

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:27,400

2

00:00:27,400 --> 00:00:31,960

OK, this is January
22nd, and we're

3

00:00:31,960 --> 00:00:36,980

at the home of Helga Gross for
an interview for the Holocaust

4

00:00:36,980 --> 00:00:37,480

Museum.

5

00:00:37,480 --> 00:00:41,440

6

00:00:41,440 --> 00:00:45,800

Would you tell us about
where you grew up,

7

00:00:45,800 --> 00:00:53,180

what your family was like, your
parents, your siblings, you're

8

00:00:53,180 --> 00:00:54,203

background?

9

00:00:54,203 --> 00:00:58,920

10

00:00:58,920 --> 00:01:00,540

I grew up at my parents' home.

11

00:01:00,540 --> 00:01:03,270

12

00:01:03,270 --> 00:01:09,060

I was a very happy child until
Hitler changed everything.

13

00:01:09,060 --> 00:01:12,450

And he changed my life.

14

00:01:12,450 --> 00:01:13,770

It was very rough.

15

00:01:13,770 --> 00:01:18,860

16

00:01:18,860 --> 00:01:24,940

Did you know about
Hitler and his policies?

17

00:01:24,940 --> 00:01:29,245

When did you become aware
of Hitler and his policies?

18

00:01:29,245 --> 00:01:41,660

19

00:01:41,660 --> 00:01:43,070

He was president of--

20

00:01:43,070 --> 00:01:47,780

in Germany, Interbruck--
oh, at the Hindenburg.

21

00:01:47,780 --> 00:01:50,300

22

00:01:50,300 --> 00:01:52,970

President Hindenburg, when
he died, Hitler took over.

23

00:01:52,970 --> 00:01:55,610

We were all shocked
that that happened.

24

00:01:55,610 --> 00:01:56,810

Before, we didn't know.

25

00:01:56,810 --> 00:02:00,440

26

00:02:00,440 --> 00:02:01,970

My grandmother was crying.

27

00:02:01,970 --> 00:02:05,240

My mother and father--

28

00:02:05,240 --> 00:02:08,570

what's going on?

29

00:02:08,570 --> 00:02:09,759

We had no idea.

30

00:02:09,759 --> 00:02:12,026

How old were you at the time?

31

00:02:12,026 --> 00:02:17,660

32

00:02:17,660 --> 00:02:22,100

I think it was 1933 when he took over, so I was 13 years old.

33

00:02:22,100 --> 00:02:25,500

34

00:02:25,500 --> 00:02:26,370

I remember it well.

35

00:02:26,370 --> 00:02:29,850

When I saw my parents and my grandmother,

36

00:02:29,850 --> 00:02:30,750

they were all crying.

37

00:02:30,750 --> 00:02:35,720

38

00:02:35,720 --> 00:02:37,850
I didn't understand yet.

39
00:02:37,850 --> 00:02:42,400
I was still too
young, and I was deaf.

40
00:02:42,400 --> 00:02:46,570
So interviews were
very difficult.

41
00:02:46,570 --> 00:02:50,380
How did you communicate
in your family because--

42
00:02:50,380 --> 00:02:51,890
well, first tell us--

43
00:02:51,890 --> 00:02:52,810
I'm sorry.

44
00:02:52,810 --> 00:02:57,310
First tell us about your
family and were they all deaf?

45
00:02:57,310 --> 00:02:59,380
Or were your parents deaf?

46
00:02:59,380 --> 00:03:04,020
Or-- give us a little
bit more about what

47
00:03:04,020 --> 00:03:05,190
your family was like.

48
00:03:05,190 --> 00:03:09,720

49
00:03:09,720 --> 00:03:10,720
My parents were hearing.

50
00:03:10,720 --> 00:03:14,880

51
00:03:14,880 --> 00:03:17,900
My father was awkward.

52
00:03:17,900 --> 00:03:22,590
He really didn't have good
communication with deaf people.

53
00:03:22,590 --> 00:03:29,460
My mother was a singer.

54
00:03:29,460 --> 00:03:33,225
And she really taught me how
to speak, and play the piano--

55
00:03:33,225 --> 00:03:36,540
and with intonation,
using the piano.

56
00:03:36,540 --> 00:03:40,560
I practiced a lot and that's
one reason I spoke well,

57
00:03:40,560 --> 00:03:44,310
the German language, that is.

58
00:03:44,310 --> 00:03:47,460
Every morning at
breakfast, we would

59
00:03:47,460 --> 00:03:49,290
sit with paper and pencil.

60
00:03:49,290 --> 00:03:52,590
And I would try and
talk to my parents

61
00:03:52,590 --> 00:03:53,790
using a different language.

62
00:03:53,790 --> 00:03:57,432

My parents thought that I
was using a wrong language.

63
00:03:57,432 --> 00:03:58,890
They said, you must
speak properly.

64
00:03:58,890 --> 00:04:01,600

65
00:04:01,600 --> 00:04:04,030
If it was wrong, then
we would write down

66
00:04:04,030 --> 00:04:08,860
on the paper the correct way.

67
00:04:08,860 --> 00:04:11,020
And they told me I must
read a lot of books

68
00:04:11,020 --> 00:04:12,970
and learn the
language correctly.

69
00:04:12,970 --> 00:04:15,652

70
00:04:15,652 --> 00:04:19,250
So it was your
mother who really was

71
00:04:19,250 --> 00:04:21,910
the communicator in the family?

