

**INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH (ZINGER) DAVIS AND FRITZI (ZINGER)
NOZIK**

MELBOURNE, FLORIDA - APRIL 6, 2010

10:00:00:00

Liz: ...fact that, um, it's really appreciated that you are, um, doing this project because when we're gone, we'll be gone, and, uh, there'll be nobody to really tell the story, as it is, a-, as even today it's being challenged that none of...of this ever happened, and, uh, as long as you still have a few people that can tell you it not only happened but that we were part of it, uh, is very, uh, good to me to...to hear. That's what I just wanted to say, so thank you for doing this.

Fritzi: Have you got it down, or you didn't start yet? [laughs]

Okay, we're good now. That's great.

Means a lot to us.

It means a lot to me to do it. To me, it's a privilege to be working on this project.

Thank you.

10:01:02:12

So we're rolling? (Yes, we are.) Just for the record, because this is also going to be transcribed, we're simply going to start by having each of you say your name, spell your name for the person doing the transcription, and then I'll start asking....

Uh, both names you want spelled?

Yes.

Okay.

Yeah, so....

Older sister goes first.

Uh, Fritzi Nozik.

[sotto voce] No, my name is....

Oh. Uh, are you filming already?

Yes.

All right. My name is Fritzi Nozik, F-r-i-t-z-i N-o-z-i-k, and, uh, I was born, um, May, 1930, in Vienna, Austria.

Well, to match that, uh, my name is Elizabeth—I go by Liz mostly—Elizabeth Davis. Uh, our maiden name was Zinger, and Davis is my married name. I, uh, was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1933, and we started our childhood there, and then the rest is part of the story.

10:02:16:18

Wonderful. And let's start with your recollections of your early years in Vienna, and I'm very, very interested in having you tell me a little bit about your recollections of your younger years in Vienna, your family life. Tell me a little bit about the neighborhood you lived in, and some of your memories of life in Vienna as young girls.

Fritzi: Uh, you want to know, um, our life in Vienna, and, uh, it was, uh, very, I...I remember that we lived, uh, near the Danube River and, uh, it was called Engelsplatz, and, uh, um, then my sister was born, and, um, I loved her, it was like a little baby, and, uh, I remember going to school and then my mother brought along Elizabeth in a little carriage, um, to pick me up, and, um, I was in, uh, in the third grade. Well, I started in the first grade and then I went to the third grade, and that's when we had to leave, uh, school, and, uh, uh, it was very happy, and at that time, of course, there were no things like, uh, airplanes [laughs], or, um, uh, well, I did see an airplane and I asked my mother how the pilot came out, I know that, and, uh, we did go to the movies, my mother and I, and we saw Shirley Temple and I loved it. I...I said, "When is Shirley Temple coming on? When is Shirley Temple coming on?" And, uh, and my father was wonderful, he's a great person, and, uh, there was a lot of love in our family. I know I...I felt that.

10:04:31:23

Liz: I, too, uh, remember our childhood. Um, uh, as far as my father is concerned, he was your, uh, typical Austrian. Uh, we did not, uh, adhere to the

same characteristics in that he was blue-eyed and blond hair. We were dark-haired [laughs] [Fritzi laughs] and dark. Everyone always wanted to know, "Well, where's the Viennese in you, like your father has?" Uh, we did live in a lovely apartment, um, near the Danube. You could see the Danube from our, um, porch there, and I was always busy playing ball on the porch and it would fall down, and my mother would come to the rescue and look down and see whoever was walking there, she would ask them to please deposit the ball in the basket and bring it up, so that was even more fun of the being outside. It was a beautiful place, uh, serenity but near parks, and, uh, I must say that in those early years, uh, my father had his own business and we really and truly enjoyed life, not only economically but with the love of our parents and grandparents. My dad's parents were there and they were wonderful grandparents, so it was a very good beginning of life for us.

[inaudible . . . discussion about recording logistics]

It's [inaudible]...?

It has to be a computer or...

A computer is working on...on, Howard is working on....

[calls] Howard?

Oh, no.

No, he left.

We're rolling again. What was your father's occupation?

10:06:29:16

Liz: My father had a, um, uh, s-, a store which supplied restaurants, you know. I think that's correct.

Fritzi: I think I still have some of my father's silverware [laughs].

Liz: I, too [chuckles]. At least some of the pots and pans that were so great then, the spoons.

Right. Liz, you were born in 1933, which of course is the very same year that Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. I'm interested in having each of you tell me a little bit about what your early recollections are, knowing that

you were very, very young at the time, but if you do have recollections of when you first became aware of what it meant to be Jewish in Vienna at that time.

10:07:32:23

Liz: I have a very good beginning to that. My sister was in, uh, grade school, and I was, uh, enrolled into kindergarten. I thought that was great, all the little children around, uh, and, uh, the one thing that stands out in my memory is not so pretty, but I can't erase it no matter how I try. Uh, I was little and I needed to go to the bathroom, and I raised my hand, uh, it was obvious what I wanted, but nobody, uh, uh, asked me. I mean, the teacher didn't say, "What do you want?" or something. I was just ignored and ignored and ignored, until finally what happens to a child is they wet their pants, and that's what happened to me, and the teacher came over, grabbed me by the crunch of the, whatever I was wearing, held me up, and said, but in German, "You see? This is what the Yuden do. They make in their pants," and then she shoved me down. And after that horrendous experience, I went home and I was crying, and my mother didn't send me back, which was just as well because very shortly thereafter, it was announced that I could not come back, nor could my sister, because we had that terrible crime of being Jewish. So that was a childhood thing.

10:09:07:11

Fritzi: Well, uh, I had a better idea of Austria, you know, before the Nazis came, and, um, the teachers were really nice, uh, but of course they got rid of, when they came in, they got rid of those teachers and put the Nazi tich-, teachers in. That's why Elizabeth experienced that. But, um, usually the teachers were very good, and, um, a-, and, uh, until the third grade. That's what I remember.

Fritzi, was there something specific that you remember that told you dramatically that you were being singled out for that kind of treatment?

Fritzi: Um, um, let me, let me think a minute. Uh....

Liz: Of how you were singled out.

10:10:13:20

Fritzi: How...how I was singled out for, uh, bad treatment? Well, let me tell you first, uh, how I knew that something was wrong in our wonderful universe. Uh, it was in stages, and the first stage was, uh, the fear that I had in my heart, because so many things were taken away from us. First we had to move out of

our, uh, apartment, and had to go over to my grandfather and my grand, where my grandfather and my grandmother, and so in my grandmother's house there were about three families living at the time, and, uh, so I didn't, we...we moved out of Engelsplatz. The...the second thing was that I was taken out of school. And then another thing was we could not go out to shop until, uh, the others had shopped. We had a special time where we went shopping for food. And, uh, every day there seemed to be another decree and another decree, and that's why, um, as a child, uh, I felt that the only ones that were there to help me were my parents. And...and...and my father could not go to work, and, uh, of course then Kristallnacht came, and that was so b-, bad that my parents realized that they could never, they could not stay in Austria. Uh, they had to leave.

**What are your memories of Kristallnacht, which was in November of 1938?
What do you remember?**

10:12:05:12

Liz: Uh, what we remember from Kristallnacht can never, ever leave our minds. Um, were we at our grandparents'...

Fritzi: Grandparents' house.

Liz: ..at that time. We had left our home, been kicked out of our home, and we were at our grandparents'. Now, um, the children, I remember we had colds and stuff, but, um, that was a really, really horrendous experience in that the fear...

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

Liz: ...of what, uh, what was the purpose of, uh, Kristallnacht, was it?

Fritzi: Yes.

Liz: It was called Kristallnacht because the Nazis came into everybody's home and, uh, broke it up, so that a lot of crystals were broken and, you know, carried away. Well, to make this shorter, uh, my mother, who was a very smart lady, realized that when the Nazis came in, they didn't go out empty-handed. They took the people with them, and once they were with them they were never to be seen again. Not good e-, good for her. So what she did was, you know, there in Europe they don't have, uh, they didn't at that time have closets somewhat like we have here, uh, in America and England, that you open the door and there's the closets. A lot of the things were kept, um, in, uh, what did they call 'em, um, well, you know....

Fritzi: A heavy piece of furniture.

10:13:39:07

Liz: Yeah, a heavy piece of furniture where you hang up the clothes and so forth, so those were very big. Well, anyway, my mother grabbed my father and shoved him behind one of those big closets, and he was screaming he didn't wanna be th-, y-, that's where she put him, and sh-, and we pushed the credenza back, and it was hot, and dreary, and miserable, but he had to stay there. [knocks twice] Along came the Nazis, no ringing of the bell, just a kicking down of the door, and, uh, when they did that, uh, the cupboard shook a little, and some pots and pans fell out, and the, uh, highly literate la-, Nazi yelled, "Ah! [speaks in German]" "Look! They got silver!" Well, they were aluminum pots.

