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UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
FIRST PERSON: JILL PAULY

Remote CART

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>> Bill Benson: Good morning and welcome to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My name is Bill Benson. I am the host of the museum's public program, *First Person*. Thank you for joining us today. We are in our 15th year of the *First Person* program. Our *First Person* today is Mrs. Jill Pauly, whom we shall meet shortly.

This 2014 season of *First Person* is made possible through the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation, with additional support from the Helena Rubinstein Foundation. We are grateful for their support.

First Person is a series of twice weekly conversations with survivors of the Holocaust who share with us their firsthand accounts of their experience during the Holocaust. Each of our *First Person* guests serve as volunteers here at this museum. The museum's website, at www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests. Our 2014 program will end on August 14.

Anyone interested in keeping in touch with the museum and its programs can complete the Stay Connected card that you will find in your program today, or you can talk with a museum representative at the back of the theater when the program ends. In completing the Stay Connected card, you will receive an electronic copy of Jill Pauly's biography so that you can remember and share her testimony after you leave here today.

Jill will share with us her *First Person* account of her experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If we have time at the end of our program, we'll have an opportunity for you to ask Jill a few questions.

We have prepared a brief slide presentation to help with her introduction.

Jill Pauly was born Gisella Renate Berg on May 1, 1933 in Cologne, Germany. The arrow on this map points to the city of Cologne. Jill and her family lived in Lechenich, a small town outside of Cologne.

In this photo, Jill, who is in the middle and front, and her older sister, Inge, picnic in the Eifel Mountains in 1937 with her mother, Clara, and aunt and uncle. The Nazis came to power shortly before Jill was born, in 1933. On November 9, 1938, the Nazis carried out a nationwide pogrom against Germany's Jews, known as Kristallnacht, "The Night of Broken Glass." Alerted to the danger, Jill and her family fled to Cologne.

Jill's family decided to emigrate from Germany and in May 1939 they left for Kenya. In this photo we see Jill, who is on the right, and Inge, while on the German ship that took them on a two-week journey from Genoa, Italy to Mombasa.

Jill and her family lived in Kenya for the next seven years. Pictured here is a group portrait of Jill's immediate family on their farm in Kenya. Jill is in the middle, in front. This was taken in 1947 -- excuse me. In 1947, the Bergs came to the United States and settled in New Jersey. Jill and her husband Curt, who is also a Holocaust survivor, have lived in the Washington, DC area since 1974. I'm pleased to let you know that Curt is with us today as well. If you wouldn't mind waving your handled so people know you're down there. Jill and Curt have two children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Jill enjoyed a very successful career in real estate. She volunteers at the museum's donors desk where you will find her Monday mornings, where Jill says she meets such lovely people, which makes it so rewarding.

With that, I'd like to ask you to join me in welcoming our *First Person*, Mrs. Jill Pauly.

[Applause]

Jill, thank you so much for joining us and for your willingness today to be our *First Person*. We have an hour, and you have a lot to tell us, so I think we might as well get started immediately.

Jill, you told me that Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, was the catalyst for the decisions and directions that your family's life took for the balance of the Holocaust and the war. You were very young at that time, just 5 years of age. Before we turn to the events of the war and the Holocaust, tell us a little about your family and your community in the years leading up to the Holocaust.

>> Jill Pauly: Actually, the first story that I used to hear in the house of what was happening in Europe, my mother told me about my sister was born in, I believe, 1929 -- 1930. And the war broke out in 1939. My father had a cattle business, and the cattle was brought in from East Prussia, and housed in stables that were part of the enclosed backyard of the house we lived in.

He hired people who needed work, who were very low-level intelligent but could do the work that needed to be done to keep the stalls clean and keep the yard clean. He was out there, and one of his workers came and said to him, If I were you, Joe, you know what I would do? I would take this wheelbarrow, he points to a wheelbarrow, And I would put my wife and new baby in that wheelbarrow, and I would start walking, and I wouldn't stop until I was out of Germany.

My father said, Why are you saying this to me?

He said, I was invited last night to come to one of those meetings that they hold, and when I heard what they have in mind to do with you people, you better leave. You better not stay here. 1930.

He goes into the house and tells my mother this interchange, and she says, You know, Joe, there's one thing you can rely on: Little children and fools tell the truth. They don't know how to lie. What this man is telling you, take it to heart.

That was the beginning.

>> Bill Benson: That was the beginning.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, tell us, your family itself, you just recently, I think, learned that you can trace your family living there in that area in Germany back centuries. How far back does your family go?

>> Jill Pauly: The first relative, ancestor that I can find in several genealogies is 1699, around the same area we lived in.

>> Bill Benson: So 200 and --

>> Jill Pauly: The Rhineland at least.