72
00:04:21,910 --> 00:04:22,490
Yes.

73
00:04:22,490 --> 00:04:25,550
What about with your--

74
00:04:25,550 --> 00:04:29,030

They never ignored-- my mother
never ignored me or my brother.

75

00:04:29,030 --> 00:04:32,960
The two of us were deaf, and
she always paid attention to us.

76

00:04:32,960 --> 00:04:34,820
I have another brother
and sister as well,

77

00:04:34,820 --> 00:04:35,780
and they're hearing.

78

00:04:35,780 --> 00:04:37,810
And they played music.

79

00:04:37,810 --> 00:04:44,390
I couldn't hear anything, but
we were very happy as children.

80

00:04:44,390 --> 00:04:46,730
Always music in the house.

81

00:04:46,730 --> 00:04:48,680
Music's in our blood, all of us.

82

00:04:48,680 --> 00:04:53,550

83

00:04:53,550 --> 00:04:55,540
T--t--tell-- go ahead.

84

00:04:55,540 --> 00:04:59,640

85

00:04:59,640 --> 00:05:03,090
When people would come
to visit or to eat,

86

00:05:03,090 --> 00:05:04,650
there were-- we

were always playing

87

00:05:04,650 --> 00:05:06,270

and they would ask us questions.

88

00:05:06,270 --> 00:05:11,700

89

00:05:11,700 --> 00:05:12,990

They would say the alphabet.

90

00:05:12,990 --> 00:05:16,530

91

00:05:16,530 --> 00:05:19,290

For five minutes we would have
to write-- or I would write--

92

00:05:19,290 --> 00:05:22,620

until I got everything right.

93

00:05:22,620 --> 00:05:26,810

And if the names were wrong,
it would be like a game--

94

00:05:26,810 --> 00:05:29,310

who could remember the names
and who could spell them right?

95

00:05:29,310 --> 00:05:30,300

And I would win.

96

00:05:30,300 --> 00:05:33,530

97

00:05:33,530 --> 00:05:35,450

I remember being so happy.

98

00:05:35,450 --> 00:05:39,110

We would go out after
dinner for a walk.

99

00:05:39,110 --> 00:05:42,140

My father taught me, what's
the name of that tree?

100

00:05:42,140 --> 00:05:43,290

And see that bird?

101

00:05:43,290 --> 00:05:45,830

Here's the name of this bird.

102

00:05:45,830 --> 00:05:48,890

Always trying to teach
me, my father was--

103

00:05:48,890 --> 00:05:50,510

all of the children, actually.

104

00:05:50,510 --> 00:05:53,510

He would use gestures and
he would move his mouth.

105

00:05:53,510 --> 00:05:56,370

106

00:05:56,370 --> 00:06:00,670

How did she understand
what he was saying?

107

00:06:00,670 --> 00:06:02,065

Did she read lips, or--

108

00:06:02,065 --> 00:06:04,800

109

00:06:04,800 --> 00:06:06,095

Yes, I read his lips.

110

00:06:06,095 --> 00:06:08,970

111

00:06:08,970 --> 00:06:09,600

[PHONE RINGING]

112

00:06:09,600 --> 00:06:13,290

My mother could see in my mind,
but the German language, I

113

00:06:13,290 --> 00:06:14,040

hadn't learned it.

114

00:06:14,040 --> 00:06:15,290

It was a hard process.

115

00:06:15,290 --> 00:06:16,630

[PHONE RINGING]

116

00:06:16,630 --> 00:06:19,251

Can you tell her to stop
the telephone ringing?

117

00:06:19,251 --> 00:06:32,300

[SIDE CONVERSATION]

118

00:06:32,300 --> 00:06:35,017

Ask her again
because the phone--

119

00:06:35,017 --> 00:06:37,100

because the phone rang,
if she would tell us again

120

00:06:37,100 --> 00:06:39,400

about how she and her
father communicated.

121

00:06:39,400 --> 00:06:43,580

122

00:06:43,580 --> 00:06:45,480

Again?

123

00:06:45,480 --> 00:06:48,250

Start from what I said before?

124
00:06:48,250 --> 00:06:49,480
What do you mean again?

125
00:06:49,480 --> 00:06:51,850
Yes, from what she said
before about what she

126
00:06:51,850 --> 00:06:53,148
would walk with her father--

127
00:06:53,148 --> 00:06:53,773
[PHONE RINGING]

128
00:06:53,773 --> 00:06:56,320
We have to unplug the phone.

129
00:06:56,320 --> 00:06:59,126
[SIDE CONVERSATION]

130
00:06:59,126 --> 00:07:01,360
[PHONE RINGING]

131
00:07:01,360 --> 00:07:02,560
Phone's ringing again.

132
00:07:02,560 --> 00:07:05,390

133
00:07:05,390 --> 00:07:06,410
We're rolling again.

134
00:07:06,410 --> 00:07:13,740
OK, so I'm trying to
understand if her family--

135
00:07:13,740 --> 00:07:14,960
did they sign?

136
00:07:14,960 --> 00:07:16,550
Or did they just read lips?

137
00:07:16,550 --> 00:07:18,741
Or how did they communicate?

138
00:07:18,741 --> 00:07:25,500

139
00:07:25,500 --> 00:07:27,210
We read lips and signed too.

140
00:07:27,210 --> 00:07:31,400
My parents didn't have
anything against signing.

141
00:07:31,400 --> 00:07:34,480
They thought signing
was beautiful.

