN: Well, that I don't know. That I don't remember. 1982. Unless that friend from Africa. He might, yeah. He is going over there quite often.

INT: He goes back?

NATHAN: Yeah. Well, his wife is not living. He lives all by himself. And he goes anywhere, I haven't got that desire to go.

INT: This is Alsbach now?

NATHAN: Alsbach, Hessen.

INT: Looks a little like Holyoke! (laughter)

NATHAN: You think so?

INT: Well, you know, in the hills. Who knows?

NATHAN: No. It's hard to compare.

INT: You wouldn't compare.

NATHAN: What I got here. You know this man? He's the professor over in Amherst, this man. Here, here. You can see him better. (laughs)

INT: Old hotel in Germany.

NATHAN: Yeah. Well, this is a friend, I don't know. That he was bar mitzvah, I believe. "A note of thanks especially for you." Which will always be remembered. Michael. I don't know what Michael that was. I don't remember that. But this professor, he quite often we spoke together in Northampton. What is his name?

INT: Fagerson?

NATHAN: Fagerson. Does he still go to shul?

INT: I don't see him.

NATHAN: No? Well, maybe not. (pause) That you can read in English. You know this man? He had a...a store in Westfield. He was a son-in-law of the Feins. Fein's clothing store? That was a son-in-law of them, in other words, more or less a brother-in-law to Lucille. Lucille Fein. You know her?

INT: I heard of her.

NATHAN: Yeah. This is more...in Europe, in Germany.

INT: This is your town? Or close to it?

NATHAN: No. Let's see. (Names of places) You know, Bergstrasse means that's the area. The area. They called that the Bergstrasse.

INT: Mountains?

NATHAN: Mountains. Oh, yeah. Here it says (Name of place) Nice hometown. Great world in German.

INT: You agree with that?

NATHAN: Well, I did. Yes, I always said it was a beautiful, beautiful place to live. We had a spring, in the spring the trees blossoming early. And we always enjoyed that.

INT: Just the people.

NATHAN: That's correct. The people, they were ruined by this Hitler. They, originally they were good. I mean, in the normal living they were all right to live there. But not when he came. He ruined everybody. Yeah.

INT: It's a wonderful album. A wonderful album.

NATHAN: Well, thank you. I felt these were pictures I thought I'd better hold them, and put them in the right place. If I'm not here anymore, then they can look at it.

INT: How do you feel when you look at your pictures?

NATHAN: Well, (laughs) you know, it is heart-breaking at times. You say to yourself: What...what can I do to yourself? I live here, I like it here. Yeah.

INT: Well, I have a few more questions. And you know what I think? Why don't we plan, if it's all right with you, it's getting a little late, how about if we made an appointment for let's say another week or ten days, and I came back to ask some questions?

NATHAN: Oh, you think it is necessary, another appointment?

INT: Would that be all right with you? I wanted you to answer some questions. I have a questionnaire that asks some things about...

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Nathan Marx. We were just discussing my visit to the Holocaust Museum, and you were saying, Nathan, that you remember that feeling of the fear of what could happen.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It could happen any moment. Like the Kristallnacht. No one expected anyone to come to be arrested, and be in an ice-cold night standing on a truck overnight. They were, the people, I can see them how they are crumpled up, actually. Let me say. They are crumpled up. I can't express myself drastic enough how the feeling must have been. I was here already two months. Like I said before, had I waited two months, I would have been one of those individuals, too.

INT: Do you think that knowing that, knowing that, both that fear, and knowing that you were saved from that fate by those two months, has that had an impact on the way you have lived your life, do you think, in any way?

NATHAN: Well, I can't deny that there is some feeling, let me say, that I think back how those years, altogether, used to be. But otherwise, at times, not all the time, let me say. We live a good companionship together. My daughter is married all right. She married a nice fellow, even he was not of our...belief. But he converted. And when she goes to the temple, he goes with her.

INT: Do you think the way you, when you look back over the past forty-five, fifty years, and you think about your marriage and your children, how do you think about those relationships?

NATHAN: Well, I had to, more or less, to try to forget what went on. That's what my wife always said, "Forget that. Forget that." It is not easy to forget. Especially when you lose so many people of your own over there. Yeah.

INT: So it was not easy for you to forget.

NATHAN: No. That wasn't easy. No. It's easy for the next one to speak, that never was, went through that situation. There were tough moments. There were really tough moments. You

know, it's not always possible to remember from sixty years back what these moments exactly were.

INT: Sure. But you still seem to remember some feelings about that.

NATHAN: Oh, yes, I do. I certainly have. I would be a hard individual if I didn't think of them. When you have a sister with five children, from what, about five to fifteen years old. I couldn't come to America, unfortunately, and say, "Here, I'll bring you all over here." I didn't have that capacity. As much as I'd like to.

INT: I know.

NATHAN: We were grateful that we could bring our mother, at least, on these shores. And she lived with us for twenty-five years.

INT: Yes. So how do you think, when you look back, how did you cope with the losses of your loved ones? How did you cope with that?

NATHAN: How do I cope with that? Well, let me say, I do, when they remember, I go to these, to the shul.

INT: You mean like for Holocaust memorial?

NATHAN: Memorials, like you know, on Yom Kippur we say a certain prayer?

INT: Yizkor?

NATHAN: Yizkor. We have it during the year, not only on Yom Kippur, we have it on other holidays. I go also. As a matter of fact, I go quite often to the shul.

INT: So that's a place where you think about that.

NATHAN: Well, that's what I'm used to. That's what I was used to. It was a small town, but we had a nice, small community.

INT: What do you think the impact of the Holocaust will be on future generations? When you think about that?

NATHAN: Oh, that. My daughter knows about it, and my grandchildren know about it. And...I told them all what went on a few years ago, and they wrote it down. They wanted to know. They were interested, very much, at the time. But I can't expect them, really, to sit down and mourn. No. That I don't expect that. But I'm sure that they know that I have, that I feel so to speak, and I mourn quite more than they do. I am not taking their life away. Let me say that I say, "Listen, you can't do this and you can't do that." One has to be a natural individual again.

INT: Build your life again. And live again.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: What impact do you think that knowing about your family and your losses, what impact do you think that had on your daughter, for example?

NATHAN: Well, she didn't know anybody. I mean, that she could say, "I know the sister, and I know Elias, and I know Jacob." That she could say she has a certain feeling for them. That, I didn't expect that. I'm sure she has feeling for her mother. She has feeling for me. I don't know. (laughs)

INT: I'm sure. Do you still ever have kind of flashbacks about those first years when Hitler came into power? Does that ever happen to you, when you kind of remember it, or have a nightmare about it or...

NATHAN: Sometimes. Listen, I didn't tell my wife about it. This morning I had a cholom.

INT: You did?

NATHAN: Yeah. About them. How they were acting, and how much they took the people's money. They took the people's money actually. Whoever left Europe, they couldn't take their own money. He wanted to know what for. He gave you sixteen marks. That was at the time four dollars. Four dollars. What can you start with four dollars?

INT: So just last night you had this dream?

NATHAN: I say to myself when I wake up, I got to forget that.

INT: Is that what you say when you have those...

NATHAN: Oh, I'm not telling anyone about it.

INT: Really. Why is that?

NATHAN: Well, I don't want to upset my wife about it. She didn't know them, she wasn't born over there. She was born here in America. She knows, whenever there is a film, let me say, that they show these Nazis, how they acted and how they exercised all their activities. You know where I sit? I sit right here. And my wife, she watches it.

INT: Really.

NATHAN: Yes. She watches the film. She has, that's something I can't go in all the detail, really, Hannah. They were so shrewd. You can't describe their feeling, how they were against the Jewish individual. They were just...tough. Plain tough.

INT: So do you mean, do you watch Holocaust films, or you don't? Is that what you are saying?