>> Bill Benson: 200 years at least.

>> Jill Pauly: Longer.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: I won't do the math.

>> Jill Pauly: I didn't know that man.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: You mentioned your father was in the cattle business. In the years after the Nazis came to power in 1933, right before your birth, leading up to the events of Kristallnacht in 1938, what happened to your father's business during that time?

>> Jill Pauly: Interesting you ask me, because somebody sent me some papers from our hometown that he found in the archives, and amongst them was a copy of two letters, short little, they might have even been postcards, but they were copies of a notice from the government to my father, 1st of January 1937, that he had to stop the business, it could no longer function. Below it is another one of these statements, January 1, 1938, letting him know that everything that they own in the business now belongs to the state.

As a free American, it really rocked my boat. I mean, think about it. Maybe some of you have been living here also for 400 years or longer, and your ancestors had land or houses or whatever, and it now belongs to you or it will someday belong to you, and you get a note in the mail, Dear sir, whatever you own will now belong to the state. Pretty rough feeling. Pretty unreal. But it happened.

>> Bill Benson: I think even up to that point, you saw where, because of boycotts and things like that, that the revenue really dropped --

>> Jill Pauly: Oh, yeah, I saw that also, in a book. Where the income of the business, from one year to the next, dropped 50%, because I have to tell you there were some very righteous gentiles in our community, and I recently found out it was a Catholic community. I wouldn't have known that. They helped the family underground. They had an underground going, which was very dangerous, because their punishment would have been the same as the Jews.

They tried to help the family's business by taking their cattle to market for them and providing them with -- but that didn't work, of course, because if they had to close down in 1938, that was the end.

Then exactly at what time they decided to try -- well, they tried to get out of the country, but they started too late. By the time they got a number on which to get into the United States, when Kristallnacht happened, they immediately realized that was not going to happen, they wouldn't get out to the United States.

>> Bill Benson: By the time their quota number came up, too late?

>> Jill Pauly: Right, impossible. Sometime before Kristallnacht, I don't know when, I recently found out, Kenya was on the table.

>> Bill Benson: Before we come to that, let me ask you a couple other questions. Before Kristallnacht and those years before that, you were still too young to go to school, but your sister, Inge, was in school. Tell us a little about her experience, as best you know.

>> Jill Pauly: Well, you know, under the Hitler time, all the teachers had to be members of the Nazi party, and education was absolute. You had to go to school. Like all other Jewish children in Germany, the Jewish infrastructure wasn't such that they had Jewish schools in every small town or even big city, so a lot of the children had to go to school and were tormented, both by the teachers and their classmates.

Inge was very little. I think she was 6 1/2. She had just started school, and somebody called her names, probably "Bloody Jew" or whatever, and she gave the boy a bloody nose. And that was dangerous, very dangerous. So my parents had to take her out. What became custom, the

Jewish children were sent to relatives in bordering areas, where they could go to Jewish schools, but it had to be away from home. So she was with my grandmother in another town, but it was a Jewish teacher who had a schoolhouse for all the grades in one room.

>> Bill Benson: Like K through 12?

>> Jill Pauly: He was phenomenal. She got a terrific education. Then that group of relatives had to leave for Holland in 1937 because they couldn't make a living anymore. And Inge had to come back to the town where we lived, but by then she was old enough to commute to Cologne by train.

>> Bill Benson: By herself?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. She was always very independent. Then, when we ran away, she couldn't go -- oh, she went to school on Kristallnacht. You know, Kristallnacht was not publicized. It just happened.

>> Bill Benson: One more question before we get to that. You told me that keeping kosher was, of course, strictly forbidden, banned by the Nazis, but your family continued to do so at considerable risk. Tell us how they did that.

>> Jill Pauly: Well, when people go up to see the main exhibit you will see something that -- rolls that has all the laws, the Nuremberg Laws against the Jews, and kosher killing was one of them. Being in the cattle business, three of the uncles were kosher slaughterers, certified slaughterers. She decided they weren't going to obey the law. Maybe they wouldn't sell the meat, but for ourselves we were going to keep kosher. Terribly dangerous. One of the uncles had, would you call it an abattoir, where the kosher killing was done of the big cattle. I went back there two years ago to find it, the area.

He decided he was going to kill a big animal, and the neighbors next door were really Nazis and watched them very closely. So he decided to go inside the room. He did the kosher killing with

the prescribed knife, then he took a gun and shot him to the head so that the neighbors would think he was shooting the animal.

>> Bill Benson: And kept the knives hidden, as I recall.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes, strapped inside the chimney of our house. He didn't live in our house. We were raided twice. We were given away. That was their defiance. They really had to have something to hit back with, in a quiet way.