142
00:07:34,480 --> 00:07:38,070
Signing has helped to
relax with deaf people.

143
00:07:38,070 --> 00:07:40,005
It's hard to just--

144
00:07:40,005 --> 00:07:42,735
and stressful to just
read lips, so they

145
00:07:42,735 --> 00:07:43,860
preferred us to be relaxed.

146
00:07:43,860 --> 00:07:49,560

147
00:07:49,560 --> 00:07:52,320
Some other people's parents
were against signing.

148
00:07:52,320 --> 00:07:55,680
And they really forced
them to speech read,

149
00:07:55,680 --> 00:07:57,570
and the children
got very frustrated.

150
00:07:57,570 --> 00:08:02,640
But I was very
relaxed and very happy

151
00:08:02,640 --> 00:08:06,790
because my mother and father
had a lot of music in the house,

152
00:08:06,790 --> 00:08:08,730
and they understood the arts.

153
00:08:08,730 --> 00:08:11,820
And there was a lot of
love around us always.

154
00:08:11,820 --> 00:08:16,530
I was very lucky to
have the parents I had.

155
00:08:16,530 --> 00:08:19,510
Tell us about your school--

156
00:08:19,510 --> 00:08:21,521
what kind of school you went to.

157
00:08:21,521 --> 00:08:25,450

158
00:08:25,450 --> 00:08:28,330
It was a deaf school.

159
00:08:28,330 --> 00:08:29,570
Did you read about--

160
00:08:29,570 --> 00:08:33,610

161

00:08:33,610 --> 00:08:36,520
deaf and dumb is what it means.

162

00:08:36,520 --> 00:08:39,580
A long time ago, they used to
refer to deaf as deaf and dumb.

163

00:08:39,580 --> 00:08:42,280

164

00:08:42,280 --> 00:08:44,770
Deaf-- stumm, in German.

165

00:08:44,770 --> 00:08:45,970
And I would be silent.

166

00:08:45,970 --> 00:08:48,760
I would just say deaf, not dumb.

167

00:08:48,760 --> 00:08:51,580
Now it's like handicapped.

168

00:08:51,580 --> 00:08:53,320
That's much better
than long time ago,

169

00:08:53,320 --> 00:08:56,800
when they said deaf and dumb.

170

00:08:56,800 --> 00:09:01,180
I would go back and forth
from home to school.

171

00:09:01,180 --> 00:09:02,905
It was about a 30-minute walk.

172

00:09:02,905 --> 00:09:08,960

173

00:09:08,960 --> 00:09:13,790
I was very happy with

my classmates at school.

174
00:09:13,790 --> 00:09:15,500
We played around, we talked.

175
00:09:15,500 --> 00:09:22,450

176
00:09:22,450 --> 00:09:24,260
Signing was not
allowed in school.

177
00:09:24,260 --> 00:09:26,440
The teachers forced
us to speech read.

178
00:09:26,440 --> 00:09:28,555
But when we were outside,
we all signed together.

179
00:09:28,555 --> 00:09:31,220

180
00:09:31,220 --> 00:09:33,130
And how long did you
go to this school?

181
00:09:33,130 --> 00:09:35,180
Was it-- did she start
school in this school?

182
00:09:35,180 --> 00:09:38,622

183
00:09:38,622 --> 00:09:40,910
Until I was 14 years old,
I went to that school.

184
00:09:40,910 --> 00:09:44,120
Maybe-- I went--

185
00:09:44,120 --> 00:09:46,400

my mother took me to
school, I think first

186
00:09:46,400 --> 00:09:48,330
to a hard of hearing school.

187
00:09:48,330 --> 00:09:52,580
And they found out that I
didn't hear well enough,

188
00:09:52,580 --> 00:09:54,560
so then they put me in
the school for the deaf.

189
00:09:54,560 --> 00:09:59,900

190
00:09:59,900 --> 00:10:02,490
I was nine years old--

191
00:10:02,490 --> 00:10:06,730
eight or nine at the time.

192
00:10:06,730 --> 00:10:08,185
Stayed there until I was 14.

193
00:10:08,185 --> 00:10:14,700

194
00:10:14,700 --> 00:10:17,940
Then I stayed home
with my parents.

195
00:10:17,940 --> 00:10:19,230
I was like a house-daughter.

196
00:10:19,230 --> 00:10:21,660
I cleaned, I cooked.

197
00:10:21,660 --> 00:10:25,710
They taught me how to speak,
and how to do a lot of things.

198
00:10:25,710 --> 00:10:28,260

199
00:10:28,260 --> 00:10:28,790
Was this--

200
00:10:28,790 --> 00:10:36,544

201
00:10:36,544 --> 00:10:41,510
When I was-- two years
later, when I was 16,

202
00:10:41,510 --> 00:10:46,910
this house-daughter learned to
cook and sew and everything,

203
00:10:46,910 --> 00:10:51,185
so then I went to work.

204
00:10:51,185 --> 00:10:52,310
I went to work as a weaver.

205
00:10:52,310 --> 00:10:55,210

206
00:10:55,210 --> 00:10:57,320
I learned art.

207
00:10:57,320 --> 00:11:02,900
I went to school with
hearing people, of course.

208
00:11:02,900 --> 00:11:04,890
It was really difficult for me.

209
00:11:04,890 --> 00:11:06,330
I was frustrated.

210
00:11:06,330 --> 00:11:10,520

I didn't really understand
what the teacher was saying.