NATHAN: I don't.

INT: You don't.

NATHAN: No. I know enough about it. I don't have to watch them. I don't want to see. Where is there a paper? I had a paper, where they describe them sometimes. Sometimes they describe themselves, how wonderful they are. How great they are, what they have done. Even last night there was a woman on the TV. And she spoke about Nuremberg. Did you perhaps see it?

INT: No. I didn't. What was that about?

NATHAN: Something where they made in 1953, eight years after the war was over...

INT: The war trials, maybe?

NATHAN: Where they made some laws. They made some laws in Nuremberg. That's what she spoke about it. But I didn't want to know about it.

INT: Really. You'd rather...

NATHAN: I have never gone back. What am I going to go back for? For them to see, all these Nazi faces, that had no, not five cents left for me, so to speak. I mean, there was some, there was some, at times, that helped you. Why not? But in general, the majority were against us. Yeah. There were some fellows, they had actually to flee. I know a man, he was a little older than I am at the time, and he went over to Australia. He couldn't come to America. Why? He couldn't stand all that anti-Semitism. David Frank, even the teacher, the teacher, they arrested him and put him in jail. For what reason? As much as I harm you. Yeah. It was a terrible situation. Terrible situation. You couldn't...walk, so to speak, with safety across the street. Yeah.

INT: And what do you think, when you think about yourself now, do you feel that you, generally do you trust people, or are you suspicious of people? Has that had any impact on the way you think about the world now?

NATHAN: Well, I convinced myself, let me say, that I get the right part of it, whatever I want. I convinced myself. Oh, yeah, I'm careful. But I...but I'm going to get. Even in the place of work, they came in and worked with the uniform on, in other words, you Jews, you can't throw me out. I am here. I am one of the...of the party, and I can do what I want. I come in here the way I am dressed. You can't tell me anything against it. If anybody, any Jewish man would say anything against, they would kill him. Right then and there. Even in earlier times. Even in earlier times.

INT: So really you were not safe then.

NATHAN: No. No. You were not safe. Our house, we thought, well, we get a good price for it. We get good price for our land that we had. You had to, so to speak, give it to the price that **they** offered, that they offered, you had to, yes, take it. And it has, this is all written in courts. Oh, yes. It's legally sold.

INT: What about now? Do you feel safe now, would you say? Or do you feel...

NATHAN: Here in America?

INT: Yeah. In your life in general.

NATHAN: Well, why not? I haven't harmed anyone. I haven't done anything wrong.

INT: Can you feel safe for your wife and for your children?

NATHAN: Yes. Oh, yes.

INT: I mean, because if you think about it, that's a credit to you...

NATHAN: Oh, no, I can't carry that on forever. One couldn't go, listen, the mind can go meshugge. To kill innocent people is terrible.

INT: And what about when good things happen in your life? Are you able to enjoy them? Or are some of these things still with you? You know, I'm wondering.

NATHAN: Good things?

INT: When you think back, what are some of the good things?

NATHAN: (laughs) Well, I was glad I could get a decent living. Of course, my wife helped me, too. And in our younger years, we went, where is that in New York? (Pause) I forgot the name of it. In New York State. It is up in Vermont, I believe. Then you go over to New York. We traveled around with some friends.

INT: On like vacation?

NATHAN: Yes, on a vacation, and what was the name of that?

INT: Niagara Falls?

NATHAN: Not Niagara Falls, no. It was a different place.

INT: The Adirondacks?

NATHAN: Adirondack, we were there. Adirondack. That is one place.

INT: Or the Catskills?

NATHAN: The Catskills we were one time for, we were a couple of times, for Pesach.

INT: Oh? That's nice.

NATHAN: That was an interesting place. (pause) Maybe my wife can tell you that later.

INT: That was like, for fun you mean? Like a fun thing, like when you were trying to think of good things, you thought of that?

NATHAN: Well, not so much the fun things, but interesting to see. The land, and the...

INT: The scenery.

NATHAN: Yeah. The whole scenery.

INT: Was there anything that happened to you in those early years, as you were getting ready to leave, and you knew that things were getting bad in Germany? Is there anything that has been difficult to share with your family? Anything about that?

NATHAN: Not that I can register. No, thank G-d, it was...but you suffered from the general ideas. Thank G-d no one came to my house and said, "Let me see your house." However, they came, when my mother (?) was there yet, I wasn't there anymore. They came in and searched the whole house over, they looked the secretary over, they looked all the rooms through. After they left, she was a sick woman.

INT: When she was here with you, was she someone you would talk to?

NATHAN: Well, maybe that could have been at a time where I was not home. You know, I was not always home. I was working, so to speak, to the day that I'm going to work.

INT: Yes, I know. And you told me you had to travel for some time. Did you, and you continued to speak German with your mother when she was here?

NATHAN: Oh, yes.

INT: With your brother, too?

NATHAN: No, my brother, I spoke English. No, my mother (?), unfortunately, she couldn't learn that language anymore. She was in the sixties at that time. But...she was a good companion to them down in Springfield. Now they're all gone. Only one boy left, that's a nephew of mine.

INT: That's your brother's son?

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: And is he, would you say, his father having been a refugee, has that had an impact on his life, do you think?

NATHAN: No. He had the idea early enough already before 1936, he inquired from the woman that gave him that relationship that we had here in America. That's what made him more interested to go to America. And in 1936, he had the papers all ready, everything set. And he went away. Over, he went from there over to France, and in France he got the boat to come here.

INT: Were there other Jews from Germany that you would have maybe known or talked to when you came here to this area?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. There was some. You know, I didn't keep track. I didn't keep touch with them. So you lose the contact, let me say, over a few years.

INT: Sure. Well, I have...

NATHAN: There is some in Springfield. I'm sure they could...I wish I knew the names. Like I told you Levy, he would be, there was a Levy, he came on the same boat as we did. Even on the boat. (laughs) We took the opportunity, and we prayed, we made a minyan, and had, oh, yes. And this fellow, he's very, very, he's more Orthodox than anyone I can think of at the moment.

INT: I think I know who he is. Herbert. Is that his name?

NATHAN: Yeah, Herbert, that's one. He has a brother who is also, I forgot his name. Herbert didn't come with me on the boat. His brother came.

INT: When you think about today, and the future in America and the world, do you think something like what happened could happen again?

NATHAN: Oh, I hope not. I hope not. But here, Hannah, you know about the Ku Klux Klan. You know, there was, they speaking sometimes tough. And I hope never, **never ever** something will happen in America. Never ever. This is...because that would be, that would be destroying the whole, when it came here, that would be for the whole world to suffer. Honest to G-d.

INT: Surely we hope it never will happen.

NATHAN: No.

INT: I have a little kind of questionnaire here that maybe you can help me with. Two of them. The first one, I'm going to try to explain it, and what it is is a way to try to understand how people deal with stressful events in their life. This is a kind of...

NATHAN: Well, it can affect people, stressful can affect the mind. It can affect the body, the rest of the body.

INT: Do you find...

NATHAN: Some people broke down. I know a man who came here. You know where he landed? In Northampton, in the institution.

INT: In the hospital?

NATHAN: In the hospital. Yeah.

INT: And why was that?

NATHAN: Oh, he's not living anymore. Oh, he was ill. He was indeed, it was a pity to see him after. You know.

INT: He got sick?

NATHAN: He was very sick, yeah. Yeah.

INT: Do you ever get depressed thinking about...

NATHAN: No, thank G-d, no.

INT: Is that what happened to him? Was he very down?

NATHAN: He was down. I guess he didn't have anybody else. He lived with strangers here. At least I came to a brother, let me say, and the brother and I together, we can converse like a normal family does. We lived in one room.

INT: So that was important, to have someone.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Yeah. The mind can do a lot of things.