There were other things they couldn't do anymore, but they weren't quite as strong.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, of course, you started to tell us about Kristallnacht. Tell us about Kristallnacht and what it meant for your family.

>> Jill Pauly: Well, I think what the audience has to understand is that for the German Jews the Holocaust started in January 1933, when Hitler came to power, because by March 1933, Buchenwald, what's the other big one?

>> Bill Benson: Dachau?

>> Jill Pauly: Dachau and Sachsenhausen were opened. They were not used primarily at that time for Jewish people, but for enemies of the state, whoever fell under that. They were known to be extremely, extremely cruel. And people did die there, but it wasn't a systematic destruction like what came later.

The family knew about those camps. Everybody knew about them. There was something that went on that you could actually feel. As a 6-year-old, I saw a man who came out of Dachau. He had been arrested and let out. The Germans threatened anyone that they let out of the camps alive, that if they told anyone what was going on in the camps, they would come after them and kill them.

So whenever camps were spoken about when I was little was in a whisper. They knew -- they just had to have whatever it is, faith or confidence that they wouldn't be doing anything to end up in one of those places. They were not as active as later, but they were operational.

Where was I?

>> Bill Benson: Starting to tell us about Kristallnacht.

>> Jill Pauly: Kristallnacht. By the time Kristallnacht came, I was 5 1/2.

>> Bill Benson: That was November 1938?

>> Jill Pauly: 1938. For some reason, which I never knew, I was sitting in a living room, in our family living room with my grandparents, which was a room never used during the week. We only went there on the sabbath. So we had time to sit there, whatever they were doing. It was on a higher level than the kitchen.

I was sitting on a stool, and I can see my father going to the front door, and I remember that he was wearing dark pants and a white shirt, which he didn't wear unless he went to synagogue in the mornings or the afternoons.

He went to the front door. There was a knock on the door. And it was a gentile man that he knew who told him, You can't go to the synagogue today. Nor can your father or your brother. Do not go to the synagogue.

He said why? He didn't know anything.

The man said, I can't tell you why. I don't know why, but just don't. Terrible things are going to happen. Don't go there.

Well, that frightened us terribly. And he started making phone calls, trying to find out what was happening. It didn't take long, and he found out that the synagogues were being burned and that people were being arrested. There were seven people in the house. They started screaming. They didn't know what to do, didn't know where to go.

My grandmother decided we're running away, we're not staying in the house. Get the drivers, get somebody, we're running away. We had a car or two, but I don't know, it wasn't there, and -- or another family member was using the car.

There were lots of phone calls. Then a man came and picked us up, my grandmother, my grandfather and two children. We got in the car. The minute my sister and I walked out the front door, we smelled smoke, and it was gray, and it was maybe 11:00, 11:30. We got petrified. We started screaming. I think we saw the flames of the synagogue. It was only a block and a half away. We smelled the smoke for sure.

Being separated from our mother, we started to scream. We were terrified. So my grandmother took us into the car and made us facedown on the bed of the car, and she put her feet on us. She was about 5'2", weighed about 250 pounds, and she had a cast on her leg. She had a broken leg. She was very resolute, my grandmother. She really had it.

My grandfather got in the car and put his feet on me. So that we couldn't get up and we couldn't look out of the windows, and we couldn't see flames, because that terrorized us. That way we were taken into Cologne. Just before we -- just as we got into Cologne, she let us get up. And for the first time, I saw a Nazi flag. Can you imagine? For 5 1/2 years they kept me under wraps in the house, and I had never seen a Nazi flag.

>> Bill Benson: That was the first time you saw that?

>> Jill Pauly: First time I saw one. I thought it was very pretty. I liked the colors. And they were hanging all over. You know, the buildings looked gray, and here are these gorgeous red flags with white and black on them. Very impressive. About 50 years later, on Clinton's inauguration evening, we had theater tickets in Washington. We're driving down along the Constitution or one of these avenues, and I see the flags in the dark, and I lost my breath. I just -- it was a flash. It was a flashback of these flags. And that happens, you know. You have these memories that come back.

>> Bill Benson: You will see something that evokes that memory?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. We got out of the car in Cologne. We went into an apartment building where my mother's retired brothers and sister were living. They lived in a little town somewhere and sold everything, and we called them pensioners. They were retired. The apartment had room for them, and within five minutes it had room for 12 people. That's without the men of the family.

>> Bill Benson: Just the women?

>> Jill Pauly: Just some of the women. My mother, my grandmother. The grandparents that were in the car with us, my father's parents, they were put in a pension for elderly people, and that was good because they had food. We, as a group, had a food shortage. It didn't bother me. I don't remember being hungry ever, but my sister tells me that we had great problems getting food on the table.