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: That's how much they knew. But they, uh, walked in and they asked my mother, "[speaks in German]? Where is the father, the husband?" And my mother said, uh, that he went out earlier and he hadn't come back. Now please remember, when she said this, she had told us before, "Don't say anything," and we sat on the couch or a bed, one of us had a cold, we did not say one word, and they said, "[speaks in German]?" We didn't answer. And of course we knew where he was, but we were smart enough not to say, as little kids, like, "Oh, over there," you know. So that was a very high emotional moment. So they looked all around, they wanted the man, and they said, "Well, if he's not here, we're gonna take her," and they grabbed mother, but, uh, she said something like, uh, [speaks in German], you know, that we had a cold or that we were sick, and so they said, "All right. We're leaving now but we're coming back in a little while, and if he hasn't come back, we're taking you," and they stomped back out. And we were all [blows air out]. And of course, my mother then went and released my father from the hiding behind this big credenza, and he was so red and so sweaty, and he says, "When they come back, I'm not going behind that. I...I, I'm not, I can't, I can't." But she had saved his life, and, uh, for some reason Kristallnacht was called to a close for that night. They had captured enough Jews to their appetite to be sent to the concentration camps right then and there. But we as children never forgot it...

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

Liz: ...and were so grateful that the father escaped that night, peacefully.

10:16:29:20

Fritzi: Well, my mother saved my father many times [laughs]. About, you know, three times when they came for him, his mother packed, like one time, uh, when we were already in America, uh, there was an edict out that, uh, they were going to send some Jews, uh, to another area in, perhaps in Poland or something, on...on the trains, put him on the train, so, um, that time she got him a fever [laughs], uh, Papa got a fever, and, uh, she said, uh, to the, uh, Nazis or to the black shirts, uh, that he's sick, so a doctor came in and examined him and he said, "All right. You're going to go on the next train," and his mother had packed a suitcase and everything, but, uh, my mother said, "He's not going," and that train was blown up, and so again he averted death. And I want to say that, um, Dachau was the concentration camp that they were going to send him in.

Liz: To.

Not long after Kristallnacht, there was news about this kinder transport going to the United States, and I'd like to ask each of you, again knowing that you were quite young at the time, what you remember about both your parents and yourselves learning about that possibility, and then what you remember about the process by which you and your family ended up applying to be part of that kinder transport program.

10:18:26:13

Liz: Well, I will answer, uh, about what happened when they announced a program to take some children to America and save them. Uh, I really don't know too much about it because, uh, I was five years old and, uh, it just didn't sink in that we were going to be separated from our parents and sent away, but, uh, I do know that that was a very, very difficult decision on the part of my parents. Number one, would we be accepted to this group that was being saved? Did they really want to separate us? What were the chances of never seeing again? And then I'll let Fritzi explain how it came about that we did go.

Fritzi: Well, I also am a little bit hazy on what happened, but my mother came to where I was, uh, in bed, and she said, uh, uh, "Fritzi, we're going to, um, go to this place, and, uh, so we'll have to get dressed and...and, um, perhaps, uh, you will be chosen as, uh, some of the children." Uh, that's all I remember about it, and then when we went to this place, I think there were more than fifty children...

Liz: Oh, many.

Fritzi: ...I think there were a hundred and fifty children...

Liz: Yeah.

10:19:57:10

Fritzi: ...and, uh, Elizabeth and I got chosen 'cause we were so cute, right? [laughs] And, uh, what I remember there was, uh, Mrs. Gilbert, or perhaps it was some other lady, had red fingernails, and I had never seen red polish on a person before, and I...I just looked at them, and, uh, thought how wonderful, and, uh, and then, uh, I guess, uh, they contacted my mother and father and told them that we were chosen to go on this, uh, on the ship.

Liz: And I...I was crying all the time that I would go, but they had to go, too, they had to go, too. And they said, "Well, we'll come, we'll come later, but not now." That was terrible, to su-, to think of a...a little girl thinking they were gonna be separated from their mother and father.

When the Krauses arrived, Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus, and I believe you're right, Fritzi, others have remembered that Eleanor Kraus, Gilbert's wife, had red nail polish, so it's quite a memory.

Fritzi: Yes.

Do you have any memories of the kinds of questions that were asked?

Fritzi: Um, actually, no, I don't have any memory. Um, I, but I think they wanted, uh, first you had to be physically all right, and, uh, because of the Amer-, you know, in America they didn't want to have people that, uh, had some disability or something like that for the immigration, but, um, physically all right and mentally all right. And, um, that's what I remember.

Liz: [sotto voce] Don't forget to repeat the question.

You're doing just fine. Liz, we were talking before off camera about the difficult, almost the impossibility of imagining any of us as parents sending our children off. Do you have recollections of, again recognizing that you were quite young, discussing any of that with your parents?

10:22:30:11

Liz: The question is did we discuss with our parents that we were going to be sent off. I do not recall that. I'm sure they did, but I didn't, don't think they did too much of it, because I don't think that a parent would tell the child, "I'm

gonna be sending you off and you won't probably see us again." I understood that I was just going on a trip, and my older sister Fritzi would look after me, and then later on we'd get to meet up with them. Uh, that's all I remember from that. You know, being five or six years old, it didn't sink in to me what was happening.

Fritzi: Yes, uh, you want to know [laughs], uh, about how we felt when we, um, left our parents. Uh, I also never gave in to the idea that I wouldn't see my family again. Uh, I had that hope that they would come later, and I also knew that I had to take care of Elizabeth because, uh, my father still wrote me, uh, when we were in America, he wrote me, um, you know, about not letting Elizabeth do any [speaks in German], which meant [laughs], and, uh, not to fool around around the swimming pool, and to change our clothes every day, uh...

Liz: To keep me out of trouble.

Fritzi: ...underwear, and, um, just to take care of her, and I...I think I've heard, uh, that, uh, everybody who had a older sister or an older brother, that person stepped up to the plate and took care of the little one, and that's how it was. And on the ship and everyplace, uh, we, uh, the older ones, the older children helped to take care of the younger children.

10:24:38:15

Liz: That's true. Uh, but they did that, and unfortunately many times when there was something that I had done and running aw-, and refusing to come to, they wanted to teach us a few words of English, I ran off and I really was rambunctious, it was an expression of totally missing the parents, not knowing where they were and if I would see them again, and very often, um, I was, uh, open to punishment of some sort...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...like no dinner, no something, but my sister would come as the hero and she'd give me her dinner or she'd make, and she promised to everyone, "Well, I'll do this and this for you, but, you know, let my sister, uh, not be punished." So she was really, really good about that.

Fritzi: That's when we were already in the United States, and, uh, were at the camp in Philadelphia, and, uh, it was usually, uh, uh, dessert that Eli-, they would take away from Elizabeth, and of course she took my dessert, yes [laughs].

Liz: As you can see, I did a very good job.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I always ate my desserts.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Before we move to the ship, and, of course...

Yeah.

...to Camp Sholom, let me ask you again about your memories as you were getting ready to leave Vienna, and I'm wondering if by any chance you remember what you brought with you, or what you were allowed to bring with you as you were leaving Vienna.

10:26:13:00

Fritzi: Uh, we each had our clothes, and, uh, w-, we, my mother packed for us, so I don't remember anything, there were no toys or anything like you have here [laughs]. Toys were not included, uh, just the essentials.

Liz: Well, uh, one thing that, uh, I recall in things that we were, uh, bringing along was my mother, uh, made sure, you see, when...when, we...we were two and a half years apart, and my mother had always had us in very beautiful clothes, but she would have the larger size and I would have the smaller size, so we very, very often, uh, were, a-, aboard ship and...and...and the camp with clothes that were alike, but, uh, fitting our sizes, and a lot of pictures were taken, where the dirndl that she wore, I wore a similar thing, so that everybody knew that we were the sisters, and, uh, uh, I gave her a hard time. Every time she wanted to wear something, it meant I had to wear that dress, too, and, you know, that was just a good quarreling area. I wanted to be in something else, but I listened to sister and...

Fritzi: Well...

Liz: ...she guided us.

10:27:40:17

Fritzi: ...uh, we called, uh, Mr. Kraus Uncle Gilbert. Everybody called him Uncle Gilbert.

Liz: And adored him. Like a father that we missed.

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: He was the father. And his beautiful wife was the mother.

Before getting on the ship, as I... [inaudible] We're just gonna pause for one second. [inaudible] Do you need to take a break for any...?