INT: You're a fighter. You don't let those things get to you.

NATHAN: (laughs) Well, my dear Hannah, I can't afford otherwise. That is important.

INT: What's important?

NATHAN: To have the right mind. Like this fellow, oh, he, we had pity with him.

INT: How did you know him?

NATHAN: Well, in the early years we came together. The German boys in America who were, where were you from? He was, I believe, Bavarian, if I remember right. Bavaria, and there it was a lot more so. And we lived in Hessen, which is, there it was a smaller town. But there was enough, believe me, there was **plenty** of it. It's...and that man, he was, he had studied, he had studied the law over there.

INT: He really couldn't deal, as well as you did, with a new place and new problems.

NATHAN: Well, thank G-d, like I said, I had a brother here. For a few years we lived together. It's...it's not easy.

INT: It's not easy.

NATHAN: No.

INT: I don't blame him at all. I mean, I think it's remarkable...

NATHAN: No. And I hope not ever anything comes here. Not such a murderer. Not such a murderer.

INT: Well, Nathan, I'm going to try to explain how you can help me with this. This is kind of a...sort of a...

NATHAN: I don't know if I'm smart enough! (laughs)

INT: Oh, I bet you are! Here's how it's going to work. You start by choosing a stressful event that happened to you within the past two to five years. It might be an illness of somebody, or maybe moving. Is there something like that that comes to mind for you, something stressful?

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

NATHAN: Well, you had to, let me say, attend with an open eye. That it is existing. You had to really go through with it no matter what. The company even sent me to Berlin, and dissolved the branch over there, or helped, let me say, dissolve the branch. It doesn't, I would say, it doesn't just take anybody with a meshuggene mind.

INT: So let's take that as an example. So if you have something stressful, a problem in your life, let's say, like that time, many years ago, when you were asked to dissolve this branch, or even something more recent. You're saying one of your responses is to face it with an open, to face it, to see that that's what you have to do?

NATHAN: Pardon?

INT: So you look at the problem and you say, "I have to face this. This is a challenge for me. I have to take care of it." Is that one of the approaches you take? When something happens?

NATHAN: No, I took it because I worked for the company with pleasure. And they liked me. I can show you letters here.

INT: Yes. I remember you showed me that once.

NATHAN: Yeah. And these are all written in German. If you could read German, I'd be glad to show you.

INT: No, I can't, unfortunately. But you showed me one in English. I remember that one.

NATHAN: Yeah. And I was trusted, I was trusted even to, to co-sign checks in the later years that I was there. I feel I was accepted, so to speak. As a matter of fact, there was a man, one of the men was living in New York, Solomon Marx. I went. We were, that was my wife and my daughter, and myself, we went to New York, and we saw some shows there. But my wife, she was a little bit reserved. She did not feel like going...

INT: To see him?

NATHAN: To see him. So I said, "Well, I'm going myself." And we had the most enjoyable afternoon together.

INT: Really.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Reminiscing or talking?

NATHAN: Oh! It was all kinds of, let me say. There were good things and bad things were mentioned. And he was an excellent, excellent salesman. He went out on the road. He sold plenty, plenty merchandise. So...

INT: But it was nice to have somebody who knew you, who remembered you.

NATHAN: Yeah. Oh, yes. Oh, I was in New York, I wouldn't have wanted to miss him. Unfortunately, he's not living anymore.

INT: Well, let's try this, I'm going to ask you some questions about being Jewish, and I'm going to ask you to answer in the following way: Do you agree, or do you disagree? I'm going to say a sentence, and then you can tell me if you strongly agree, if you agree, if you disagree, or if you strongly disagree. For example, let's say if I say to you, "I am proud to be a Jew." Would you say you agree...

NATHAN: I never disliked it. I can say that truthfully. You can ask my wife what she thinks of me. My wife is not quite as, let me say, she can't go to synagogue, but she has gone before, but not as strongly as I go.

INT: So you strongly agree that you're proud to be a Jew.

NATHAN: Well, yes I do.

INT: I feel that I am personally connected to Jewish history. One link of a chain that extends for over 5,000 years. Do you agree or do you disagree with that? Do you strongly agree with that, that you feel that you are connected to Jewish history?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. I like Jewish history. What happened. Quite often I read it. Even back in the, take the Chumash and read back what 25,000 years ago, what happened then.

INT: Jews have an especially rich and distinctive history. Do you agree with that, or disagree with that?

NATHAN: Jews have what?

INT: Have a rich history, a special history.

NATHAN: They do.

INT: You agree.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Do you strongly agree? Do you feel strongly about it?

NATHAN: Well, from what I know, I can say they do. You see, we observe every year what now comes a Yom Tov up. What a Chanukah, that is...I observe it every night. I light the candle, add the additional one. Yeah.

INT: Being Jewish is so much a part of me, apart from Jewish traditions and customs, that I couldn't stop being Jewish. Do you agree with that, or disagree with that?

NATHAN: I myself wouldn't want to be a goy now. No. From what I have on my mind, what is on my mind, what I went through, and all these incidents, no. I want to be. I want to be.

INT: For me, Jewish involvement is a way of connecting with my family's past. With my past and my family. Is that true for you?

NATHAN: Also that, yeah.

INT: I am committed to being Jewish, but Jews shouldn't publicly display their differences from other Americans. Do you agree, or do you disagree?

NATHAN: Well, that is a hard question. I'm not...to disagree with other people, that is hard to discuss, let me say. I would rather not discuss that.

INT: Okay. Okay. How about, I feel there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand. Do you agree with that, or do you disagree with that?

NATHAN: There is some, they do. We have here several people, who, this rabbi here wants to convert. There is, I never seen him in synagogue, all of a sudden they come. There is about five, six of them. They come every Shabbas. I tell you something, some of them come more often than the local Jewish boys. Why is it? It is so much on a Shabbas there is so much to do. Of course, I don't say I didn't work. I worked, too. After all, when you work for an outfit like I worked for, that's a big concern. They wouldn't say, "Yes, you can take off Saturday." They would never say that. That was the busiest day of the week. I had to work. But since I don't work now, why shouldn't I, why shouldn't I attend the services?

INT: And you do.

NATHAN: As a matter of fact, here, quite often I daven the Shacharis, and so forth. You reminded me of the Haftorah and all these things. I can read the Chumash. I can read the Torah. Of course, it takes me a little time to learn it.

INT: Right. But you can do it.

NATHAN: Yes. But it takes me a little time to learn it, like I said. Yeah.

INT: When you think of what it means to be a Jew in America, would you say that it means being a member of -- and you can tell me if you agree with these -- a religious group, an ethnic group, a cultural group? When you think about being Jewish in America, which of those, or maybe all of those, do you think of?

NATHAN: I believe...let me say not direct, very religious. Not so black. More, let me say, the Conservative way is good.

INT: Do you think of being Jewish as also a cultural experience, or just something that has to do with religion? When you think about being Jewish is it also being of a cultural group, or a racial group?

NATHAN: No. Jewish came from way, way back. Many, many years. That is not just since a few years ago. That is from father and mother and grandfather and great-grandfather, way, way back.

INT: Way, way back. A connection to the past.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: How important would you say that being Jewish is in your life? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?

NATHAN: Well, I think it is important in my life.

INT: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Anti-Semitism is a serious problem in the United States today. Do you strongly agree? Do you somewhat agree?

NATHAN: Well, I don't think it is as strong, let me say, as it was in Germany, where they came right out, they marched in the street, and they said, "Wenn das Juden blud von Messershpritz, geht as noch einmal so gut." You know what that means? When the Jewish blood jumps off the knife, then it goes double as good. When you hear that, what do you do? You think that is comfortable, Hannah? No.

INT: It's frightening.

NATHAN: Sure! No, I don't think that comes to that here in America. Not in America. I think we...these, between the two parties, the Democratic and the Republican Party, that is plenty that you can choose from, and have representatives.