Jews, by then, were not allowed to go to the stores and shop like other people. They had to wait until 4:00 in the afternoon. By then, they were also afraid of going shopping. There wasn't much left on the shelves.

I know that my mother, for food, would get on the train and go back to Lechenich where she had some friends who helped her. She told me when she went back to this one store where the man was willing to help her, he told her, If you hear the door, you have to dive under this place and sit there until they leave. In other words, he hid her --

>> Bill Benson: The shopkeeper hid her?

>> Jill Pauly: The shopkeeper hid her. That's why she went back, because she knew the shopkeeper.

There was one woman, she was a maid for some wealthy people in town, and had known the family like for the 300 years. I think she was already alive then.

[Laughter]

That's how long the relationship went back. She brought my uncle a chicken in a basket. Have I ever talked about that?

>> Bill Benson: I don't remember this one, I don't think.

>> Jill Pauly: Every Friday, she brought my uncle a live chicken to Cologne for him to slaughter in the apartment, so there'd be food for the sabbath. Do you know what a risk she took? Do you know how she kept the chicken quiet?

>> Bill Benson: Tell us.

>> Jill Pauly: She put its head under its wing. If you do that, the chicken will sit quietly.

[Laughter]

That's how chickens sleep. And she put a blanket over it. It never cackled, not once. 40 years later, my mother sent me to thank her.

>> Bill Benson: Is that right?

>> Jill Pauly: She said, But that was then. You don't have to thank me. That was just something I wanted to do.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, while you're at your aunt's house in Cologne, tell us where your father had gone.

>> Jill Pauly: Oh, on Kristallnacht, the main focus of the onslaught was on the men. She wanted to arrest the men, and they did; 30,000 Jewish men were put in concentration camps. You have to realize that was a huge percentage, because half of the Jews of Germany by then had left. So it was maybe 15% to 20% of the Jewish men were incarcerated in concentration camps.

>> Bill Benson: Essentially over a 24-hour period?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. In order to avoid that, the men got in the family car, there were five of them, and kept driving for 24 hours, and then they went into the woods, and they came out just before the sabbath in Cologne.

That weekend, my father decided we were going to go into hiding, like Anne Frank's parents, in an attic. I found out since then from the living relative that the attic was in the house where we were living. We went up there for one or two nights, and Inge had screaming nightmares. So that didn't work. Thank God it didn't work.

A day later, on Sunday, after the sabbath, three of the five men decided they're getting out of Germany even if they have to walk. But they drove. We only lived one hour by car from Fenlow, in Holland. So they drove back and got gasoline at a station in Lechenich where they knew the attendant wouldn't give them away, and they drove into Holland. 40 years later, a woman came up to

me in Germany, and said, I saw your father at a gas station on Kristallnacht. What was he doing there?

I said, Well, I presume he was getting gasoline. I don't know.

When I thought about it, that little girl was 10 years old. She could have given him away, and she didn't.

>> Bill Benson: So they got their gas and took off and went to Holland?

>> Jill Pauly: Went into Holland and were arrested. They were put into prison. The man who was running the prison, I don't know if any of you know the history of Holland during the war, there were quite a lot of Dutch Nazis, and he was one of them. He was all set to send them back to Germany. They would have gone straight to the camps. But one of the uncles that was living there since 1937 was -- what do you call those people? He helped people. He was busy being a -- oh, it's on my tongue. I can't think of it. He helped people.

He went to the prison. He saw them. He spoke to this Nazi guy, and he said to him, What are you going to do with these men? He said, I'm going to send them back to Germany. He said, You can't do that. He said, Yes, I can. By tomorrow morning, they're going back.

So he ran -- he made a few phone calls and was told to go to the Hague and get -- that there was a law that he could not send anyone back to Germany without written authorization.

>> Bill Benson: From the Dutch government?

>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. And the guy didn't have that. So he went to The Hague, and there was this Jewish man in Rarmont, the advisor to Queen Wilhelmina.

>> Bill Benson: An advisor?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. He said get a lawyer, get papers. He did, they signed the papers, and they were allowed to stay in a detention camp in Holland.

>> Bill Benson: At the time with no threat of going back to Germany after that?

>> Jill Pauly: Right. It was all done within 24 hours, with the right connections. Luckily.

>> Bill Benson: So here we have you're in Cologne with many of your family members, immediate family members. Your father and his brother --

>> Jill Pauly: Uncles.

>> Bill Benson: Now in a detention camp. To some extent, your grandmother is driving this. The family makes the decision that you have got to leave Germany now. That's what brought about this decision to end up -- that led you to Kenya. Tell us how that came about.