Fritzi: No. Well, it's all because you were only six years old, and at six, we...

Liz: Yeah, but there were others six years old, and they were behaved.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I wasn't.

Fritzi: I know [laughs].

Liz: Been like that all my life. Never take it.

What do you remember before getting on the ship? You left Vienna, as I understand it, there was a train ride . . . just tell me what your memories are leading up to getting on the ship.

10:28:33:09

Fritzi: Well, the only thing I remember is the train ride to Hamburg, and, uh, that was the port, and, uh, uh, I remember, uh, some way, uh, being washed, uh, or having little baths in, uh, in Hamburg, and I also remember we got a potato to eat in Hamburg [laughs]. So that's my memory.

Liz: I'm sorry, I do not remember anything about the pre-boarding and the getting on. I just remember being in a fog, a total fog. I just....

I'm gonna ask you to, 'cause you're just [inaudible] a little bit.

Liz: Oh, sorry.

Fritzi: Um, you ask me what I remember about before the ship. Well, somehow, uh, we were in Hamburg and I, she was E. Zinger and I was F. Zinger, and so,

uh, I, we had to wait till the last one of us because I was the last one in the alphabet, and...

Liz: Zinger.

Fritzi: and that was...

Liz: Z.

Fritzi: ...Z, and...and that was hard, and, uh, uh, I think, uh, both of us were sc-, crying, were crying before we got on the ship. And I remember looking up at the ship, the S.S. Hardy, and it was enormous, I think, oh, my goodness, is this a ship? [chuckles] It looked like a building.

Liz: We had never seen anything like that.

Fritzi: Yeah. It's a different world now than what we came from. You know, many, many years have passed, and it's a different world completely.

Liz: Children today would know

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: ...big ships for going on cruises with their parents and so forth. Such a thing was unheard of in our time, of going on a cruise [chuckles] with your parents, you know.

One favor. I know you tend to be looking up a little bit, and to the extent possible...

Fritzi: Could...

...if you could just try to keep looking at me.

Fritzi: Oh [laughs].

Unless you're talking to Liz.

Fritzi: Oh, okay.

I just [inaudible]...

Fritzi: I have been talking....

I know it's a hard thing to control, but I know your eyes [inaudible]....

Fritzi: I never looked up there. I'm good.

Try to keep it in mind. I hate to sound critical.

Fritzi: No.

Liz: No, no, no, you gotta advise us throughout.

I wanna ask you a funny question, because a few others have mentioned this, and that was what you remember about the food that was served to you on the ship. I've heard a couple of stories. I don't know if you have any memories, but if you do, if you could tell me a little bit about eating aboard the ship, and now we're on the S.S. Hardy coming over to America.

10:31:25:05

Fritzi: Can I answer that? Well, you want to know what we ate on the ship. I don't remember the meals exactly, but, you see, after we reached the English Channel, Elizabeth was only in the...in the bed in, uh, in our cabin, because she was terribly seasick, and what I did sometimes, I took her upstairs, which wasn't as, uh, uh, you know, wavy, and, uh, and I brought her oranges from the, uh, from the dining room. And when...when she was so sick, I wasn't sick at all, and all the people on the boat had had, uh, the first few days before we reached the English Channel, they had all the chairs, deck chairs out, and, uh, and I could never get a deck chair. But when we went into the English Channel, I had all the chairs I wanted, and, uh, poor Elizabeth with a green face was lying in the bed, and she wasn't running away from me, so I knew exactly where she was.

Liz: [chuckles]

Fritzi: The first few days I was looking for her all over the ship. I said, "Have you seen my sister? Have you seen my sister?" and nobody had seen her. But after that, she stayed put.

Liz: Yes, the seasickness had a important role, in, uh...

Fritzi: In trip.

Liz: ...our behavior, in my behavior, and getting, uh, to America safely [laughs]. I'm...I'm ashamed to say that, but thankfully I've overcome that and I love being on a [chuckles] ship now, but, uh, it was...

Fritzi: Well...

Liz: ...it was, uh, very rough seas at that time and you know, we....

Fritzi: They didn't have, uh, what are they called, tranquilizers, no, ciber-[laughs]...

Liz: Whatever.

Fritzi: ...equalizers or something on the ship.

Obviously you shared a room.

Yes.

Were there others in the room with you? Do you remember?

Fritzi: Well, uh, this is a funny story, but, uh, I, you know, there was a...a cup where you could throw up, and my cup was clean. One of the other children came in, and that was Il-, Hilde Braunbasser, and she said she wanted to sleep with me, so I said okay, so she was throwing up in my cup. That's the only thing I remem-, otherwise there were only two people in the...in the cabin.

Do you have memories, and again, we're still on the ship here, of the Krauses, in terms of were they interacting with the children, were they a presence?

10:34:15:11

Fritzi: Well, Elizabeth is not gonna like this, but I think Uncle Gilbert [inaudible] her up one time and said, "This one I would like to throw in the ocean."

Liz: [laughs]

Fritzi: And I was so scared because I thought it was literal, uh, you know, that he meant it literally. But, you know, she was just, uh, uh, one of the youngest, so that's why he said that, uh, that's....

Liz: Youngest and least behaved.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I must take my credits...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...where they come. I do not remember this, but I'm sure that's true...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...because if anyone gave them a hard time, it was me.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I...I bitterly, uh, emotionally, uh, represented the feelings of losing my parents and my toys, mainly my toys...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: and, uh, being misbehaved in the...in the sense of, uh, not wanting to learn any words in English...

Fritzi: No.

Liz: ...not wanting to come and eat, not wanting to do anything, and so if what she says is correct, that he threw me up...

Fritzi: No, no, no.

Liz: ...in the air, you know, held me and said, "This one I could throw over..."

Fritzi: Like to throw overboard.

Liz: ...he would have every right to have made that decision, and I still love him despite that.

There were efforts to learn some English.

10:35:38:19

Fritzi: Uh, yes, but not on the ship, al-, although we, I think we learned o-, maybe this was at the camp that we went to in...in Philadelphia, but, uh, they did try to teach us, "Oh, say, can you see," uh, and I thought, my goodness, if

this is English, I'm never going to learn it, because that's a very [laughs] hard song, oh, say, can you see.

Liz: There maybe were no formal lessons given, but at every opportunity they did try to teach us something about, uh, not manners but behavior and so forth, really to start, uh, start us on getting into, uh, Americanism. I was never there for those, uh, suggestions and, uh, information. I was hiding someplace.

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: I don't know why or where, but I just felt as a little girl that being out of all of this was the only, uh, answer to the feelings that I had at being abandoned, you know, and, uh, that's it.

What are your very first memories of arriving in America?

Fritzi: Well, uh, I guess we went to Ellis Island. We had to open up our suitcases and peep-, uh, the people were searching them, and, uh, oh, yeah, and then...then we took a bus to Philadelphia. Well, my sister was sick on the bus. She was not only sick, uh, o-, seasick, but she was motion sick [laughs], and, uh, so when we arrived at the camp in Philadelphia, I says, "Where's my sister?" I was always saying, "Where's my sister?" And, uh, they said, "Don't worry, she's all right."

10:37:38:03

Liz: Yeah, we were taken to this camp, and, uh, um, what...what was the name of it?

Fritzi: Brith Sholom.

Liz: B-, Brith Sholom, and, uh, it seemed right away that things would be better, because first of all, we weren't being tossed up and down or, uh, we weren't out in the open. Uh, we had a room for ourselves...

Fritzi: Very nice.

Liz: ...and somehow I just got the idea that things would come along better now, and, uh, the only thing was there, uh, they started into serious, uh, learning of English. Who wanted to learn English?

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: Not me. But I finally got [chuckles] broken in and, uh, uh, and joined and started to have a much better, uh, behavior and less resistance to what was happening to my life.

Fritzi: Uh...

Liz: That was the beginning there at the camp.

10:38:34:15

Fritzi: Well, you wanted to know wha-, what happened at the camp. Well, this was something that I'll always remember, uh, but I don't remem-, when El-, when we were starting on our trip, Elizabeth had a condition, the, uh, mastoid in the ear, but we couldn't say anything because, uh, any sickness and we would be held back. So not only did she have the mastoid, uh, mastoiditis, so the very first day I got into the room, uh, two ladies...

Liz: This was on the ship?

Fritzi: No, no, this was in Philadelphia.

Liz: In...in Philadelphia, okay.