INT: And have some choice.

NATHAN: Am I right?

INT: Mm-hm.

NATHAN: Even now there is some questions. I just was reading it how to vote. Like, it is hard the way they...put the questions in the book.

INT: Right. That booklet.

NATHAN: Like question number one, has to do, what does it have to do with? (pause) I can show it to you in my book.

INT: Okay.

NATHAN: May I?

INT: Sure.

NATHAN: I left it in my other room. I'll be right back, Hannah. Because the majority in America has the capacity. I mean, they are not Jewish. I mean, we are the minority, so to speak. We have to, to a certain extent, and that's how we lived, let me say, over in Europe. We didn't

put on the big front and say, "We are the master here." What do you have to say? They have to say.

INT: You mean, we were always a minority.

NATHAN: Yes. I mean, as a Jew one has to understand that. I don't know whether my feeling is right or not.

INT: Yes. Well, it's the reality. It's the reality of our life. So let me ask you this, then. When it comes to a crisis, do you agree or disagree that Jews can only depend on other Jews? Do you feel that way?

NATHAN: No. And I don't like to. (laughs) I don't like to.

INT: Why is that?

NATHAN: There is...you have to have a little bit of...feeling yourself, your own bright feeling.

INT: You mean, individually?

NATHAN: Yes. But some people, they don't mind if they depend on others.

INT: But you're not that kind of a person.

NATHAN: No.

INT: You told me that. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: that being a good Jew means advocating values of social justice and concern for the poor and disadvantaged. Do you agree with that? Is that a part of what it means to be a good Jew? To support values of social justice, and to be concerned for poor people?

NATHAN: Well, to a certain extent, probably.

INT: So somewhat. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: being a good Jew means having a personal commitment to Jewish religious beliefs.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

INT: Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Torah, about the Chumash: Do you believe that the Torah is an ancient book of history, and moral precepts recorded by man?

NATHAN: Oh, yes.

INT: Or, that the Torah is the actual word of G-d?

NATHAN: No. That comes from long, long time ago. I mean, that we have that. That was put together from many smart people. And that's how that came to existence, in my opinion.

INT: Okay. That's fine. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: A Jew's moral behavior should be guided by the Jewish religion. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree...

NATHAN: Immoral.

INT: Moral. Should your moral behavior, the way you behave in the world...

NATHAN: Absolutely.

INT: Do you agree or disagree with this statement: To be a Jew in the full sense requires observance of religious rituals, practices, etc. Do you agree with that?

NATHAN: To...

INT: To be a Jew in the full sense of the word. Does that mean that you should observe rituals?

NATHAN: Yes. I always, I mean, when you go, what is the sense to go to synagogue, and say a prayer, or...like here I'm a Cohen. So what I have to first aufruf. They observe it as sure as I am sitting here. When I'm there, that I got the aufruf. Naturally, there is other Cohanims, but they don't come. And...do I believe, tell me that question again, please.

INT: Well, we can go on to this one: Jews have a special responsibility for one another, no matter where in the world they live. Do you agree with that, or do you disagree?

NATHAN: Well, I give them some, listen, when they ask for some donation for some certain occasion, I give them some. Yeah.

INT: In your opinion, how important is it for a Jew to have a Jewish education? Very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all?

NATHAN: Absolutely.

INT: Jewish religious practices are **not** essential for Judaism to flourish. Do you agree, disagree?

NATHAN: Jewish education?

INT: Jewish religious practices are **not essential**? Do you agree or disagree?

NATHAN: (laughs) I think they are.

INT: You think they are, so you disagree. Okay. Well, this happened to you. If your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person, would you support or oppose the marriage? Strongly support, support...

NATHAN: Do I join them to support?

INT: Well, in your case, you didn't support it, right?

NATHAN: No.

INT: You opposed it. Let's say your child had married a non-Jewish person, and hadn't converted, as in your case. How would you relate to the marriage? Would you support it strongly?

NATHAN: It would be the same thing, whatever I do. Whatever I do. (pause)

INT: Let's see. How important was it for your parents that you be identified as a Jew? Not important, moderately important, very important.

NATHAN: Oh, my parents, they did not work, let me say, on Shabbas. But they didn't, let me say, oh, you have to go to work on Shabbas? You're going to ride in the train. No. But my father said, "Well, if you have to, you have to." You see, they gave in, even in those years. I remember that.

INT: You do.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Interesting. So he understood that you would have to do that. Was he an understanding, what kind of person was he in that? Would he normally be understanding?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. He was very understandable. Oh, yes. He even wished if I wasn't sick. He was sick in 1935, if I wasn't sick, I would go to America myself. And he knew, he knew from people who had relatives here, some here, how it is in America. That the American Jews are not as...definite about everything.

INT: About their Judaism. Because he still would have encouraged you...

NATHAN: Yes. Because it gets around. You know, the son comes home, and he explains it. And then maybe the father explains it to my father. They're not. They say over there, they say the American Jews, they don't know much, they don't keep much. (laughs)

INT: At home, with your parents, what did they do to help foster your identification as a Jew? For example, did they teach you religious practice?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. But you know, as a Cohen, I can duchen, so my father, I can remember forever. On Yom Kippur night, to Kol Nidre, we went. He asked me to go up with him to duchen. That was, he insisted on that. So to speak. "Go with me." Okay. And it was, for me it was satisfying.

INT: To participate with him.

NATHAN: Yeah. And I was a youngster. That's not easy. Others say, "Oh, I don't want to do that. I don't want to do this." There is some people who answer like that.

INT: But you said yes.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. (crying)

INT: Are you okay, Nathan? Are you okay?

NATHAN: Oh, yeah.

INT: Is that hard to remember that?

NATHAN: No, no, go ahead.

INT: What about religious education? Did they...

NATHAN: We had education. We had it...

INT: You had your teacher, David Frank.

NATHAN: David Frank. He taught us. I can remember when I was a youngster, I had to, I didn't learn my lesson. That I can tell you. I didn't have my lesson learned, and the teacher made me stay afterwards, after the session was over. There was not many in it, many in that class. But I escaped. And I came home, and the next Wednesday I had to go back. "Where were you?" That was on a Sunday. He took me, and he put me over his knee, and he gave me two, three patsches. David Frank. (laughs)

INT: How do you like that.

NATHAN: I was cured! (laughs)

INT: (laughs) I bet.

NATHAN: You see, things like this, they come to life when someone asks you definitely about a certain question. Otherwise, I wouldn't have thought of that.

INT: Sure, sure. That wouldn't be something you'd want to remember anyway! (laughter)

NATHAN: That happens.

INT: Did your parents ever talk with you, or identify with Zionist causes?

NATHAN: No. Not that much. No, not that much. As a matter of fact, the Israel in those years did not interest them, because they had so many other things to do. Plenty on their mind. What I was going to say on the questionnaire that you asked me, about teaching. When I had to go back, my mother, she had to bring me over to the school. I didn't want to go. I knew what was coming up.

INT: (laughs) That's funny. What were your parents' goals in fostering your identification as a Jew? What do you think their goals were, in wanting you to...

NATHAN: Well, for instance, on a Shabbas, when we sat around on the dinner table, there was the order not to go away. First we bentsch. Oh, yeah. We bentsch.

INT: They wanted you to know the rituals, you think. Have they succeeded in that, do you think?

NATHAN: Pardon?

INT: Do you think they succeeded in their goal?

NATHAN: Well, here we have been doing the bentsching on a Sunday morning. On a Sunday morning we go to shul, and daven, and then...when it's over we have a coffee break. Coffee, all right, the rabbi makes a little sermon, and so then he says to me, "Nathan, would you do the bentsching?" "Sure, why not."