211
00:11:10,520 --> 00:11:15,460
My mother talked with the
administrators about my problem

212
00:11:15,460 --> 00:11:16,130
and being deaf.

213
00:11:16,130 --> 00:11:23,860

214
00:11:23,860 --> 00:11:29,020
Bibliotheque-- I went into
the library, got books,

215
00:11:29,020 --> 00:11:30,910
and it still didn't
satisfy me enough.

216
00:11:30,910 --> 00:11:34,000
I needed to have that
one-on-one education.

217
00:11:34,000 --> 00:11:37,480
But I had to accept that I was
deaf, so they just went ahead

218
00:11:37,480 --> 00:11:38,500
and let me go to work.

219
00:11:38,500 --> 00:11:42,230

220
00:11:42,230 --> 00:11:47,310
I think when I was
17 or 18 years old,

221
00:11:47,310 --> 00:11:50,280
the boss where I was doing
weaving, he really liked me.

222

00:11:50,280 --> 00:11:53,470

I was kind of his pet.

223

00:11:53,470 --> 00:11:54,476

They liked my designs.

224

00:11:54,476 --> 00:12:17,450

225

00:12:17,450 --> 00:12:21,010

A very small town,
where he lived,

226

00:12:21,010 --> 00:12:24,160

the boss invited me to
their house to work.

227

00:12:24,160 --> 00:12:30,160

228

00:12:30,160 --> 00:12:35,350

There was one town, then
Hamburg, and another town.

229

00:12:35,350 --> 00:12:41,200

230

00:12:41,200 --> 00:12:45,040

The bombs started
happening in Hamburg,

231

00:12:45,040 --> 00:12:47,080

and destroyed everything.

232

00:12:47,080 --> 00:12:50,560

My parents evacuated.

233

00:12:50,560 --> 00:12:53,440

They went south.

234

00:12:53,440 --> 00:12:57,940

I stayed in the island--

235

00:12:57,940 --> 00:12:59,380

I stayed in the island--

236

00:12:59,380 --> 00:12:59,980

on the island.

237

00:12:59,980 --> 00:13:04,340

238

00:13:04,340 --> 00:13:08,150

I begged my boss to contact
my parents, but he refused.

239

00:13:08,150 --> 00:13:11,610

He just told me to stay
put, and I cried so much.

240

00:13:11,610 --> 00:13:14,180

I hoped that my parents
were still alive.

241

00:13:14,180 --> 00:13:16,070

I didn't know if they
were dead or alive.

242

00:13:16,070 --> 00:13:18,330

There was no
contact for a month.

243

00:13:18,330 --> 00:13:22,125

And finally, we received word
that my parents were alive.

244

00:13:22,125 --> 00:13:28,990

245

00:13:28,990 --> 00:13:34,390

Then my boss allowed me
to go and see my parents.

246

00:13:34,390 --> 00:13:38,245

I stayed in the
south, in Bavaria.

247

00:13:38,245 --> 00:13:41,390

248

00:13:41,390 --> 00:13:45,290

Ask her how old was she
when she left school,

249

00:13:45,290 --> 00:13:47,630

and how old was
she when she left--

250

00:13:47,630 --> 00:13:49,190

I was 14 when I left school.

251

00:13:49,190 --> 00:13:52,110

252

00:13:52,110 --> 00:13:53,840

And when did you leave home?

253

00:13:53,840 --> 00:13:58,470

254

00:13:58,470 --> 00:13:59,190

Around 16.

255

00:13:59,190 --> 00:14:08,020

256

00:14:08,020 --> 00:14:11,620

Our house was destroyed by fire.

257

00:14:11,620 --> 00:14:15,090

My father had many, many books.

258

00:14:15,090 --> 00:14:17,380

And the fire destroyed
all of them but one.

259
00:14:17,380 --> 00:14:20,640

260
00:14:20,640 --> 00:14:22,410
My brother and I--

261
00:14:22,410 --> 00:14:24,570
the three of us, my
deaf brother and I--

262
00:14:24,570 --> 00:14:27,960
the other brother
and sister were gone.

263
00:14:27,960 --> 00:14:29,130
One was in the army.

264
00:14:29,130 --> 00:14:30,360
My other sister was gone.

265
00:14:30,360 --> 00:14:34,260
My deaf brother and I,
we were with my parents,

266
00:14:34,260 --> 00:14:36,630
and we saw what was left.

267
00:14:36,630 --> 00:14:39,555
A lot of people died from
the bombings and the fires.

268
00:14:39,555 --> 00:14:42,880

269
00:14:42,880 --> 00:14:45,610
Can we go back when
she was in school,

270
00:14:45,610 --> 00:14:52,690
and talk about what
happened when the steriliz--

271
00:14:52,690 --> 00:14:55,060
how they were told
by their teacher

272
00:14:55,060 --> 00:14:57,820
when the sterilization
law took effect?

273
00:14:57,820 --> 00:15:02,250

274
00:15:02,250 --> 00:15:02,750
One moment.

275
00:15:02,750 --> 00:15:14,600
[SIDE CONVERSATION]

276
00:15:14,600 --> 00:15:18,230
So again, my question
is when did she--

277
00:15:18,230 --> 00:15:20,840
how did she find out about
the sterilization law?

278
00:15:20,840 --> 00:15:23,566
And how did they talk to
her about it in school?