Fritzi: The very first day I came in, two ladies came in and said, "Fritzi, let's go for a walk." Now I had never left Elizabeth, but I figured, you know, s-, all right, they wanna take me for a walk, so I went for a walk, and as we came back, as we were on our return, I...I heard this awful screaming and screaming, and I went in and what it had been was the doctor had been called, and her mastoid was pierced, and I said, "What are you screaming for?" and she said, "The doctor said he was coming back." That's why she was screaming. And it was a very sad time for me because I sat on my bed and I said, "I'll, I have to grow up now because, uh, you know, she got hurt so badly." I...I, uh, I was sa-, I was sad and worried. But she recuperated, went on her merry ways and her [laughs]...

Liz: Doings.

10:40:20:14

: ...doings [laughs]. And, uh, of course, this I remember, when we went, when we were in camp, up, we had the Indians, the American Indians come, and they would give, they would dance, and then they would give feathers to the girls or the boys that were good. Well, uh, al-, the younger ones had to go back to, uh, to the camp, and the older ones could stay on. Well, Elizabeth wanted me to go

back with her and started screaming a lot [laughs], and, uh, so I did. So I never stayed for the whole time that the Indians gave out feathers. Of course she never got a feather. [chuckles]

Liz: I never got a feather.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I'm going to write a book.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I never got a feather.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: But I became a good citizen, so something came out of it.

Fritzi: And ab-, about her English, um, she, uh, they came to me and said, "There's something wrong with your sister." I said, "Wha-, what is it?" "Well, she can't learn English," and of course [laughs], she was, she's a brilliant person, and, uh, she became very [chuckles], very smart. It was just that she didn't want to learn English [laughs].

10:41:44:11

Liz: All I wanted was my mother and my father, and...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...if they would produce them...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I would gladly learn English and say "mother" and "father." I didn't want to learn those words until I had a mother and a father. But slowly I came around, very slowly, thanks to my sister and her support and her always making excuses to the counselors...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...on my behalf.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: So I made it, and I'm very indebted to her...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...all these years later.

At what point did you.... Were you hearing at all anything from your parents?

10:42:25:21

Fritzi: Yes. I told you, I was get-, I mean, I thought that you asked me that. I was giving, I was s-, sending letters back, because I remember in the picture when I told you about Elizabeth pinching me, I said, "Elizabeth [speaks in German]." That means she, uh, was [speaks in German] [laughs], I didn't say that what she did, but...

Liz: What is [speaks in German]?

Fritzi: Uh, [speaks in German].

Liz: Oh, bawled you out.

Fritzi: Bawled, because I didn't look into the camera.

Liz: Oh, that's right. I bawled her out 'cause she didn't look into the camera. Very good. Let's see.

Fritzi: So, and then my father was writing me letters, but I think, uh, uh, when we went to my cousins, aunt and, uh, and uncle, or...or cousins, uh, I don't think we received letters any more. There was a stoppage when ama-, uh, yeah, there was a stoppage.

Liz: Wait, you have to explain that. We had come, and we were put into a camp.

Fritzi: Brith Sholom.

10:43:35:15

Liz: Uh, it was going to be in, uh, Pennsylvania or Philadelphia, a home for the aged, but prior to occupation as a home for the aged, the wonderful person who brought us succeeded in letting us come there first, so we had some time to

acclimate there. Uh, then they found, uh, the people, relatives or whoever would be taking us over, and these were some relatives. They weren't a direct aunt and uncle, but they were someone in the family, and their children had grown up and were in college. Uh, the son, I think, was in the Marines and, uh, they took us to live in their house, and that's when, um, they were urging us at all times, kindly so, um, we would call them Uncle Max and Aunt Birdie.

Fritzi: Birdie.

Liz: And each day they would say, when we went to bed at night, we'd say our prayers, and Uncle Max said, "Now, remember, you say Papa. I'm Papa, and that's Mama. Say it. Yeah, Papa. Mama." And we would do that, at least me, and I think you, too, but then a voice in the night sleeping next to me would say, "Das is nicht [inaudible] Papa, das is nicht [inaudible] Mama." This is not your father, this is not your mother. So in the morning I would get up and I'd say, "Good morning, Aunt Birdie."

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: "Good morning, Uncle Max."

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: And they would throw their hands up.

Fritzi: [laughs]

10:45:13:18

Liz: This kid, she'll never make it, you know. But it was she who oriented the right, uh, feelings in my heart. We, they were like mother and father to us, they treated us beautifully, uh, they had, uh, a full-time maid, uh, at the time we moved there, and they got another maid so that she could take care of us, and we were given food and clothing and, uh, whatever adoration they could, uh, but, you know, it's my sister who did not let me be buried in all of that but reminded me all of the time that we have a mother and a father, and I'm so grateful to her for that.

Were your parents still in Vienna at this point?

Fritzi: Yes. Uh, you asked me whether my parents were still in, uh, Vienna at that point. Yes, they were always in Vienna, and I want to add something to Elizabeth's, uh....

Liz: Comments.

Fritzi: What?

Liz: Comments.

10:46:20:01

Fritzi: Comments. Well, my grandfather wrote a letter to the, uh, people that were taking us, Uncle Max and Aunt Birdie, and he, my grandfather told them about the situation in Vienna and what was happening, so that's how he got in contact with these people, and I want to tell you when they came. Um, one day, at the end of the two months at the camp, in Brith Sholom, uh, someone came to us and said, y-, th-, "Your relatives are here." And so we combed our hair, washed our faces, and we came into this room where our relatives were, and they said, "Oh, my good-," uh, Aunt Birdie cried out, "Oh, my goodness, they're blackies!" Uh, she meant we had black eyes and, uh...

Liz: Black hair.

Fritzi: ...black hair, and, uh, I guess she expected blue eyes and blond hair from Vienna [laughs], but, um, Aunt Birdie was very nice, and...and Uncle Max, uh, he liked me, and, uh, also Aunt Birdie, but she brought her sister-in-law with her, and that was Helen, and so, uh, uh, Helen and Max and Birdie and Elizabeth and I went into the car, and we were going to Utica, New York, that's where we stayed, and that drive they will never forget and I will never forget, because Birdie and Helen had beautiful dresses on, and they took Elizabeth in the back, and I was in the front. A few hours into the ride, their dresses were ruined because of Elizabeth's trouble...

Liz: [laughs]

Fritzi: ...with her seasickness, carsickness, height sickness, and...and seasick. So, um, e-, the ride took a very long time. I don't know, maybe eleven hours, I don't know.

Liz: I think they needed new clothes after...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...bringing us...

Fritzi: But I said...

Liz: ...to the homefront.

Fritzi: But they forgave us.

10:48:46:20

So you moved, when you left the camp, you moved up to Utica.

Both: Yes.

Liz: To beautiful quarters.

Yeah.

Liz: Of their home.

Fritzi: Uncle...Uncle Max drove us to Utica, New York.

And then tell me what did happen with your parents.

10:48:54:15

Fritzi: Well, we don't know w-, uh, what happened...

Liz: In exact detail, no.

Fritzi: ...in Vienna, we don't know. But, uh, somehow my uncle, who was ten years younger than, uh, my father, uh, had put my father on the quota list when he had put himself, uh, on the quota list, I guess, and, uh, because my father did not want to at that time go away from Austria. He said he had been in the German army at seventeen, his father was in the German army, and he thought that he was safe as a citizen of Austria, because they had a different mindset at that time. Uh, things had not been so bad. Well, it turned out that those people that were on the head of the quota list, uh, and Uncle Max in America sent them papers or visas to come to America, so they got on a ship and, uh, they came. And I guess it was before 1941, because in 1941, yeah, we...we were already together, and they heard the news that the Americans had been attacked at, uh, Pearl Harbor.

10:50:10:19

Liz: Throughout that waiting period with the papers and all, I do know in talking later on in life, uh, the parents mentioned often that they thought they would never make it because every day there were raids to the houses, and pickups of, uh, Jewish people. If they went out on the street, they were sh-, soon sent, uh, to the concentration camps that were to be. I mean, it was not like they're sitting there and waiting for their trip to America. It was very, uh, maybe yes, maybe no, depending on who told on you that some Jewish people were living there and waiting to get out. It was, in other words, a little while later, uh, if they had had to wait, there would've been no escape because...

Fritzi: That's right.

Liz: ...all of the Jewish people, uh, were, uh, it was like, you know, you...you take the noodles out of the soup, they were just scooped up and if they were of that faith, they were sent right to the concentration camp. So there is not a day that goes by that I don't say to God, thank you, because that was truly a miracle that they should be able to be hidden, uh, and...and ke-, kept the way they were so that, uh, they were able to escape and come to the United States.

10:51:34:20

Fritzi: I just wanna say that my par-,uh, my grandparents, my grandmother and my grandfather, were picked up and, uh, sent to the Theresenstadt, where they were eliminated.