INT: So you do.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: How important is it for you that your children be identified as Jews? Very important, moderately...

NATHAN: Well, yes, I like them to be identified. Esther doesn't deny it. They don't deny it.

INT: In what ways did you try to instill a strong Jewish identity in your children? I'll give you some examples, and you can tell me. Religious practice? Is that something...

NATHAN: She did. She went to religious school.

INT: So there was religious education.

NATHAN: In Northampton.

INT: What about identification with Israel and with Zionistic causes?

NATHAN: That's something I don't know how they feel about that. I don't know so much. I personally, I am glad to see that Israel came together with Jordan. That I like. But that PLO, them I don't trust. They are, to me, the Arafat is just another Hitler.

INT: Really. You see it that way?

NATHAN: Yes. Because he comes, he signs the contract, we have peace, and then they start up to throw stones. Is that the way to do it? Yeah.

INT: Did your daughter go to any summer camps, or belong to any Jewish youth groups, or Jewish summer camps?

NATHAN: She did. Oh, yes. I forgot the name. Jewish camp?

INT: Yeah. Or was it a regular camp?

NATHAN: No, that was a Northampton camp.

INT: What about any of the Holocaust memorial activities? Did she know that you would go to those, or did you go, or did she ever go?

NATHAN: Holocaust memorial?

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

INT: This is November 3rd. Is there any other way in which you tried to instill Jewish identity in her life?

NATHAN: No. After a while they were married. I let them be themselves. It's not good for a father-in-law, or a mother-in-law, let me say, to interfere too much.

INT: Okay. How important is it for your children, for your daughter, to raise her children with a strong Jewish identity?

NATHAN: She did. They are both, as a matter of fact, my grandchild, Kristen, she takes a Jewish education in the college, in Tufts. She goes...oh, yes. I wish I had the letter here that she writes.

INT: Oh, that's nice.

NATHAN: Yes, it is.

INT: And for those children, Kristen, and what's your grandson's name?

NATHAN: Eric.

INT: Eric. Did they get religious education as far as you know?

NATHAN: They both did.

INT: They both did. Did they see any religious practice at home, do you think?

NATHAN: That (laughs) I cannot tell you, really.

INT: That's okay. Any synagogue involvement? Are they involved with a synagogue?

NATHAN: Oh, they go. They told me. For the High Holidays, that Eric went, and that Kristen went. You know, in the temple, to my surprise, they don't go as much as they do here in the synagogue. Let me say, we sit all day from morning early to the evening. But there, they have different regulations. They say, look, it's over at 2:00.

INT: Yeah, different synagogues. You told me you went to a cheder, right? Was that your religious education?

NATHAN: Me? No. No, no. That was a private sort of a school. That wasn't a cheder.

INT: That's right. You mentioned that to me. And how many years did you have that teacher? Until when?

NATHAN: Well, I was bar mitzvah there. He taught me. As a matter of fact, I was bar mitzvah on the first day Rosh Hashanah. In that neighborhood, is my birthday. And I still can say it. That whole...

INT: Your Haftorah.

NATHAN: The Haftorah, that's the easier way. The Torah reading, (chants it in Hebrew) and so forth.

INT: That's beautiful. You still remember.

NATHAN: There is a man that comes from Israel that we have here.

INT: For your holidays.

NATHAN: For the holiday. It's a chazzan. And he reads the Torah. And he reads it beautiful. And I never have gone up to him and say, "Look, let me read the Torah." For the simple reason I

don't want to have him not that enjoyment. He comes for that. But on the very end, on the very end, on the second Torah, I read that part. He says, "You want to read it?" "Yes, sure."

INT: That's nice.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: So you did have a bar mitzvah.

NATHAN: And I do the Haftorah after I have been reading the Haftorah here for Rosh Hashanah every year.

INT: I remember you did it in Northampton, too, didn't you?

NATHAN: Yes, that could be.

INT: So you had a bar mitzvah.

NATHAN: At that time, there were my people, my family, they were rather Orthodox, and they did not come. They were invited, but they did not come. That came on a Shabbas, and that Rosh Hashanah together. So they did not ride, and they didn't want to disturb all that.

INT: Did you ever...

NATHAN: But later on, one does things sometimes that are maybe not as "tzaddikish," let me say that.

INT: What do you mean? What made you think that?

NATHAN: Well, let me say the company sent me out to Berlin to dissolve the branch. You have to find a place where to live, where to eat, and so forth. You cannot always find places that were just the right place for the Yid to eat. What does he do? I'm asking you, Hannah.

INT: What did you do?

NATHAN: (laughs) Well, what did I do? Well, I had to do the next best thing. I ate some fish or something like that.

INT: But you didn't have family, there was no family there.

NATHAN: No, no. I was a single guy.

INT: Did you ever attend any adult Jewish Studies courses?

NATHAN: No.

INT: Did you ever go on a trip to Israel?

NATHAN: No.

INT: You've never been? Did you participate in any activities that support Israel or Soviet Jewry? Any organizations like that?

NATHAN: Oh, I do that. I do that.

INT: And you told me before your daughter attended the Sunday school, Hebrew school, I mean. Afternoon school.

NATHAN: She, I believe, I don't know if she taught Sunday school herself, or not.

INT: Your daughter?

NATHAN: Yeah. I couldn't say for sure. And here, in Youngsford.

INT: Where she lives now.

NATHAN: She was the head of that organization there.

INT: What one?

NATHAN: In the Sunday school.

INT: Oh, really? Referring to Jewish religious denominations, do you consider yourself to be Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Reform, something else, Orthodox/Conservative?

NATHAN: No. I'm far away from Reform. I'm not the frummet. Orthodox to me means they are like you see in New York. That is very Orthodox. Here, we are more or less, let me say, Conservative.

INT: Okay. But you were raised Orthodox.

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: Shomer Shabbas.

NATHAN: Yes.

INT: And your parents when you were growing up, they thought of themselves as being Shomer Shabbas?

NATHAN: Well, here, like if I ask you now, here, for instance, is no kosher place that you can go and eat. You go to Springfield, you don't find it either. Where can you go?

INT: It's hard. You have to make do. You have to find other ways.

NATHAN: Unless someone doesn't care to go anywhere. I mean, that is hard to know.

INT: Is that a problem for you?

NATHAN: Yes. I go. My wife wants to go. All right, I go. I'll eat a fish dinner. It's not what I go out for, actually. That's all I can do.

INT: Currently, if you are a member of a synagogue, which denomination is the congregation affiliated with? The synagogue here is Orthodox, isn't it? Affiliated?

NATHAN: They call it that. They call it that. But I could count them on my one hand how many are.

INT: Yeah, I know that. And I know that you go to synagogue, now you go at least once a week, right? You go on Shabbas.

NATHAN: At the moment, yes. Because the simple reason sometimes I go in the evening, if someone has a yahrzeit, I go. Because I myself expect to have a minyan, so I have to go. And on Shabbas, I go, yes.

INT: Now, I'm going to ask you some questions, and you can tell me whether you do these things never, sometimes, usually, or all the time. For example, do you or your household light candles on Friday night?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Usually, all the time...

NATHAN: All the time.

INT: Do you say a blessing over a cup of wine on Friday night? Usually...

NATHAN: Not here. Not here. I say it in the shul. In the shul, they have the rabbi, he usually conducts the service. And at the end, I got the kiddush.

INT: Oh, you make kiddush?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: That's nice. What about a blessing over challah on Friday night?

NATHAN: We have that.

INT: At the shul, or at home?

NATHAN: At home.

INT: Do you refrain from handling or spending money on the Jewish Sabbath? All of the time, usually, sometimes...

NATHAN: Handle money? I take my money out of my pocketbook, and I leave it here in my drawer.

INT: Do you refrain from traveling in a car on the Jewish Sabbath, all of the time, usually, sometimes...