>> Jill Pauly: The whole thing is a miracle really. One of the women who was married to a Berg, I was a Berg, had a little boy of 18 months, and they lived up the street from us in Lechenich. It seems she was determined to get out of Germany. Absolutely determined to leave. And Kenya had been spoken about, East Africa.

>> Bill Benson: And America you couldn't get into because the quota was not going to come up.

>> Jill Pauly: Couldn't get in anywhere. Oh, there was a scam going on, I think during that time, after Kristallnacht, where people thought they could get into Uruguay and you had to pay a lot of money to get tickets or whatever, and they were very careful they didn't give the guy their money because it was a scam. So people were desperately trying to get out.

This woman was determined to get out. She also risked her life. She went to the telephone, which was at the train station, every day for months, and an uncle, another uncle had to go with her and stand guard, because it was forbidden.

>> Bill Benson: To use the phone?

>> Jill Pauly: To use the phone. She called England. She had a cousin in England, his name was Kosi Strauss. This I just learned about six months ago. I got 58 pages, copies of letters between this man and my family which were donated to the Holocaust Museum in London, and we got the copies, because --

>> Bill Benson: Within the last few months?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. I was too young. I knew all about it, but I was too little to know details. She called him, and Strauss was a man, German Jewish, went to university in Germany, and happened to hear Hitler on a street corner in Munich during his university days. He decided he had to get out of Germany ASAP.

He went to Birmingham, England, and his sideline was helping Jewish people get out. She forgot to tell him that my grandmother got the money out, the family money was smuggled out of Germany the day I was born, into Holland. My grandmother would not allow any of the business money left in the banks in Germany. She didn't trust them.

It took money in Holland to save them, not to be sent back. That took money. The money was in Holland. Now I lost my train of thought.

>> Bill Benson: You're telling us how Kosi Strauss --

>> Jill Pauly: Yeah, she was his cousin. She bugged him. I have to tell you, she bugged him.

>> Bill Benson: As you found in these letters?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. They needed to get out, and could he please help them get into Kenya. His brother had been brought out by him early, studied law in England. Kenya was a British protectorate, and he got a job with a prestigious law firm in Nairobi, Kenya. So he had the contact in Kenya. And that's when the fun began.

We had 12 people in Germany. We had seven people in Holland. And she had a whole family she wanted to help. And naturally, my family felt if this man is going to help us, then she has the right to help her family, and it gets to be unbelievable mess, because communicating the three men in the detention camp weren't allowed to do anything. They were out of it. I had two uncles in Holland who were the interlopers between the ones, and they had to get permission that their money could be used for whatever he needed to use it for.

When you read the letters, and I just read them recently, my life wasn't hanging on a string, it was hanging on a cobweb. Because, the British loosened up a little bit to let Jews in after Kristallnacht, but their rules and regulations did not change. They wanted to let in white people who had farming background. They had a motive.

>> Bill Benson: Into Kenya, not Britain, Kenya?

>> Jill Pauly: Into Kenya. They had a motive. They wanted the white farmers to settle the highlands to keep it within the British interests. And they wanted to know if the family members were farmers. The guy wrote yes, we were cattle dealers and farmers. But they were so strict about their criteria that the family was afraid they wouldn't let us in, because they really weren't hoeing fields, they were country people and cattle dealers and they did have farms --

>> Bill Benson: But not raising crops and things like that.

>> Jill Pauly: Right. So it was touch and go. Of course, again, we didn't have people in Kenya who could vouch for us. Nobody knew us there.

>> Bill Benson: Right.

>> Jill Pauly: There was a Jewish community that worked very hard on behalf of the incoming refugees, but their background was they were Anglicized and came from East European Jews that came to Kenya around 1900.

So luck be it, this guy Herman, who was in Kenya, had brought over his sister and her husband and put them on a farm, and I think that the husband must have gone through some farming school to get permission to come. She -- I'm making a long story very short. She went to Nairobi and -- what do you call that? She swore in front of the court that she knew us, and that we were decent people and we would not become a burden to the state, and that we were farmers. She didn't know us. She heard of us. She was Rose's sister-in-law, the woman I said wanted to get out.

OK. Then the British government said they wanted lists of names. And I see in these letters the list of names. There were a lot of names. Unfortunately, 1/3 of them were over 70, and they were out immediately.

>> Bill Benson: So the English did not want people over the age of 70?

>> Jill Pauly: Only people who could work and could swear they would not become a burden on the state. OK, so some of them are -- the ones taken off the list didn't make it. They all died in the camps. And when I finish, I'll tell you what happened to this aunt of mine who got us all out. I think her brother or cousin was also on our family list, naturally, OK.

To make a long story short, in March 1939, the Berg family got permission to go to Kenya. We were accepted by the British. And we left -- we didn't leave in May, we left middle of June, about eight weeks before the war broke out.