279
00:15:23,566 --> 00:15:28,050

280
00:15:28,050 --> 00:15:33,310
In the class, a teacher
came into the room

281
00:15:33,310 --> 00:15:34,375
and said, good morning.

282
00:15:34,375 --> 00:15:37,370

283
00:15:37,370 --> 00:15:39,340
There were six boys
and four girls.

284
00:15:39,340 --> 00:15:42,890
And I was one of the girls.

285
00:15:42,890 --> 00:15:46,210
We were all sitting
in like a semicircle

286
00:15:46,210 --> 00:15:51,830
and the teacher was standing
up by the window, just looking.

287
00:15:51,830 --> 00:15:53,910
We were just waiting.

288
00:15:53,910 --> 00:15:55,470
The teacher didn't
teach anything.

289
00:15:55,470 --> 00:15:59,520
We were wondering
what was wrong.

290
00:15:59,520 --> 00:16:03,570
Then came a man
from the government.

291
00:16:03,570 --> 00:16:04,740
It was very interesting.

292
00:16:04,740 --> 00:16:10,030
And he said to all of
us, school students--

293
00:16:10,030 --> 00:16:17,550

294
00:16:17,550 --> 00:16:19,785

he was explaining to
us how to breathe--

295
00:16:19,785 --> 00:16:28,370

296
00:16:28,370 --> 00:16:31,640
and you must go to the
hospital for sterilization.

297
00:16:31,640 --> 00:16:32,980
And we said, what?

298
00:16:32,980 --> 00:16:34,130
Why?

299
00:16:34,130 --> 00:16:39,350
What do you mean go to the
hospital for sterilization?

300
00:16:39,350 --> 00:16:43,220
He explained that when you
grow up and get married,

301
00:16:43,220 --> 00:16:47,030
you won't be able
to have a baby.

302
00:16:47,030 --> 00:16:49,482
We said, huh?

303
00:16:49,482 --> 00:16:51,890
It means we can't have a baby?

304
00:16:51,890 --> 00:16:53,630
We all looked at each other.

305
00:16:53,630 --> 00:16:55,130
We really didn't understand.

306
00:16:55,130 --> 00:17:01,080

307
00:17:01,080 --> 00:17:03,600
Then he left.

308
00:17:03,600 --> 00:17:06,284
I went home, and
I told my mother.

309
00:17:06,284 --> 00:17:10,339

310
00:17:10,339 --> 00:17:14,569
My mother really didn't
explain it to me.

311
00:17:14,569 --> 00:17:18,920
Later I found out that my mother
had gotten a letter from them.

312
00:17:18,920 --> 00:17:20,520
No, wait-- forget--
just a moment.

313
00:17:20,520 --> 00:17:28,480

314
00:17:28,480 --> 00:17:30,805
They chose an 11-year-old
girl from my class.

315
00:17:30,805 --> 00:17:33,730

316
00:17:33,730 --> 00:17:34,840
She had deaf parents.

317
00:17:34,840 --> 00:17:38,480

318
00:17:38,480 --> 00:17:41,510
They took them all to
the hospital at one time,

319
00:17:41,510 --> 00:17:42,620
and sterilized them.

320
00:17:42,620 --> 00:17:46,280

321
00:17:46,280 --> 00:17:47,360
When they came back--

322
00:17:47,360 --> 00:17:52,180

323
00:17:52,180 --> 00:17:55,036
we were young, we really
didn't understand.

324
00:17:55,036 --> 00:17:58,000
Especially clearly, we didn't
understand what it all meant.

325
00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:00,960

326
00:18:00,960 --> 00:18:03,630
Well, we just thought nothing
of it and continued playing.

327
00:18:03,630 --> 00:18:08,920

328
00:18:08,920 --> 00:18:11,740
My father, I was like his
pet, he really loved me.

329
00:18:11,740 --> 00:18:13,540
And I felt funny.

330
00:18:13,540 --> 00:18:18,345
I told my mother, why is
my father so affectionate

331
00:18:18,345 --> 00:18:22,248
and loves me so much as
compared with my other sisters

332
00:18:22,248 --> 00:18:22,790
and brothers?

333
00:18:22,790 --> 00:18:23,740
Why, what's wrong?

334
00:18:23,740 --> 00:18:26,630

335
00:18:26,630 --> 00:18:29,600
Mother said, oh, your
father likes you just

336
00:18:29,600 --> 00:18:31,240
like everybody else.

337
00:18:31,240 --> 00:18:32,210
Everybody's equal.

338
00:18:32,210 --> 00:18:34,970
We love to see you smile though.

339
00:18:34,970 --> 00:18:35,890
He called me sunshine.

340
00:18:35,890 --> 00:18:42,150

341
00:18:42,150 --> 00:18:47,620
Then as the time
became near, I remember

342
00:18:47,620 --> 00:18:51,100
very well, I was in the
kitchen and I was cleaning.

343
00:18:51,100 --> 00:18:53,110

My mother came and
said, Helga, sit down.

344
00:18:53,110 --> 00:18:57,760

345
00:18:57,760 --> 00:19:00,895
And she explained, you have to
go to the hospital in two days.

346
00:19:00,895 --> 00:19:04,710

347
00:19:04,710 --> 00:19:07,350
I said, I have to go to the
hospital to get sterilized?

348
00:19:07,350 --> 00:19:10,220

349
00:19:10,220 --> 00:19:11,930
I was calm.

350
00:19:11,930 --> 00:19:13,290
I kind of accepted it.