Liz: As were most, almost all of our relatives, uh, were picked up and sent to their deaths, and, uh, it's very hard for us to remember that this sweet grandmother and grandfather, uh, ma-, my grandmother was very short, that's who, uh, I came after [laughs]...

Fritzi: You take after.

Liz: ...with my genes,

Fritzi: [chuckles]

Liz: ...and, uh, she was just a little woman and so nice, and, uh, the father had been in the army twice, uh, and as she said, my father was very proud of being an officer in the army and never thought that, uh, his dedication wouldn't be a good excuse for not getting killed because of the religion, but, uh, that's what happened, and, um, I feel to this day so sorry for my grandparents, who were just gentle, sweet, elderly people, to think that they were scooped up and sent to death in the concentration camps.

Fritzi: That's what happened to all the families we knew. We were just extremely fortunate that our parents were able to come to this country.

And when they did come to this country....

[end of recording]

10:53:01:00

And when your parents did arrive in this country, within, it sounds like, a couple years of your arrival, where were you then living?

Fritzi: Uh, we were living in Utica, New York, and it was winter, I remember, because my poor parents, they were walking, they didn't know where to go, eh, the snow was piled high, you know. I don't...I don't think they ever had snowstorms like that in Vienna, but, uh, uh, they came, and it was a little strange at first. I'll tell you, uh, when we...when we went home with them, with my mother and father, I s-, they treated us so won-, you know, my mother was treating us so nice, and I thought, I went to my mother and said, "Mama, uh, why don't you yell at us?" and, uh, well, later on she yelled at us [laughs], so we knew [laughs] that we, that, because, uh, they were so polite to us at first. It was a little bit strange.

Liz: Well, uh, when asked, uh, what happened, you know, when the parents came and when we reunited, I really feel as I look back that the, um, uh, wonderful relatives who had us, uh, and cared for us, uh, in a very high way, as I said, they...they already had a live-in maid but they got another to be sure that we were taken care of, because they were in a social circle and they were busy and all that, so I do know, I mean, I learned this later, that, uh, they really felt, and tried to tell my parents, that they ought to let us stay with them because they could do so much for us, and they would help them get settled, but you're still young, they said to my parents, you will have other children, and let us keep, uh, these and we'll, you know, get them trained and go to college and give them aw-, everything that they needed, which really, I'm sure, sounded good to my parents, but both parents said, "Absolutely not. We only wanted to live in order to come and, uh, see our children and be with the children." So then the relatives agreed, and, uh, uh, they helped them a very little bit to just, uh, get some place to...to live...

Fritzi: Uh, lived in Utica.

Liz: ...in Utica, where they owned the building and rented to a doctor and a dentist and a...and a, uh, automobile, uh...

Fritzi: Dealer.

Liz: ...dealer downstairs, and there was a little place upstairs. And we didn't care, because my parents didn't care because it was so good to be together again, even though we were quite in the poverty zone. But, uh...

Fritzi: We didn't know we were in the poverty zone.

Liz: ...we never knew it.

Fritzi: [laughs]

10:56:00:00

Liz: My dad earned, uh, ten dollars a week for a tremendous number of hours, working, helping out in grocery store. But it didn't matter because honestly, the love just covered everything that we needed, to have your parents back. It was a very, very wonderful experience. Much as we appreciated and loved the...the relatives, the warmth that we suddenly were [inaudible] with is, uh, impossible to describe, and it did us good.

Fritzi: Of course we wa-, we went to temple, you know, at Temple, uh, Temple Beth El in Utica, and, uh, it was a conservative temple and, uh, so we...we had friends right away and, uh, and the parents had friends, too. We...we went religiously [laughs] every Friday and Saturday, every time.

Liz: There was a big group, a social group of the...of the refugees, you know, that had escaped or come, although I don't, I think most of them came and had a little more than we did. But we were kids, we didn't know, we didn't care. We just knew that we had our beloved parents back, and that was enough for us for many years.

Did your parents become American citizens?

Fritzi: Of course.

10:57:25:08

Liz: Yes. As quick, our parents became American citizens just as quickly as they could, right from the start. Learning the English, learning everything, that was

very important to them, and they became citizens right to the day when they were allowed to be.

Fritzi: I think what helped them was listening to the radio, uh, you know, that helped their English, and then my father working in the store, he had to, uh, sometimes things got different, like, uh, somebody told him to, uh, take the snow away from the car, and he thought that they had told him to wash the car, so he was washing the car [laughs].

Liz: Pail and...pail and sponge in February [laughs].

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: Uh, but, uh, you know, he earned very little, very little, ten dollars a week, I think for many, for a long time. And, but my mother, uh, cleaned the doctor's office across from us, and the dentist's office in the same building across from us, and on Sundays she cleaned the showroom of the Studebaker, so that they really, really worked hard to be able to bring us up and...and, you know, have something, and, uh, it didn't matter. We...we had our family. Didn't matter what we, else we had, you know.

Fritzi: Well, I'm sorry to say that when I went with a boyfriend, I didn't want him to see my mother cleaning the [laughs]...

Liz: On her four, on her knees.

Fritzi: ...because the, they didn't have things, you know, in, uh...

Liz: If they did, she didn't believe in it.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: She got down on this showroom and, uh, you know, washed it and waxed it, and we knew about hard work in the family all for us, so....

10:59:14:03

You know, one thing I meant to ask you, going all the way back to Vienna, is what kind of Jewish observance. Did you grow up in an observant Jewish household?

Liz: Sure.

Fritzi: All right. Uh, you asked me about my Jewish experience in Vienna, and, uh, I forgot to tell you that, uh, the other children in the class on Wednesday went to religious school, and I went, uh, to my Hebrew school teacher, and, uh, my Hebrew, uh, so I was good in Hebrew the first year. Uh, the second year that I went, I goofed off a little bit, I guess, and he gave me a two on the report card, and, uh, the way it was graded, one, two, three, four, four meant you're failing, one is excellent, so my mother saw two, so she went with me to the Hebrew school teacher and she said, "You are not going to farputz [sounds like] my child's report card," and, uh, she had him by the ear, I guess [laughs] and he promised to give me another examination, uh, which made my, see, I had all ones on my report card, but in Hebrew I had a two and she wouldn't let that be, you know [laughs].

Liz: Farputz means spoiled.

Fritzi: Spoiled, thank you [laughs].

Liz: [laughs]

Now, presumably after the summer you spent at the camp, you obviously went to school.

Fritzi: Oh, after the...

Liz: [inaudible]

Yeah, after the summer in camp, what I'm interested in asking you is what you remember about your introduction to being in school in America, as a couple of girls who had only, at that point, been in the United States for a couple of months.

11:01:18:05

Liz: Well, I would just like to say that, uh, when we first came here and were in the camp, you know, they did try to, uh, teach us s-, a little bit of English to, uh, get us ready for the time when we're leaving from there to go to school, so, um, uh, by the time we were adopted by the relatives, um, I think we both were, um, uh, had enough English in us. She certainly did, and...and when you're little, you pick it up quickly, so I don't think that there was a problem of, uh, going into the regular schools. Uh, I had to go into first grade, uh, since I never made it in...in Austria.

Fritzi: Kindergarten. Um...

Liz: No, I didn't go to kindergarten.

Fritzi: Oh, I see. You didn't make it to first grade.

Liz: They...they gave up on kindergarten first, and...and by that time, we were speaking English well enough to adjust to schools. Is that right?

Fritzi: Yes, very good. Uh, you asked us w-, w-, how we adjusted to school, and I will tell you that, uh, the teachers were very good, very good to me, at least. At the end of the school, I stayed and they taught me the alphabet. I was really good only in math, because, uh, the other things were in English and I didn't catch on so good, but, uh, they were helping me and just like the teachers before the Nazi era, uh, in Vienna, so I always loved teachers. They were wonderful to me. And...and, uh, and, uh, at the end of the period, uh, the teacher would say, "Everybody has to stay after school except Fritzi and Tommy." Tommy was a Catholic boy, and I was, you know, I was very well behaved.

So why did they ask both of you to stay after school?

Fritzi: No, not after school. We could go home. The other students had to stay after [laughs] school. They were a rowdy crew [laughs].

As you grew older over the years, did you talk about this episode much with your parents?

11:03:50:17

Liz: The episode? You're...you're inquiring whether we, uh, discussed the episode of being sent to this country by them? I think we both told them many times that we couldn't believe that they had, uh, uh, such, uh...

Fritzi: Love.

Liz: ...well, love, but also the...the ner-, not the nerve, but, you know, to do this.

Fritzi: The courage.