>> Bill Benson: That was an important point for the audience to know. The war had not yet begun. That would be September 1939. So Britain was not at war with Germany at the time. So you could travel.

>> Jill Pauly: Right. But when we traveled, we had to travel according to the Nazi permission, and that was very dangerous in Germany, for some reason very dangerous in Germany. Not so dangerous on the ship, but very uncomfortable on the ship.

>> Bill Benson: Before you continue, I know our time is starting to get short, I can't remember now but I think it was 20-some affidavits that you got, or permits to allow the family to go.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: There was a substantial price for each of those.

>> Jill Pauly: Just for the entry, to allow us to come in as a security deposit, 50 British pounds a head.

>> Bill Benson: In 1939 money.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. That was a huge amount of money.

>> Bill Benson: Per person. So 20-some --

>> Jill Pauly: They sent 21. And 19 were used.

>> Bill Benson: I think you told me that as things got more desperate, that rate went up eventually to 250 pounds.

>> Jill Pauly: For a while. Then they lowered it again. Because nobody would have gotten in.

>> Bill Benson: Right. There's quite a story about the arrangements and how you were able to get out, but now you are headed for Kenya on the ship. You said that that was -- tell us about that.

>> Jill Pauly: Well, I was very happy on the ship. That's the first time I saw -- I felt freer than I had ever felt in my little life. I was all over the ship. I saw pretty, sunny sky, blue water, and the Nazis didn't particularly bother me. I was not concerned about it.

>> Bill Benson: It was a German ship?

>> Jill Pauly: It was a Nazi ship, and they certainly bothered my mother. We were not free. We were under very strict supervision. Also, on the train from Cologne to Genoa was the fear of them throwing some of the passengers off the train. That could have meant being separated from my mother.

So before we left Cologne, she gave me a lecture, and I think that's the point where I lost my childhood. I had to learn to understand that that could happen.

We got on the train. I remember saying goodbye. That was horrendous, my mother's separation from some of these people. I don't remember it. My sister said there were 60 relatives at the train seeing us off. My mother said she knew right then and there that she'd never see them again. She didn't know about the final solution, but she knew under the circumstances --

>> Bill Benson: And they all perished?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. On the train she told us we could not go to the bathroom, we could not ask for food, we certainly couldn't quarrel, and we just had to sit quietly until we got out of Germany. To me that was like sitting there for six weeks. I didn't know what three hours was.

So I remember sitting there, sucking my thumb. I remember my position where I was sitting. My grandmother was on one side, and Inge and my mother on the other, and the rest of the family had other compartments. The lady who got us out, Rosal, her 18-month-old was in absolute terror. She gave him whiskey.

[Laughter]

I didn't know how she got that out of Germany. My mother told me later on she anesthetized him, she kept him sleeping with whiskey.

>> Bill Benson: On the ship you had this -- I know I'm fast forwarding a little bit here. As you said, you're under the supervision, it's a Nazi ship, and your mother had a very scary moment when the officer, the captain, heard you singing. Tell us about that.

>> Jill Pauly: When I was free, I sang. I was always singing. I love music. On the ship I was free, so I sang. But I didn't know that I was singing to a point where I could be overheard. I was singing to myself. I was overheard.

The captain of the ship asked my mother, she was terrified when she was called to the captain, and asked her if I could sing for the crew. Well, she couldn't say no. She had a problem. It had just been Passover in April, and the relatives we lived with, one of the uncles was an opera singer with a magnificent voice , and the other one, his brother, also had a magnificent voice. I loved to sing with them. They taught me to sing the whole Passover Haggadah. It kept me busy. It kept me going. And when I got on the ship that was still fresh in my mind, and I gave her a hard time with the Red Sea. I wanted to see when we got into the Red Sea. I wanted to see that. The Red Sea isn't red.

[Laughter]

I insisted on staying up to see that. She let me. I was very disappointed I didn't see the Red Sea.

>> Bill Benson: Her fear is you're going to sing these songs that you had sung for Passover before the Nazis.

>> Jill Pauly: Because I had no differentiation. My grandmother taught me all these German folksongs when I was little. Here I knew. Haggadah, which was lovely. She didn't want me to sing that in front of the crew.

I remember the two aunts and two grandmothers in the cabin with me teaching me overnight to separate the two, and I understood enough that I only sang the German folksongs. I must have done well, because the person was still living, she's 96, she said, You didn't do it once; you did it every single night for the two weeks we were on the ship. I don't remember that.

I do remember there was a spy on the ship who tried to get information out of my sister and I. He followed us around, and the women were afraid of him. So they posted themselves all over the ship to watch us when we were with this man. He came every day to take us for a walk. He asked us questions, and we said we didn't know, because we didn't. Luckily, we didn't know.