NATHAN: I have to travel.

INT: To get to the shul?

NATHAN: It's too far to walk.

INT: Yeah? Do you attend the Seder during Passover in your home or somewhere else?

NATHAN: No, we make it here. But what will come this Passover, I don't know.

INT: But usually you make it here.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: What about reading from the Haggadah during the Seder? Do you always do that, usually, sometimes...

NATHAN: All the time.

INT: Do you refrain from eating chometz during Pesach?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

INT: Do you buy kosher meat for the home?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: All the time, usually, sometimes...

NATHAN: All the time. My daughter goes from where she lives to Brookline, and buys kosher meat.

INT: For when you cook.

NATHAN: But now my wife found out something new. There is some frozen food, like Empire, frozen food that we can eat, and she wants to do a way that she doesn't have to go to Brookline specially for us to buy that meat. But she brings a ton of meat that goes in the freezer.

INT: Do you eat only kosher meat outside the home? In other words, you eat meat, outside the home, would you eat meat that isn't kosher?

NATHAN: Not meat.

INT: Do you use separate dishes for meat and dairy?

NATHAN: We keep separate dishes, milk and meat.

INT: Do you light Chanukah candles?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Do you have a Christmas tree?

NATHAN: No.

INT: Do you hear the Megillah on Purim?

NATHAN: Of course.

INT: All of the time.

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Did you celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel Independence Day?

NATHAN: Which?

INT: Israel Independence Day?

NATHAN: Not necessarily, no.

INT: Do you fast on Yom Kippur?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Do you fast on Tisha B'Av?

NATHAN: That's a long day.

INT: Yeah.

NATHAN: I fast a half a day.

INT: What about...

NATHAN: I used to.

INT: Really.

NATHAN: I used to from 9:00 evening till the next evening at 9:00. That's a long, long day.

INT: It's a long day. You mean you used to do that at home?

NATHAN: I mean, it's, daylight is so long.

INT: You used to do that, you mean, in Germany when you were growing up?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: What about the Fast of Esther? You know on Purim, before Purim the...

NATHAN: Yeah. Fast, well, a half a day.

INT: A half a day. Okay. Do you do, during the past twelve months, have you done any volunteer work yourself, or as part of a group for a Jewish organization? In other words, any volunteer...

NATHAN: No, no, I can't. I stay home. Here with my wife. Being disabled, I go and volunteer? No, I can't do that.

INT: To how many Jewish organizations other than a synagogue do you belong? Any other?

NATHAN: No.

INT: Although you told me that you belong to the Museum. I don't know if that counts as an organization.

NATHAN: No, I don't belong to any organization.

INT: If you belong to a synagogue, have you ever served as an officer, or on the board, or on a committee?

NATHAN: No.

INT: In the past year, did you or other members of your household contribute or give gifts to Jewish philanthropies, charities, causes, or organizations?

NATHAN: I certainly do.

INT: Do you read any Jewish periodicals, newspapers, or magazines? Any Jewish papers?

NATHAN: Jewish ones? Here.

INT: The synagogue bulletin? Oh, this book. "The Second Jewish Book of Why." Is it interesting?

NATHAN: Oh, yes. It asks hard questions. It comes to where it asks hard questions. In the beginning it's easy, and then it comes harder.

INT: Harder ones. I should take a look at this. I've always wanted to...oh, yeah, this is interesting. I'll have to look at that. And you get the synagogue bulletin. Do you belong to the other synagogue in Holyoke?

NATHAN: No. One is enough.

INT: One is enough. I think we're almost, we're getting to the end here. So you have not been to Israel. Has anyone in your household been to Israel?

NATHAN: No. But that Kristen, I understand she wants to go.

INT: Your granddaughter.

NATHAN: She plans to go there.

INT: Very nice. How emotionally attached are you...

NATHAN: She has two more years to go. She's a sophomore. That's three more years, even.

INT: Right. How emotionally attached are you to Israel? Extremely attached, very attached, somewhat attached, not attached?

NATHAN: Well, I'm attached, let me say.

INT: Have you ever considered living in Israel?

NATHAN: No. No. Not even, I'll tell you, in those years, when friends of mine went over to Israel, and later on they came to America. In those years you had to go to a kibbutz, and the kibbutz, take the shovel, pick and shovel, and work hard. That was not in my muscles. So I had that interest I didn't have, to go to Israel. No, I'm honest with you.

INT: Well, that's good. Among the people you consider your closest friends, would you say that none are Jewish, few are Jewish, some are Jewish, most are Jewish, all or almost all are Jewish?

NATHAN: Those that I now, and I am acquainted with, one of them lived in New York. He was very Jewish. Unfortunately, he's not living anymore.

INT: But your friends, most of them are Jewish, you would say?

NATHAN: Yeah.

INT: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Political lobbying in support of Jewish causes is an important right for American Jews. Should American Jews be allowed to lobby for Jewish causes?

NATHAN: Oh, yeah, for that part, yes.

INT: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Separation of church and state is an important constitutional right. Separation of church and state. That religious things should be separate from government. What do you think?

NATHAN: Well. (laughs) I don't want to go to church, no.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is the government's obligation to support the poor through a welfare program.

NATHAN: For a what?

INT: For welfare, as part of welfare. Do you agree or disagree?

NATHAN: Well, to a certain extent, it's needed. But it has maybe gone too far, I don't know.

INT: Okay. That's a fair answer. What do you think about this: Abortion should be legal, as it is now, allowing a woman to make her own decision in consultation with her family, rabbi and others.

NATHAN: That should be up to the individual.

INT: In your opinion, what proportion of each of the following groups in the U.S. is anti-Semitic, and if you're not sure, you can tell me. For example, do you think most people who are in big business are anti-Semitic, or do you think, many, some few? In big business?

NATHAN: I really can't tell you that. I don't know.

INT: Okay. That's fine. You can say that.

NATHAN: I don't know who they are or what they do. I'm sorry.

INT: What about union leaders? Do you think, what do you think about union leaders, are most, many, some, few?

NATHAN: Union leaders? I have no contact with them. I can't say what their feelings are, I'm sorry.

INT: What about Hispanics, in your opinion? Most, many, some, few, do you see as anti-Semitic, or you're not sure?

NATHAN: There is some, they are pleasant; others are not.

INT: What about blacks? Black people.

NATHAN: That's on the same idea.

INT: Democrats?

NATHAN: Well, (laughs) Democrats I'm in favor of.

INT: Do you think of the group that we call Republicans, are most, many, some, few, anti-Semitic, or you're not sure?

NATHAN: That is hard to tell, really. That is a hard. They can be, let me say Democratic, and yet have something against a Yid. Or he is a Republican, and he's a nice guy. That's hard to say.

INT: I understand. That's fine. That's a good answer. What about the Catholics, for example? Do you think most are anti-Semitic, many, some, few...

NATHAN: Not all, no. There might be some, but...it's...we have friendly neighbors right here. We have friends, neighbors here. They are all clearly very willing, anytime. This guy here, in a few days he goes to...Florida. So before he goes, he comes in here, says goodbye with his wife and all that. I don't feel any anti-Semitic feeling towards me, or across the street this way. I don't feel any anti-Semitic.

INT: Okay. What about Muslims in the United States? Do you think they are anti-Semitic, most, many, some, few?

NATHAN: I don't know who are Muslims. I don't know any of them.

INT: Do you favor or oppose giving preference in hiring to each of the following groups. In other words, disabled people, in view of disability, do you favor or not giving them extra preference in hiring?

NATHAN: Well, yes. When they are disabled, they should...

INT: Special...

NATHAN: Treatment.

INT: What about women? Should women get some special preference in hiring?

NATHAN: When they're disabled?

INT: No, just women. Not disabled.