Liz: The courage, that's the word I'm looking for. And at one point, my mother once told me once they had sent us, they thought they had made a mistake because whatever would happen would happen to all of us, and they felt that when they gave up the most precious thing they had, their children, their lives were so empty, except there was good motiv-, motivation to make sure that they could leave, but, you know, who knew about that, but they tried hard. As I say, they escaped many times from being just picked up on the streets or in the stores,

but my mom did once tell me that the, uh, what they felt, having to tear the children away from them, they felt they had made a mistake. In the end, it turned out it was just the thing to do.

11:05:07:12

Fritzi: Well, I would like to say something on that subject, uh, that you asked us, and, uh, my father wrote me in, when we were at the camp Brith Sholom, and he wrote, he always said, [speaks in German], that Mama is crying every night...

Liz: Every night.

Fritzi: ...for you.

Liz: That was not too happy for us to hear, that she cried every night. But if one sends away their children not knowing if they'll ever see them again, I don't think that's such a...a terrible thing that...that happened. I mean, it would be bad if they said we didn't have anything to...to say about you going away [laughs], you know. It was good. Of course, we had a very close family, needless to say, because almost having lost them and then being reinstated was, uh, something that built a big strength in the family.

11:06:14:06

Fritzi: And Elizabeth and I have a real big bond together because we came together on the ship, and that's what bon-, bon-, you know, we're bonded together.

Liz: Not really, but I owe her...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...because she always had to take the punishments for me.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: And now I'm trying to pay back the niceties [laughs].

Fritzi: [laughs] No, she's always been a good person.

The flip side of the question about talking about this in later years with your parents is what you have passed on to your families, to your children, about this episode. I'm guessing that it's part of the family history, part of the family tradition, and I'm just interested in how you have introduced that story to them.

Fritzi: Well, do you want me to go first? Well, you asked what we have introduced the story to my children, or how we have introduced the story. Well, they knew it from a very early age that, our story, that I came with Elizabeth, and all my children love Elizabeth like their own mother, and, uh, and, uh, they...they remember. Uh, my son is not, my oldest son is not religious in that sense, but he knows he's Jewish and he knows what happened, and, uh, and he hates what happened, the Nazis, he hates 'em, just like me.

11:07:59:11

Liz: Yeah, well, my children, too. Uh, I've never hesitated to tell the tales because I think they need to be told, and to explain what was went through in order to sustain our Judaism, uh, which is a minority group but a very important people, and that I'm counting on them to continue, uh, with our faith being supported because so many gave up so much, uh, in order to maintain their Judaism, and that we have an obligation to carry it on so that they didn't all die for nothing. And...and I know that's hard concept, uh, for kids especially, if they meet others in other faiths and they maybe get married, but that hasn't happened, but, uh, uh, they need to remember what happened to their ancestors, and to maintain their Judaism for that reason if...if none other, other than the fact that it's a pretty good religion...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...and we can all live together with all kinds of religions, as long as we don't care to kill each other in order to make our...our religion, uh, you know, good for all, but, uh, I think our kids have it. I hope they do, but they seem to. They...they seem to. And that's very important to me, that all those people didn't die for nothing. You know, that's why, and maybe that's a lot to put on your kids. Uh, what I'm trying to get across with that is I don't see Judaism as being the best religion and that's why you gotta be it. You have to carry it on because of all the sacrifices that were made so that you can be Jewish and carry on with them.

Fritzi: And I'd like to say that Hitler, uh, uh, uh, expelled the Jews and...and...and treated the Jews badly, but he also, uh, did not like homosexuals, he did not like gypsies, he did not like, uh, people with disabilities. Uh, Hitler wanted a pure German race. That was his, uh, main objective, I think, and he wanted to conquer the world and...and rid the world of all people that were not like him.

Liz: Misfits. Yeah.

11:10:37:07

As you were talking about Judaism, what's so interesting about this story, and something I'm not sure I'm gonna be able to answer ultimately, is that Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus were completely irreligious.

Fritzi: Well, they were humanists. Uh, Gilbert and Ellen, Eleanor Kraus were humanists.

Liz: Well, I don't... Uh, I...I know what you're saying and sometimes I feel that way about certain people, that, you know, what they've done and...and they really don't come to temple, but...but there's more to it than that, because what they looked at, uh, at the time was, uh, wiping out of a race, a religion that they were familiar with. They maybe weren't actively in all the things that you do in Judaism with the holidays and, because once you're Jewish, you are special in the sense that you are an...an, uh, not what everybody else is, uh, that you have your religion in terms of there is a god, but one god only, and, uh, those concepts don't necessarily mean that the person goes dedicatedly to temple and so forth, but there's an internal part of Judaism, of, uh, looking out for others, uh, that you love, or even if you don't love them, and having a...a sense of humanity and kindness, and what motivated them, I think, they were very, very smart and they saw exactly what was going to be happening with the total wipeout of their people, and...and I think that they felt they wanted to do something good for society. It wasn't because of doing a good deed and...and, uh, to show God. It was just, uh, an...an impossible situation to face that someone had come along and would kill everyone because of their religion, they weren't good of the religion, and they wanted to save the lives of children.

11:12:52:01

And I think they must be in heaven and enjoying it, uh, for the good deed that they did, because none of us, none of us can ever forget what this couple did, to bring, to forget about all the society things that they probably had at their fingertips, and all the things that they could do with the money that was spent on getting the children here, is that they, if there are angels in the sky, I swear that they amongst them because what they did was such a humanitarian project that I only wish I could somehow, one day, do something one one-hundredth of...of what they did.

What haven't I asked that you'd like to...?

11:13:53:01

Fritzi: Well, I'd like to say that, uh, uh, our history is, uh, uh, one of persecution [laughs], ,uh, from the 1400s and maybe even before, uh, when we were expelled from Spain, from, uh, from England, from France, and, uh, so, uh, when I was

studying this, uh, the expulsion, my daughter Hetty said, "Oh, you mean that even then they were like that?" You know, and so, uh, we, I don't know how we have lived till now, uh, and held on to who we are...

Liz: And what we believe in.

Fritzi: ...because we've had so, uh, so many, uh...

Liz: Enemies.

Fritzi: ...enemies and things placed in our path.

11:14:52:02

Liz: My concern is I cannot believe that even in this day and age, especially now, there's, uh, having, uh, uh, reading that the Nazis, uh, have formed a organization in some country and there's many people have joined it, and, uh I see the beginnings of everything that we had experienced in a new phase, and in a new phase it comes to me, uh, about Israel, that the Jews have finally found the land that God promised that they would have, and that I thought, uh, living in peace with Arabs they would be able to have a Jewish state so that no one could come in and kill the Jews because they didn't like them, uh, because they wouldn't follow a more prominent, uh, religion. I do not believe any one religion is better than the other. I don't care, and I know that it's not so. Whoever believes in a deity, God bless them, they...they should go ahead, but to ha-, to believe a...a...a deity is not to kill off another group that doesn't have your same kind of, uh, measures to reach the deity. And lately I see so much of that, and I read so much of the, uh, redemption of Nazi, uh, thinking and, uh, most of it is, when I read story after story that people say, "Oh, that never happened."

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: "The Holocaust never happened. Those were people that were sick and they went into camps and they died."

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: "None of the atrocities that have been built up." I really fear that in, I'm...I'm doing this program with you to my pleasure, but also in the hope that it...it will not die. When we die off, I don't want the next generation to believe that that was all make-believe, that all that didn't happen, that all didn't happen. It did happen, and I pray that it doesn't happen again. Whether it's to the Jewish people or to other people, that someone should come along and say, "I will

eradicate them and only make my religion the religion of the world," because if Hitler had won...

Fritzi: Yeah.

11:17:23:03

Liz: ...that's exactly what would have happened. We would have all been wiped out and the religion wouldn't be here any more. So I worry about that, and I pray that this episode in...in the world will not be forgotten, and that's why I'm happy to partake in this, to be amongst those that try to give the future generations some kind of idea that we have...have to be on alert and we have to not be prejudiced against the beliefs of others.

We're about ready to wrap up, but I wanna capture on film, just so I can be accurate, just if you can take each a minute to tell me a little bit about your family, your kids, your grandkids. I wanna be able to just know your story in brief in the years since, so if you could just take a minute to....

Liz: I don't need a minute. I can immediately answer you. I will burst forth like this. Now I'm like this, but...