>> Bill Benson: You eventually make this trip and get to Kenya.

>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. That was fun.

>> Bill Benson: Tell us about Kenya.

>> Jill Pauly: In a nutshell?

>> Bill Benson: In a nutshell. You would spend the rest of the war years living in Kenya.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. I loved -- my parents, the family had enough money left when they got there to pool their resources, to put a deposit on a farm of their own. The other refugees had to work for the British on their farms way out in the bush. We were 20 miles outside of Nairobi, and they bought a cattle farm and farmed pyrethrum. They learned how to do it very fast, because they had a lot of the indigenous Kenyans who worked on the farm who taught them. They taught us Swahili, they taught us how to farm. They were fantastic people. I grew up with them, and I was very sad, and have been always, that I was separated from them. I loved them.

We had a wonderful relationship, and I learned to speak Swahili and English within three months. I didn't have any immersion classes. I had teachers who told us we were going to come back Monday morning singing English songs, and we had to perform.

>> Bill Benson: Didn't you have to immediately learn and sing "God Save the Queen"?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. Over a weekend. The teachers were very, very anti immigrant children. They hated that, because it was difficult, to have children in their class who didn't understand them.

Later on in my school experience, I had two anti-Semitic, really anti-Semitic teachers. I was the only Jewish child in the lower part of the school. We were observant, and that made it very hard for me. Otherwise, I loved Kenya. My family loved Kenya. Did well there.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, despite loving it, when you landed, of course --

>> Jill Pauly: Oh, there were problems, yes.

>> Bill Benson: It's a British colony.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: To me one of the supreme ironies is here you are allowed to go there by the British, it's their territory, but you are immediately labeled enemy aliens.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: You have to explain that for us.

>> Jill Pauly: It's when the war broke out. Broke out six weeks after we got to Kenya, or a month, something like that. The first thing that happened is that the British came to pick up all the men and inter them in a camp.

My grandmother told them, Fine, you can take my husband, but you will have to take me with him, because I'm his caretaker. So they left the grandfather. They got out very quickly, because they had bought the farm. They were in for a week, but the other men were in there for long, long time, until they were able to get jobs far away from Nairobi with British people.

We remained enemy aliens for the duration of the war --

>> Bill Benson: That was because you were German by birth? That's why you were an enemy alien, because you were German nationality?

>> Jill Pauly: No.

>> Bill Benson: Why were you an enemy alien?

>> Jill Pauly: Well, I found out. The Germans were stealing Jewish identities and using them to sneak into Allied countries. So that's why the British had to treat us that way.

>> Bill Benson: Coming in as spies?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. Someone could have been a spy, and they didn't know one from the other, and their motive was to send these German Jews as far away from Nairobi as they could, into the bush. If

you haven't seen "Nowhere in Africa," it's on Netflix, and that's the story of my childhood in Kenya. It's not exactly the same, but it's very similar. The difference is my family were observant Jews, we observed everything we could, and we did, and this little girl's family was not observant. So there were some differences. Her family was not successful. My family was very successful. Her father was a lawyer. He didn't know -- I don't know how he got into Kenya. He wasn't a farmer. Didn't know one end of the cow from another.

[Laughter]

I'm wondering how some of these refugees later on got in and they weren't farmers.

>> Bill Benson: Maybe represented farmers?

>> Jill Pauly: Maybe.

>> Bill Benson: So Jill, during that time, those years that you were in Kenya during the war, and of course as you said the war broke out shortly after you got there, did your family have any real idea what was taking place in Germany, and was there any ability to communicate with any family members?

>> Jill Pauly: We got some letters, until 1941, and one letter we got that to this Rose from one of her relatives, and when they sat and read this letter they realized that between the lines she was telling them that they were not living in their homes, and that they were hungry. And, interestingly enough, my sister, who translates for the museum, got letters, a packet from Cologne to translate two years ago, wherein we read exactly what was happening, because the woman was writing to her daughter in America, who had gotten out early.

With the knowledge that we had, and with what we read in the letters, we realized that they were very hungry. After the war broke out, in 1939, by 1940 they removed the Jewish people from their homes and put them in Jew houses, they created ghettos. So we were able to glean a lot of information out of these letters that came to the museum as a donation. Because we don't know what happened to our people. We surmised, and we find information in the database upstairs.

My husband, who is sitting here, who is related to the Anne Frank family, found out that his grandfather was murdered in Midanak, and we didn't know this, until a couple years ago.

>> Bill Benson: Until recently.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. You know, survivors are always searching, and we find things.

>> Bill Benson: To this day? All these years later?