351
00:19:13,290 --> 00:19:17,062

352
00:19:17,062 --> 00:19:19,020
My mother must have
thought something was wrong

353
00:19:19,020 --> 00:19:22,140
or that I was going to
run away or get crazy,

354
00:19:22,140 --> 00:19:23,160
but I was very calm.

355
00:19:23,160 --> 00:19:25,933

356
00:19:25,933 --> 00:19:27,600
She said, how come--
later she asked me,

357
00:19:27,600 --> 00:19:28,683
how come you were so calm?

358
00:19:28,683 --> 00:19:31,950
And I said, well, the
other girls had it done,

359
00:19:31,950 --> 00:19:34,980
so I just accepted
it, that it was fair.

360
00:19:34,980 --> 00:19:36,960
If they did, I guess
it was my turn.

361
00:19:36,960 --> 00:19:43,020

362
00:19:43,020 --> 00:19:46,350
My father cried.

363
00:19:46,350 --> 00:19:48,975
He refused to see me.

364
00:19:48,975 --> 00:19:51,038
He didn't want to hug
me before I left home

365
00:19:51,038 --> 00:19:51,955
to go to the hospital.

366
00:19:51,955 --> 00:19:58,340

367
00:19:58,340 --> 00:20:01,400
It was a very small, cute
hospital-- a very nice place,

368
00:20:01,400 --> 00:20:02,270
actually.

369
00:20:02,270 --> 00:20:06,340
Babies-- only babies
were born there.

370
00:20:06,340 --> 00:20:13,790
A woman did the surgery, gave
me anesthetic and a shot.

371
00:20:13,790 --> 00:20:17,550
Everything was good and clean.

372
00:20:17,550 --> 00:20:21,090
After the surgery, I woke up.

373
00:20:21,090 --> 00:20:26,670
I was throwing up, and I
could feel something heavy

374
00:20:26,670 --> 00:20:27,315
on my stomach.

375
00:20:27,315 --> 00:20:30,640

376
00:20:30,640 --> 00:20:32,600
My mother was
sitting next to me.

377
00:20:32,600 --> 00:20:34,330
And I tapped her, she
was like sleeping.

378
00:20:34,330 --> 00:20:37,180
I said, Mummy, Mummy.

379
00:20:37,180 --> 00:20:41,130

380

00:20:41,130 --> 00:20:45,260

The second sister underneath
me opened the door

381

00:20:45,260 --> 00:20:48,590

and looked in and said, hi.

382

00:20:48,590 --> 00:20:52,910

Her big eyes looked in at
me, and I was laughing.

383

00:20:52,910 --> 00:20:56,630

She was so funny-- to see
her, just these two big eyes

384

00:20:56,630 --> 00:20:59,071

poking through the door.

385

00:20:59,071 --> 00:21:03,860

Oh, but the pain when I
laughed, oh-ho, great pain.

386

00:21:03,860 --> 00:21:04,790

I said, go away.

387

00:21:04,790 --> 00:21:07,910

388

00:21:07,910 --> 00:21:09,940

Where was my father?

389

00:21:09,940 --> 00:21:11,150

He couldn't come.

390

00:21:11,150 --> 00:21:14,270

He was so embarrassed
because he was crying for me.

391

00:21:14,270 --> 00:21:18,770

392

00:21:18,770 --> 00:21:24,470

Later, two of my schoolmates
came, and the three of us

393

00:21:24,470 --> 00:21:25,550

just sat and cried.

394

00:21:25,550 --> 00:21:30,200

395

00:21:30,200 --> 00:21:36,180

Did she know-- well, to go
back a little bit, when--

396

00:21:36,180 --> 00:21:39,600

how old was she when
that man first came in?

397

00:21:39,600 --> 00:21:45,420

And then how old was she when
the operation happened to her?

398

00:21:45,420 --> 00:21:51,760

399

00:21:51,760 --> 00:21:55,200

I was 11 or 12 years old.

400

00:21:55,200 --> 00:21:57,540

The other girl was 11 when
she went to the hospital.

401

00:21:57,540 --> 00:22:03,360

I hadn't gone to the
hospital until I was 16.

402

00:22:03,360 --> 00:22:05,340

They were hoping that
I wouldn't have to go,

403

00:22:05,340 --> 00:22:15,770

but I wanted to become
a grandmother, you see.

404

00:22:15,770 --> 00:22:17,900

And that's the reason--

oh, they wanted to become

405

00:22:17,900 --> 00:22:20,000

a grandmother if I had a child.

406

00:22:20,000 --> 00:22:24,510

And that's the reason my mother

was crying and my father too.

407

00:22:24,510 --> 00:22:30,330

Did she-- did you understand

why this was happening?

408

00:22:30,330 --> 00:22:31,716

Why they were doing this?

409

00:22:31,716 --> 00:22:38,650

410

00:22:38,650 --> 00:22:42,640

Not until later-- years later.

411

00:22:42,640 --> 00:22:46,620

412

00:22:46,620 --> 00:22:50,580

When I moved to the

United States in 1954,

413

00:22:50,580 --> 00:22:54,075

five years later, I went

back to Germany for a visit.

414

00:22:54,075 --> 00:22:57,120

415

00:22:57,120 --> 00:23:00,660

I saw my baby sister.

416

00:23:00,660 --> 00:23:02,295

She had a beautiful baby.

417

00:23:02,295 --> 00:23:06,810

418

00:23:06,810 --> 00:23:10,800

The baby was so beautiful
and I got to hold the baby.