Fritzi: [laughs]

11:18:34:17

Liz: ...when I think about my children, uh, they were very lucky to have, besides a father and myself, the influence of the grandparents who had escaped, and though they never walked around and moaned about losses that they had, they set up such an example to my children of what it is to be, uh, Jewish and to live a Jewish life, and to maintain your Judaism, uh, for eternity, and that there is a God, and we are one of the religions that worship God with our own, uh, you know, holidays and so forth and so on, never to condemn anyone who, uh, does differently, but this is our path. And, uh, so far, uh, I'm happy to say that my children, I have a son, Seth, and a daughter, Joyce, both of them are married, both of them have children, and both of them make me very, very happy when they phone and they say that they had a wonderful, uh, Seder for Passover or, uh, Hanukkah gifts, and I see through them that they are carrying on, uh, what is important to me is also important to them, and I only hope that will continue.

And how many grandchildren?

Liz: Uh, three grandchildren. Bright, very bright. Can't keep up with 'em, but that's good.

Fritzi: Well, I have, uh, three children, and, uh, yes, uh, they all.... Well, um, I'm gonna have a special birthday in May, and I have invited them to come, and they're gonna come, and, uh, uh, I have a special love with my daughter, and, uh, oh, on all the children, uh, and I have five grandchildren, and, uh, I have, uh, w-, one, uh, uh, a young, uh, son, and he, uh, is married to a very [laughs] religious girl, and so they have all their traditions, and, uh, my daughter also asks all of us for Passover, and, uh, the middle son is sort of a renegade and he [chuckles], he climbs mountains [laughs]...

Liz: That's his religion.

Fritzi: [laughs] That's his....

Liz: Climbs the highest mountains in the United States and elsewhere, I think.

Fritzi: And...and...

Liz: And he prays a lot so that he shouldn't fall down.

Fritzi: [laughs] That's my, uh...

Liz: Son.

1:21:27:09

Fritzi: ...son. And I'm unfortunate not to have my second husband, who, uh, died in 1993, and, uh, we were, uh, s-, like they say, soul mates because, uh, when we first met, he...he bought the, uh, song of, uh, Hebrew songs, and we danced, we had a good time, and then my other husband, my ex-husband is still living in Hawaii.

Liz: [whispers]

Fritzi: Hmm?

[inaudible]

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: He's got such a good hearing, this man.

No, sometimes Dave has a question or two.

Fritzi: Okay, sure.

Ask Dave if he's got any questions.

Liz: We've talked so much, I don't see how the poor guy [chuckles]...

But if he does, just [inaudible] like I asked the question.

Fritzi: Oh, okay.

Liz: Definitely. You're the question man.

Okay. 'Cause I rely on him to fill in what I forgot to ask.

Fritzi: I'm sorry if I, uh, looked up there.

No, no.

Fritzi: It's, uh....

You were fine.

Liz: She's not sorry.

Fritzi: [laughs]

You got anything? Dave: Just you mentioned, do you remember anything about the menus or the food service on the boat?

Fritzi: No.

11:22:45:22

Liz: Not I, because I never had any service...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...I never had any food. All I had was throwing up. [laughs]

Fritzi: You had those oranges [laughs].

Liz: I was a terrible passenger. I'm really sorry.

Fritzi: I...I don't remember the food.

Liz: But, you know, as a kid, and, uh, with all that was going on between the move, you know, it was wintertime, wasn't it?

Fritzi: No.

Liz: No?

Fritzi: It was in May.

Liz: Oh.

Fritzi: May or June.

Liz: Well, wha-, whenever it was, the...the boat was always jumping and bouncing and I, you know....

Fritzi: Uh, uh, I don't think children are interested in food, but I will tell you that at the camp, uh, the article in *The New York Times* said that all the children, they liked oatmeal but they did not like tomato juice.

Liz: [laughs]

Fritzi: So [chuckles]....

Liz: That was news in the *Times*...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...the children [inaudible] ...

Fritzi: *New York Times*.

11:23:37:12

Liz: I...I often wonder what, uh, instigated, uh, the, uh, initiation of, uh, this nice couple to...to want to go through all that. I mean, that to me is just impossible to, because it isn't just a money affair where you go over and you're gonna bring the kids [inaudible], but the worry about what's gonna happen to them, who's gonna take them, what's gonna be, and, you know, I'm just very sorry that there wasn't any connections carried on later, because what they did was really a miracle.

That is one question I had. While you were at the camp that summer for a couple of months, do you have any memories of the Krauses?

11:24:28:10

Liz: Little bit.

Fritzi: Yeah.

Liz: But remember, we were very young, very young, and, uh...

Fritzi: Well, mostly of the counselors, you know. They were maybe thirteen or fourteen years old, and, uh, uh...

Liz: They talked about the...

Fritzi: They talked about having dates with me [laughs].

Liz: No, no, no, I mean, of...of the person that brought us over.

Fritzi: No, I don't remember. Uh, I don't remember if he just visited the camp sometime, or, uh, was there. And it seems that I did read someplace where either on the boat or...or in the camp, we had services, uh, and s-, people attended, you know, the children attended service.

Liz: And did they mention him?

Fritzi: No.

Liz: Throughout that...

Fritzi: Maybe they had ban-, bar mitzvahs or something, I don't remember.

Liz: See, we were amongst the youngest....

[inaudible] There were a couple of brothers, and one of the brothers celebrated his bar mitzvah at the camp.

Liz: Camp.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

There's a photograph somewhere.

Fritzi: Yeah.

I've probably seen the same photograph.

Fritzi: Oh.

Liz: 'S wonderful.

Fritzi: Can I ask you, who is this, um, doctor of s-, some doctor, Blecker or...

[inaudible]

Fritzi: Pardon me?

Dr. Schleff?

11:25:59:20

Fritzi: No, uh, another doctor, and he lives in, um, New York, and he's the one that got in touch with us.

Tepper.

Fritzi: Tepper.

Liz: Tepper, yes.

Fritzi: Not Schlepper. Tepper.

Liz: [laughs] Very serious mispronunciation.

I have not met him yet...

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

...[inaudible] Tepper...

Fritzi: Yes.

He's somewhere in New Jersey...

Fritzi: Uh-huh.

...and he's still very much alive, and...

Fritzi: Uh-huh.

...he's also assembled a number of materials...

Liz: Yes. Well, tell him two...two people remember him very much, the sisters.

What do you remember about him?

Fritzi: Tepper? I don't remember anything about....

Oh, you just remember him from....

Liz: Yeah.

11:26:38:20

Fritzi: I just remembered, you know, my best friend, and then, uh, I remember that we had the professor, who a-, always knew everything and...

Liz: Oh, yes, a very smart...

Fritzi: ...uh, he was an intellect-, you know, high...

Liz: As a child.

Fritzi: ...as a child, and always wore his clothes on backward [chuckles].

Liz: Inside out, she means, not backward.

Fritzi: I...I don't know if you've contacted him.

I'm not quite sure who that is, but I'll be on the lookout for somebody who wore his clothes inside out.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I think he's learned since then [laughs].

I don't want to embarrass you, but I would love to have you tell me the story of being pinched in the photograph.

Fritzi: Oh.

Liz: Oh, oh, oh.

Fritzi: Well, uh...

Liz: He wants me to tell the story.

Fritzi: Oh, okay.

11:27:30:12

Liz: Uh, you, you've, uh, mentioned something about a picture that we had taken. I'm glad there were two, because the...the second one is better. It's not showing my bad behavior...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...and I hope that will be always used, but, you know, uh, I was spoiled, she spoiled me, and, uh, we were sitting and having a picture taken, uh, on the ship, I believe, and, uh, who p-, who pinched whom?

Fritzi: [laughs] She, uh....

Liz: Oh, I was the bad one.

Fritzi: But it wasn't just a pinch. It was a snip.

Liz: A snick! A snip.

Fritzi: A snip [inaudible]....

Liz: [inaudible]...

Fritzi: [inaudible] over the skin. But, you know, she's always been protective of me, and, uh, so I didn't look into the camera, so that's why she did it.

Liz: It is? Okay.

Fritzi: [laughs]

11:28:21:05

Liz: She didn't look into the camera, and I squeezed her she should look in the camera, and then she cried and some, one of those pictures are terrible 'cause everybody's smiling and she's crying.

Fritzi: Yeah.

Liz: And I was the culprit.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: But over the years I've learned...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...and I'm making up for that [laughs]. I'm making, I've been making up for my bad behavior...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...for fifty years now [laughs]. I think it's enough! [laughs]

Fritzi: I think she still has bad behavior [laughs].

Liz: [laughs] Not to be quoted. Where's my bad behavior?

Fritzi: No, no.

Liz: Give me back my money [laughs].

Fritzi: [laughs] Bad beha-....

Liz: If you have any more questions, we will gladly...

Fritzi: Uh, well, uh....

Liz: Send 'em to us, and we'll tape 'em and send back to you.