>> Jill Pauly: To this day, yes.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, you said that you and your family loved Kenya. Your family was very successful. But yet, you left Kenya.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: Tell us why.

>> Jill Pauly: When we arrived, my grandfather was living and was used to taking a daily walk. He was a little man, he puts on his German uniform, his little jacket and pants and bow tie, he goes for a walk on this 500-acre farm, walking around. He gets to a certain place, and he sees that there's a black man who's created himself a home on our property. He said to him, You can't live here. We just bought this place.

He said, You can't live here either. This is my land.

So he came home, he told his sons, This is a temporary haven. We can't live here. This is not our land. This is the black people's country. And there will be an upheaval.

My father knew there would be. And he didn't want -- he loved that -- he would have stayed forever. He loved it. But he knew he couldn't. And he picked the United States. He had tried to get into the United States for 13 years. It took that long.

>> Bill Benson: It took that long.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: Eventually the family did make it to the United States. You moved here and began a farming career all over again, right?

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. Not as successfully as in Kenya, but you have to realize it was a third beginning, and by then they were in their 50s.

>> Bill Benson: Starting all over again.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, before we close, you were invited, just recently, 2012, I think, you were invited to go back to Lechenich, your hometown in Germany. Tell us, what that was like for you.

>> Jill Pauly: I've been in Germany before. And you know, I have no connections there. There were no roots. There were no -- nothing. People are like people everywhere, and you see pretty sceneries and nice buildings, but there's something about living in your home and being connected to your parents who have passed away, who are in cemeteries that you know, and having children and grandchildren. None of that exists for me in Germany. The people are nice enough, but I find it a very cold -- for me, it's a very cold place.

I tried to get into a cemetery where the ancestors are buried, and I couldn't get in. And I tried to get into the home that's still standing where we lived, and the woman wouldn't let us in.

>> Bill Benson: She wouldn't let you come into the home?

>> Jill Pauly: No, she wouldn't let us in. Other than that, the people are very gracious and very nice. But I simply don't have any interest to go back.

>> Bill Benson: Another place you lived, of course, in Kenya, and I think you've recently reconnected with the Jewish community in Nairobi.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes, I did for a while. I don't know if they're still living, but I was connected for a little while.

>> Bill Benson: OK.

>> Jill Pauly: But most of the people that we were in friendship with or connection with also left Kenya. Sooner or later. Most of them went to Israel.

>> Bill Benson: Jill, I think we're close to closing our program, and I'm going to turn back to Jill in just a moment. I want first to thank all of you for being here for our *First Person* program. We have two more programs in 2014, next Wednesday and Thursday. The museum's website will have information about our program in 2015. So please, if your travels bring you back to Washington, DC or if you live locally, come back to another *First Person* program.

It's our tradition at *First Person* that our *First Person* has the last word. So I'm going to turn back to Jill to close the program in just a moment. But first, two things. One, because we didn't have a chance for you to ask Jill questions, when she's done, she'll step off the stage. If anybody wants to

come ask her a question, or just say hi, shake her hand, give her a hug, feel free to do that. Jill will be here.

When Jill is finished, I'm going to ask you all to stand, because our photographer, Joel, is going to come up on stage and take a photograph of Jill with you as the backdrop. That makes for a very nice picture. We'll do that.

On that note, Jill?

>> Jill Pauly: My last word?

>> Bill Benson: Your last word.

>> Jill Pauly: You know, what I spoke about today is really the very beginning, like a pregnancy in its first six week, or a disaster. When you go through this museum, the horrors and the awful conditions of people for the next five or six years were horrendous. All you have to do is just think about one person who is in a concentration camp, who is alive, who follows the regime, whatever that regime was, and what they must have been thinking and what would happen to them in any given moment, at any given time.

I'm not speaking of one that went to the gas chambers. I'm speaking of one who survived, who came out at the other end. And then when you do that, when you bring it down to a single person, you get so much better a feeling of what it was really all about. When you go through your life on a daily basis and you plan, "I'm going to the beauty parlor, I'm going to the market and I'm going to call my son, now I'm going to send a gift to someone." What did these poor people have to think about, and why? Simply because of their faith? It makes you think that mankind is mad. They certainly were mad at that time.

That's why I work here, to memorialize those people, many, many hundreds of whom were my family. They can't speak. They've never been able to speak or contact a soul. We're the only ones left that can speak on their behalf. So, like we come here and do this work, which is not easy, because you never adapt, for you to come here and visit, this is just the beginning of learning. It's a huge history. It's an important history to the American People. Otherwise, it wouldn't be here.

With that, I close.

[Applause]

>> Bill Benson: If I can get you all to stand, please.

[Ended at 12:00 p.m.]