419

00:23:10,800 --> 00:23:16,410

And that morning, my sister
was feeding the baby.

420

00:23:16,410 --> 00:23:19,740

And then I realized what
I felt when I realized

421

00:23:19,740 --> 00:23:22,140

I couldn't have any children.

422

00:23:22,140 --> 00:23:23,540

I started to cry.

423

00:23:23,540 --> 00:23:28,660

And I ran into the bathroom
and just cried and cried.

424

00:23:28,660 --> 00:23:31,095

When I came back out, my
sister said, what's wrong?

425

00:23:31,095 --> 00:23:32,490

What's the matter?

426

00:23:32,490 --> 00:23:34,842

I said, oh, I'm just crying
because I'm happy for you

427

00:23:34,842 --> 00:23:36,300

because you have
a beautiful child.

428
00:23:36,300 --> 00:23:41,140

429
00:23:41,140 --> 00:23:45,710
Then the next day I saw other
people with babies and I cried.

430
00:23:45,710 --> 00:23:51,170
And as I got older, I
tried to forget about it.

431
00:23:51,170 --> 00:23:53,290
How old was she when
this-- when this happened,

432
00:23:53,290 --> 00:23:54,290
when she took this trip?

433
00:23:54,290 --> 00:23:55,220
Was she married?

434
00:23:55,220 --> 00:23:56,210
Or was she single?

435
00:23:56,210 --> 00:23:56,710
Or--

436
00:23:56,710 --> 00:24:03,420

437
00:24:03,420 --> 00:24:04,380
I was married then.

438
00:24:04,380 --> 00:24:14,560

439
00:24:14,560 --> 00:24:16,300
I was 35 years old, about.

440
00:24:16,300 --> 00:24:21,540

441
00:24:21,540 --> 00:24:29,960
Did the officials, the
government officials,

442
00:24:29,960 --> 00:24:33,930
or your family
explain why this had

443
00:24:33,930 --> 00:24:39,560
to happen to you, why this
operation was going to happen?

444
00:24:39,560 --> 00:24:43,280
My mother's brother
was a judge, and he

445
00:24:43,280 --> 00:24:46,430
was trying to help us to
prevent the operation.

446
00:24:46,430 --> 00:24:52,910

447
00:24:52,910 --> 00:24:54,170
He was not successful.

448
00:24:54,170 --> 00:24:59,480

449
00:24:59,480 --> 00:25:05,900
Oh, he was not a member of the
Nazi regime, so it didn't work.

450
00:25:05,900 --> 00:25:07,320
My father was the same way.

451
00:25:07,320 --> 00:25:13,050

452
00:25:13,050 --> 00:25:22,290

I was a Girl Scout,
and they were

453
00:25:22,290 --> 00:25:26,300
trying to force me to become
a member of the Nazi party.

454
00:25:26,300 --> 00:25:27,660
I said, oh, no.

455
00:25:27,660 --> 00:25:28,760
They said, you must.

456
00:25:28,760 --> 00:25:30,790
I said, why?

457
00:25:30,790 --> 00:25:34,260
Because you can speak with
hearing people and other--

458
00:25:34,260 --> 00:25:36,780
and children.

459
00:25:36,780 --> 00:25:38,430
Well, my mother taught
me how to speak.

460
00:25:38,430 --> 00:25:43,440

461
00:25:43,440 --> 00:25:48,490
They gave me the paper, told
me I had to go to the flag--

462
00:25:48,490 --> 00:25:51,390
where the flag was,
and sign some papers.

463
00:25:51,390 --> 00:25:51,900
I refused.

464
00:25:51,900 --> 00:25:54,510

465
00:25:54,510 --> 00:25:59,400
My weaving boss invited
me to the island to stay.

466
00:25:59,400 --> 00:26:02,810
And I went there and
I told the teacher,

467
00:26:02,810 --> 00:26:06,540
I'm leaving for the
island, they invited me.

468
00:26:06,540 --> 00:26:10,000
I don't know how long I'll stay.

469
00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:11,750
She said, bring the
papers with you.

470
00:26:11,750 --> 00:26:15,300

471
00:26:15,300 --> 00:26:18,660
You must go in there
with your papers

472
00:26:18,660 --> 00:26:21,880
and take them with
you everywhere.

473
00:26:21,880 --> 00:26:24,770
My heart sank.

474
00:26:24,770 --> 00:26:28,480
I felt so much fear
for a very long time.

475
00:26:28,480 --> 00:26:36,870

476

00:26:36,870 --> 00:26:40,440
I would sleep, and then
I would walk to work.

477
00:26:40,440 --> 00:26:43,740
The Nazis, two of them would
stand there with their flags

478
00:26:43,740 --> 00:26:45,480
as I walked by.

479
00:26:45,480 --> 00:26:49,440
I had the papers
with me all the time.

480
00:26:49,440 --> 00:26:50,560
Should I go or not?

481
00:26:50,560 --> 00:26:52,170
Should I go or not?

482
00:26:52,170 --> 00:26:53,190
I would pass them.

483
00:26:53,190 --> 00:26:57,510

484
00:26:57,510 --> 00:27:02,100
I was afraid they would
pull me back by my hair.

485
00:27:02,100 --> 00:27:02,850
But they didn't.

486
00:27:02,850 --> 00:27:03,470
I'd say, no.

487
00:27:03,470 --> 00:27:05,220
And every day this would happen.