NATHAN: (pause) I don't know. There is, there was last night there was someone on the TV, and he says he comes from Puerto Rico. In California. And he came here illegally. Did Kennedy actually make that a state, that they don't have to apply to come into this country?

INT: I'm not sure.

NATHAN: I told my wife that this morning, because she fell asleep while she was watching TV. And I said just what I told you just now. I says, "He thinks it is right that he, as an illegal alien, that he should get a job just like that." Why should he get a job just like that? I mean, it's enough to be an alien for a certain time, isn't it? That's what I was. It didn't take me long, and I applied for citizenship. That was an important thing to me. But to him, evidently, it is not. And he wants, they all just come to make the money. But, gosh, if somebody, don't take the job away from someone else, but they do take jobs away from someone else.

INT: So you wouldn't agree that, for example, Hispanics, or would you, should get special preference for jobs? For hiring?

NATHAN: Well...they could get a job, but not be so...let me say, what they do, they go out, and then when they, like here, some living are very nice. As a matter of fact, we have one fellow that comes here, he does some odd work, washing windows, goes on the roof, fixes the chimney, that has to be painted once in a while, or clean the gutter. I have a fellow that he's Spanish. I like him. But there are other, they don't want to do nothing. And they're just collecting welfare.

INT: Well, what about the Jews? Do you favor or oppose giving preference in hiring to Jews?

NATHAN: It's a hard question, Hannah. What should I say? Jews, why not? I was hired by a Jew as an alien. Sissitsky. He was Jewish. Philip Sissitsky. He hired me.

INT: I remember you told me that.

NATHAN: But he didn't pay me the biggest pay. Yet, I took it.

INT: Well, you needed work.

NATHAN: Right.

INT: Did your parents take issues, a stand on political issues?

NATHAN: My parents? No. They were not involved, no.

INT: In the elections, I can give you some names here, could you tell me who you supported, for example in 1960, John Kennedy or Richard Nixon? Do you remember?

NATHAN: In 1960? Well, John Kennedy was well spoken for. And in fact Nixon later on showed that he had good material. Really.

INT: Do you remember who you supported in that election, if it was Kennedy or Nixon?

NATHAN: Who did?

INT: You. Who did you support?

NATHAN: That I don't remember. No.

INT: What about in '64, when it was between Johnson and Barry Goldwater? Do you remember who you supported?

NATHAN: Johnson.

INT: Johnson. In 1968, was it Hubert Humphrey, or Richard Nixon?

NATHAN: Wasn't that Humphrey, didn't he...take that over, or was he supposed to be elected?

INT: Yeah, but I don't remember. But then he was, then there was a vote. Then there was an election.

NATHAN: He was a Democrat.

INT: Maybe you can't remember.

NATHAN: No, I can't remember.

INT: What about in '72? It was Eugene McCarthy and Richard Nixon.

NATHAN: I believe then it could have been Nixon.

INT: In '76, Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford?

NATHAN: Jimmy Carter.

INT: In '80. Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan?

NATHAN: Oh, I wasn't for Reagan.

INT: Mondale or Reagan in '84? Walter Mondale or Ronald Reagan?

NATHAN: Mondale.

INT: 1988, Michael Dukakis or George Bush. Do you remember that?

NATHAN: Dukakis? Oh, Dukakis, that was a state man. Yeah.

INT: And then in 1992, Bill Clinton, or George Bush?

NATHAN: Bill Clinton.

INT: So when you would think about your own political...

NATHAN: I think he was one of the better ones of the whole ten men, that Clinton, at that time.

INT: What best describes your political party identification now? Are you a...

(END TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO)

NATHAN: I'm Democrat.

INT: A conservative Democrat, a moderate Democrat, a liberal Democrat?

NATHAN: (laughs)

INT: When you first started to vote, did you see yourself as a Democrat then, too?

NATHAN: Oh, yes.

INT: So you haven't really changed your political...

NATHAN: No.

INT: Okay, very good. Thank you very much.

NATHAN: You're welcome very much.

INT: Should we try this once again? I have one other questionnaire. Do you have a little bit more time? Let's see if this works. See, I'm trying to ask you to think about something in your own life in the past two to five years that was stressful, that was a problem.

NATHAN: When?

INT: In the past five years, let's say.

NATHAN: In the past five years?

INT: Somebody got sick, or a child had a problem, or there was some family conflict. The reason being, that I'm trying to understand how you manage when you have a stressful event. If there's something you could think of. I mean, it's good if there wasn't anything. But if you could think of anything, let me think. Well, let's say the example you gave of when your daughter came and said she wanted to marry somebody who wasn't Jewish and maybe that added some stress to your life, let's say. When that happened, did you try to grow as a result of the experience?

NATHAN: Well, after he converted, let me say, then that was 25 years ago. Then I was more relaxed, let me say.

INT: Usually, when something stressful happens in your life, like if you have to move, or there's a financial problem, or a problem in the family, do you, what do you do to take your mind off of things? Do you turn to work? Do you try to find something else to do when something stressful, how do you handle it? Do you get upset and let your emotions out?

NATHAN: At times, I could.

INT: Do you try to get advice from someone about what to do?

NATHAN: No. I'm not going and doing that.

INT: Do you concentrate your efforts on doing something about the problem?

NATHAN: No. I don't think I have to. To do anything. It was all right, what he did.

INT: Let's forget that particular situation, but let's take any one, any one, when there's something stressful in your life. Do you discuss your feelings with someone about it?

NATHAN: Maybe. Maybe. Very little.

INT: Very little. Do you think about G-d? Do you turn to G-d for help? Is that something you do? Does it sound like something you do?

NATHAN: Well, I can honestly say I daven every day here. But...

INT: Do you learn to live with it, if there's a problem? Is that something you do?

NATHAN: Sometimes.

INT: Do you pretend that it doesn't happen? That it hadn't really happened? Do you ever do that? Do you try to...

NATHAN: Have to accept whatever it is. I don't know. It's hard to say.

INT: Okay. All right. I think that's okay. I think we've handled that. I think we've handled that as much as we can. I think it's a way for me trying to understand how someone like yourself, who really, you've been through, what you've experienced around the war time was a difficult, very difficult time, and yet you've built a life, and you've found a way to go on and adapt and all of that. And so I'm interested in knowing how that happens. How you make sense of that. You did stay strong, you did do all those things. How do you understand that, that you could do that?

NATHAN: Well, you have to be. After all, if you want to come to America with a clear mind, you have to be strong. And not let yourself all the way down. Thank G-d, like I said, I left someone over there, and I came to someone here.

INT: And that made a difference.

NATHAN: Oh, yes. It's, otherwise, the thing is, the situation is harder. They want every day, like you go to Philip Sissitsky, you don't find him every day.

INT: Somebody that helpful.

NATHAN: Yeah. That you get accepted, one, two, three. And I was younger. (pause) Yeah, we had...with eight dollars, you don't do much.

INT: Well, you did a lot.

NATHAN: (laughs) Yeah, today, it's different. Today they want big money. Everybody. It costs a lot.

INT: But you were, it seems to me, always independent, and wanting to be able to take care of yourself.

NATHAN: Thank G-d I was. Like I said, I went out, I worked. Even when I retired at first. I took on a little job.

INT: Well, Nathan, I want to thank you very much.

NATHAN: You're welcome very much.

INT: I'm glad I've had a chance to get to know you a little bit, and I'm honored that you let me learn this.

NATHAN: That's quite all right. I don't have to hide nothing.

INT: Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

(END OF INTERVIEW)

(TAPE SIX) **INTERVIEWER'S THOUGHTS**

INT: November 7th. And I'm recording some notes based on my interviews with Nathan Marx, to accompany the tapes of our interviews together. These notes represent some thoughts that we shared apart from the interview time itself, and then also some of my comments on our conversations.