11:29:10:15

Fritzi: Oh, you know, um, uh, Steve, uh, she is like my mother, and I happen to have my father's personality, and...and that's, uh, and then we're together and that's why, uh, you know, these things have happened to her [laughs]. Uh, she....

Liz: What happened?

Fritzi: [laughs] No, uh, you know, she's a different personality than me. Uh, personality sometimes, uh, differ.

Liz: If you're like our father, where's your blue eyes and blond hair?

Fritzi: [laughs] No, I don't have that, but, uh, personality-wise. But still, you know, she saved my father, my mother, and...and all those things.

11:29:52:00

I realize I didn't ask you this. I know your father was Austrian, because you said he served in the army. Was your mother native Austrian?

Fritzi: Uh, both of them were not native. They came from Poland.

Liz: Yeah. As little children, I think.

Fritzi: Well, my mother, uh, was the tenth child of her father. We never saw the grandfather and grandmother.

Liz: He was a rabbi.

Fritzi: And, uh, and her mother died in childbirth, she always told us that. And, uh, when the w-, I don't know if the war ca-, the first World War or something happened, but all her sisters went to America, but my mother went to Vienna to be with one of her sisters there, because one sister was in Vienna, Austria. So, uh, that's why she emigrated to Vienna, and that's how, uh, my father was already there and that's how they met.

But both originally Polish?

Fritzi: Yes.

Both your parents.

Fritzi: Yes. [inaudible] childhood.

Liz: The other children....

Fritzi: The other children, uh, of my grandfather were...were not Polish, they were born in Vienna. There was two sisters and a brother born in Vienna.

Anything? Dave: I was wondering, you came to this camp, there were counselors, the counselors are teenagers....

11:31:25:15

Liz: No, they were a little older.

Fritzi: No, fourteen, fifteen.

Liz: Oh, really? Okay, I'm sorry.

[inaudible] speak?

Fritzi: Uh, I guess we spoke German.

Liz: Good question, though.

Fritzi: Yeah, very good.

But did the counselors speak German?

Fritzi: Uh, yes, they spoke to me, you know.

Liz: Well....

Fritzi: And then doctors came to examine us, uh, and they must have speak, spoken German.

Liz: It's a good question. I...I don't remember, uh, you know, the communication lines.

Fritzi: Oh, I forgot to tell you some...

Liz: Maybe someone was there to, uh, say what they were saying.

11:32:06:02

Fritzi: Elizabeth liked to play soccer with the boys [laughs], and, uh, uh, she gave 'em a good run for the money [laughs].

Liz: Yeah.

Fritzi: Yeah, because...

Liz: La-, later on I just gave 'em a run for the money...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...without the soccer, but....

Fritzi: No, no, uh, you know, uh, they played soccer. They didn't play baseball.

Liz: That's right.

Fritzi: They played soccer.

Liz: That's why she could never fine me, I was off playing soccer with the boys [laughs].

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: I didn't wanna do crochet and stuff.

Fritzi: No, no.

Liz: Can you get the picture of these kids with all their needs and being in a camp, and, uh, uh, I, this...this was some project, you know, all of them missing their families and.... Course when they were a little bit older, they were more adjusted, I think, uh, to a change. I don't know how many of their parents escaped, but, uh....

11:33:07:22

Fritzi: Well, we had a reunion, but not many people were there in Philadelphia. Elizabeth and I went about ten years ago, I think, and, uh, there was Inge Braunwasser was there, and then the, and then there was a man who lived in Philadelphia, you know him, and, uh, he has made, or his children have made a big picture, you know, of the fifty children, and his wife is very, uh, interested in this, uh, project, you know.

What was that like, going to that reunion? I didn't ask you that.

Fritzi: Well, uh, oh, well...

Liz: Don't remember...

Fritzi: Yeah, well, I'll, I remember. Uh, I have bad feet, so I was in a wheelchair [laughs], I think, part of the time, and, uh, Elizabeth was standing there and a man, uh, sort of wanted to have a drink with her [laughs], but this was not one of the children, and I have a picture o-, of the children, uh, that...that went to that, uh...

Liz: Reunion?

Fritzi: The reunion, yeah.

Liz: Oh.

Fritzi: And, uh, it was nice, uh, but I think, uh, a lot of them have passed on and so, and, uh, I...I would like to know if that man that lived in Philadelphia, do you know him?

Liz: Oh, you do?

Fritzi: And...and his wife? Very bright, and, uh, and, uh, we went to that temple with Lloyd, uh, Frank Lloyd Bright, you know...

Liz: Wright.

11:34:46:03

Fritzi: ...Wright built, and it was beautiful, and, uh, then we went up on the stage and...and told, uh, who we were and what we had done in our life, and all the people who had contributed, uh, their money or something, uh, uh, they, uh, they listened and they were very nice to us. And then we went home. [chuckles]

Yeah, I believe the gentleman you're referring to is a fellow named Kurt Herman.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm. And I have a picture of him.

Dave and I spent some time with him.

Fritzi: And his wife is wonderful.

[inaudible]

Liz: Well, were they able to remember things more so than we did? Because I was thinking, we were very young and those things really don't, uh, remain in your mind as much as when you're older, you know, the things that happened.

Yeah, Kurt is a couple of years older. I think Kurt was about ten or eleven.

Liz: Oh.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

He was sort of in the middle.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Liz: Is he well?

Quite well. Very active.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm.

He ended up being the president of the Brith Sholom chapter...

Fritzi: Ohhh.

...in Philadelphia.

Liz: Oh, and that's a...a home for the aged now?

Well, it's like a B'nai Brith, it's like a fraternal lodge.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Liz: No, I mean, the place where we stayed.

Oh, long gone. No longer....

Fritzi: Gone with the wind.

...unfortunately.

Liz: Really? They didn't....

No, Brith Sholom ended up building and maintaining kind of a retire, not a retirement but sort of a subsidized housing apartment.

Liz: I see.

And that's [inaudible] in Philadelphia. But the camp is gone, which I'm sad about 'cause I would've liked....

Liz: Oh.

Fritzi: Mm-hmm. You would've liked.

Liz: Well, what did it turn into, or...?

I have....

Fritzi: No.

I'm not quite sure. The Brith Sholom organization sold the property...

Liz: Oh, I see.

...in order to build this apartment [inaudible].

Liz: I see. I see.

Can you just look at each other?

11:36:52:13

Fritzi: [laughs]

But not, look as though you're [inaudible]....

Fritzi: Hi.

Liz: Yes, you gave very good answers.

Fritzi: You did, too. [laughs]

Liz: Was that enough?

Fritzi: Or do you want more?

Liz: You want more?

Fritzi: [laughs]

Don't lean in so much.

Fritzi: Me? Lean in?

Liz: Don't lean in, lean out.

Fritzi: [laughs] Hi.

Liz: Hi.

Fritzi: How are you?

Don't say anything.

Liz: Oh. [whispers]

Fritzi: [chuckles]

If I didn't like to hear you talk, what do you think? [laughter]

[the sisters whisper inaudibly]

Okay.

Liz: It's been very nice.

Fritzi: Yeah, very nice to be with you.

Liz: To be with you, too. ...the tales you tell about me.

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: None of them are true.

Fritzi: [laughs] You were just a very different child.

11:37:51:18

Liz: Difficult.

Fritzi: Difficult, yeah [laughs]. But I think that's what makes the, uh, uh, the story interesting...

Liz: True.

Fritzi: ...that we were of different kind of personalities [laughs].

Liz: Yeah. I was good, and you were....

Fritzi: [laughs] And after, should I tell about after we got the dolls from New York? [laughs]

Liz: I don't remember those dolls.

Fritzi: Oh [chuckles], okay.

Liz: What did we do, take their heads off?

Fritzi: No, no [laughs]. You did take the heads off in Vienna...

Liz: [laughs]

11:38:22:10

Fritzi: ...of my doll, 'cause you wanted to stand looking for Mother. She was outside.

Liz: [laughs] Horrible, horrible.

Fritzi: [laughs]

And after Dave is through, I'm also going to ask you to just remain for a minute, 'cause I wanna take some photographs.

Liz: Oh, boy.

Still, with a still camera.

Liz: You want the camera to break?

Fritzi: [laughs] I need plastic surgery [laughs].

Liz: Me, too.

Okay. So actually, one thing that I do need to do is I need to record just the sound of the room without anyone saying anything...

Fritzi: Okay.

...for about fifteen seconds, so just kind of hold your breath.

11:39:03:01

And room tone start. Okay.

Fritzi: Okay. [laughs]

Great.

Liz: Oh, did we do nearly as good as your other...

Fritzi: [laughs]

Liz: ...people, or...?

[end of recording]