488
00:27:05,220 --> 00:27:09,590
And I'd be filled with fear

as I walked past these two men

489

00:27:09,590 --> 00:27:12,200

with their flags.

490

00:27:12,200 --> 00:27:16,055

And they were bombing Hamburg.

491

00:27:16,055 --> 00:27:18,060

And I needed to rest.

492

00:27:18,060 --> 00:27:19,990

And I thought I
needed some relief.

493

00:27:19,990 --> 00:27:26,600

494

00:27:26,600 --> 00:27:29,970

But I heard later
that our teacher

495

00:27:29,970 --> 00:27:31,005

was dead from the bombs.

496

00:27:31,005 --> 00:27:37,030

497

00:27:37,030 --> 00:27:41,320

Then when I went to the south to
join with my father and mother,

498

00:27:41,320 --> 00:27:43,120

I still had those
papers with me.

499

00:27:43,120 --> 00:27:49,750

500

00:27:49,750 --> 00:27:52,960

Then during the war, then
we saw the white flag.

501
00:27:52,960 --> 00:27:55,480

502
00:27:55,480 --> 00:27:57,170
Bombs were everywhere.

503
00:27:57,170 --> 00:28:00,320

504
00:28:00,320 --> 00:28:01,730
And now I could claim--

505
00:28:01,730 --> 00:28:05,396
come to-- from south, I went
to-- could go to America.

506
00:28:05,396 --> 00:28:12,690

507
00:28:12,690 --> 00:28:15,420
Before I came to
America-- in Germany--

508
00:28:15,420 --> 00:28:16,995
the Americans, the Germans--

509
00:28:16,995 --> 00:28:20,010

510
00:28:20,010 --> 00:28:22,530
we lost the war.

511
00:28:22,530 --> 00:28:23,910
Hitler died.

512
00:28:23,910 --> 00:28:24,630
That was good.

513
00:28:24,630 --> 00:28:36,260

514
00:28:36,260 --> 00:28:39,080
When we saw the
white flag, it meant

515
00:28:39,080 --> 00:28:41,810
that we had given up, that
there was no more war.

516
00:28:41,810 --> 00:28:45,790

517
00:28:45,790 --> 00:28:50,580
The American soldiers saw
us, and they tore the papers,

518
00:28:50,580 --> 00:28:52,350
threw them away--

519
00:28:52,350 --> 00:28:54,560
threw them in the fireplace
and burned them up.

520
00:28:54,560 --> 00:28:58,680

521
00:28:58,680 --> 00:29:00,075
Boy, did I feel relieved.

522
00:29:00,075 --> 00:29:04,510

523
00:29:04,510 --> 00:29:09,280
And years later, when I
wanted to come to the USA,

524
00:29:09,280 --> 00:29:11,970
my husband's uncle helped us.

525
00:29:11,970 --> 00:29:14,770
They-- to support
us for five years.

526
00:29:14,770 --> 00:29:17,665
And after five years, I
became an American citizen.

527
00:29:17,665 --> 00:29:22,330

528
00:29:22,330 --> 00:29:29,490
Before, in Germany, in
Hamburg, my husband and I

529
00:29:29,490 --> 00:29:33,000
asked his aunt and uncle.

530
00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:34,800
They lived in Michigan--

531
00:29:34,800 --> 00:29:35,790
Detroit, Michigan.

532
00:29:35,790 --> 00:29:40,770

533
00:29:40,770 --> 00:29:43,410
We came as an immigrant--
as immigrants.

534
00:29:43,410 --> 00:29:46,160
And they were very happy
to help us, to support us.

535
00:29:46,160 --> 00:29:50,610

536
00:29:50,610 --> 00:29:53,400
But the aunt and uncle went
to the American Consulate.

537
00:29:53,400 --> 00:29:55,530
And at the consulate
they asked for papers,

538
00:29:55,530 --> 00:29:58,020
and they told them
about my husband and I,

539
00:29:58,020 --> 00:30:00,210
that we were deaf.

540
00:30:00,210 --> 00:30:01,900
They turned us down.

541
00:30:01,900 --> 00:30:06,450
They said deaf was not allowed
to come to the United States.

542
00:30:06,450 --> 00:30:10,780
I was very disappointed.

543
00:30:10,780 --> 00:30:15,610
Two years later, one
American man from Boston--

544
00:30:15,610 --> 00:30:18,820
he was deaf himself--

545
00:30:18,820 --> 00:30:21,850
we became good friends.

546
00:30:21,850 --> 00:30:25,450
We told him about wanting
to come to the States.

547
00:30:25,450 --> 00:30:29,375
And we said we were
looking for freedom.

548
00:30:29,375 --> 00:30:33,080

549
00:30:33,080 --> 00:30:35,120
And I had read
books about America,

550
00:30:35,120 --> 00:30:36,430
and I was so impressed.

551
00:30:36,430 --> 00:30:48,810

552
00:30:48,810 --> 00:30:50,330
This man said, good.

553
00:30:50,330 --> 00:30:52,080
He helped us go to the
American Consulate,

554
00:30:52,080 --> 00:30:53,130
and asked for our papers.

555
00:30:53,130 --> 00:30:55,140
And he said, I
will support them.

556
00:30:55,140 --> 00:30:56,400
They turned us down again.

557
00:30:56,400 --> 00:31:01,690

558
00:31:01,690 --> 00:31:04,920
Second time I was disappointed.

559
00:31:04,920 --> 00:31:08,000