I'd like to say that, at the end of the interview with Nathan last week, I was interested in trying to get to meet his -- not to meet, I've met his wife -- but to interview his wife, and his one daughter, who also lives in Massachusetts, and he seemed a bit hesitant, both in that his wife isn't feeling well. She's been home, and there are voices in the background of the tapes because he prefers to have me come on days when the nurse or an assistant comes to help her, because she's sprained an ankle, I think, and has been incapacitated, and so someone else is around when I'm there, although he and I are in a separate room. In fact, I think Sadie Marx would be willing to speak with me, and often before and after my interviews with Nathan, she will have things to say. And particularly this: about being Jewish in Holyoke, where they live, about having grown up in Northampton, where in fact, she was born. About Nathan's Orthodox ways, which she thinks are Orthodox ways, versus the more modern ways she thinks are necessary.

And in the last meeting, we spent about a half hour in the kitchen, Sadie and I, with Nathan standing nearby, and she talked about how the issue of her daughter marrying Fred Wiconda -- this comes up on almost every interview with Nathan -- was a turning point for them, in many ways, including, relevant for us, perhaps, is that Fred Wiconda knew enough about Nathan to say to Nathan, when he was interested in marrying Nathan's daughter, "I want to marry," he said, according to Sadie, "I want to marry your daughter, and I know how important the Jewish

religion is to you." So he knew this either from his own acquaintance with Nathan, and also from what Nathan's daughter had relayed to him.

She, too, according to Sadie, was well aware that her parents, and especially her father, would only agree to her marriage to Fred Wiconda, who was the son of the librarian, the city library in Northampton, that this could only happen if he would convert. So that's a pretty strong theme in our conversations, and I would be very interested in speaking with the daughter, who Nathan says is very busy, and busy with school. So my thinking is perhaps in a few months, or when I return the tapes and the transcript to him, maybe then Sadie will feel better, maybe his daughter will be on school vacation, and I could still follow up on this, because it's an interesting case of an immigrant, a refugee, coming, marrying a native-born, Northampton-born woman, raising their only daughter in Northampton, and she went to college here, at the University of Massachusetts, and married a man who then converted, and now raises, has raised two children, who have an affiliation with, I guess, a Reform temple, I'm not sure, in Chelmsford, where they live, and just what it is she knows. Nathan gave me some sense of that, but not in all of the ways in which I'd like to know that.

I want to say, too, that it was hard sometimes to have this process part of the conversation with Nathan. Sometimes he didn't really understand my words. And I don't blame him. I think in retrospect when I listened again to the tapes, there were ways in which I might have given him more time, other examples. For example, the coping scale just didn't work with him. And maybe that's because we got stuck on one or two examples that were not...relevant, or were too dated to make sense. And I'm sure he has had stressful events in his life. Who doesn't? Within the past two to five years. I just maybe didn't give him enough time and just after a while assumed it wasn't going to work. Because there were other things like that. When I'd ask something about the role of Jewish identity, he'd say, "Oh, everybody knows who I am." That's not unimportant, but that's his response. I just want to say that I'm learning that there may be other ways I need to give interviewees a way to respond. So unfortunately the coping scale didn't work that well.

There's also this interesting increase in his affect and emotions at a variety of times, that are probably clear on the tape, but I'll just say them. For example, the way he always talks about Hitler as "him, that man." He really has a strong way of describing him. And he's really, when you are with Nathan, the one thing everyone says about him, and knows about him, is what a gentleman he is. How gentle he is. But he has very strong feelings about that.

Similarly, I think it was in the second interview, when he was describing how it felt to him, what it sounded like to hear the goosestep of the Gestapo, the Nazis marching through his town, and this frail, 85-year-old man just picked up his leg and **pounded** it on the floor. You could probably hear it on the tape. It was very powerful.

Or, what's not that typical of him, but what comes across at times, a kind of cynicism about, "Why should I want to go back? Why would I **ever** want to go there? Why would I want to go back to my town? Why would I want to look at people who don't even think I'm worth five

cents?" So those were very, there's a kind of bitterness and anger about that man and those people that is pretty telling.

Also, that he doesn't share this, it seems, with a whole lot of people, he seemed to say. For example, in the last interview, he told me he had had a nightmare, just the night before. Who knows? Maybe in anticipation also of the interview that was to be, but certainly, I guess I could have asked him how often he has these nightmares. I wish I would have. But he didn't tell his wife. "Why should I?" he says. "Why should I upset her? She didn't go through that." So there's a kind of differentiation there, of what's his to know, or perhaps was his brother's to share with, or this friend he visited in New York. But not really with his wife, and he doesn't think with his children, that they have to mourn with him. So that, I thought, was noteworthy. And the fact that he doesn't watch these films. His wife might, but he won't, because he knows enough. He knows enough about what happened. He doesn't need to see Holocaust films.

So those are some points that occurred to me. I also have some notes that I took from my meetings with him. I do want to say that when I finished the first interview with him, I probably didn't know then about the non-Jewish son-in-law, which is a very big issue that comes up in the other ones. But he did tell me about it as we passed a picture of the whole family. And then he told me about his daughter marrying a non-Jewish man, that he was not happy about it, and he told her that he would have to convert.

His wife, at that first meeting, told me, started the theme that then she repeated at this last meeting, about how important it is to be flexible in America. This is America. Being Orthodox isn't where it's at. It's important to be flexible. And Nathan later will tell me that his wife doesn't understand that he isn't really even as Orthodox as she thinks he is, you see? So it was interesting. Also, I sense a kind of deep pain in some ways. I mean, this man who keeps these meticulous files, that have the heading on the "German Memories." Who has this beautiful photo album of beautiful people in Germany before he left. Who was very anxious to show me the certificate, the letter of recommendation he came to America with, from his company. And so on. He was, this was important to him, and it was taken away from him, these memories. And I think there's real pain around that.

And I need to say, too, that it was a challenge for me to try to understand his story, because it's so different from ones I know better, namely, the Polish-Jewish story, or the Polish-Jewish survivor story. So this was a new experience for me. It made me think about what it meant all these years to be this accented German Jew running these food stores in these small towns of New England. How much of it was familiar to him, how much of it was very strange. What role did his wife have in all of this, Sadie, the American who could kind of show him the way?

What happened to his "German Memories" file, and the pride that he took in his family. Clearly, he expended a great deal of effort in trying to locate information about his family members. These letters in his files are really very, very moving. Including recent ones that he has sent in the '90's to these little municipalities to get some official document that says, "So and so lived here," a brother, a sister. And, "What happened to them is unknown, or we do know what happened to them, and they were killed in Theresienstadt." And his anger when one letter he got

back seemed to him rude. And he said, "I just ripped up that letter. It was like from a Nazi." Interesting. Lots of strong feelings, still, around, being in a way, humiliated. And as he says in the last interview, "crumbled up," even though he left.

When I asked him about America, he said he never would have left for America, but he had to, in his words, when he had to leave his country, you take the next best thing, and that was America. You had to forget about regrets. And so, for him, coping was not so hard, he says, because he knew that there was no alternative, in other words. That's how he explains it to me. And this is someone who did do it by himself, although he had a brother here. But this was not someone with money connections, at least not that he told me about, or...big family here.

So, interesting to think about the experience of growing up in his small town of Alsbach, and now this small town of Holyoke, Massachusetts. And he says there's no comparison, meaning, to me, it sounded like he was saying, "How can you compare this to what was there, what was so beautiful there?" So there is some nostalgia and fond memories for the place, until "He" came, until Hitler came. So I wonder about Nathan as someone who holds onto the past in a way. Is he seen as someone who does? Does he stand out as someone that does? What do his family members think of him? His wife, his children? I mean, his child and his grandchildren. So I do hope I'll have an opportunity to still interview them. I'll try to persevere with that. And I'll end with that.