REALTIME FILE

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FIRST PERSON: CONVERSATIONS WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
FIRST PERSON JILL PAULY
APRIL 11, 2018

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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*. We are in our 19th year of the *First Person* program. Thank you for joining us. Our First Person today is Mrs. Jill Pauly, whom you shall meet shortly.

This 2018 season of *First Person* is made possible by the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation, with additional funding from the Arlene and Daniel Fisher Foundation. We are grateful for their sponsorship. I'm pleased to let you know Mr. Louis Smith is here with us today in the front row.

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 serves as a volunteer here at this museum. Our program will continue through mid-August. The museum's website, at www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests.

Jill will share with us her First Person account of her experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If time allows, we will have an opportunity for you to ask Jill a few questions. If we do not get to your question today, please join us in our on-line conversation: Never Stop Asking Why. The conversation aims to inspire individuals and

new generations to ask the important questions that Holocaust history raises, and what this history means for societies today. To join the Never Stop Asking Why conversation, you can ask your question and tag the museum on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram using @holocaustmuseum and #AskWhy. You can find the hashtag on the back of your program, as well.

Today's program will be livestreamed on the museum's website. This means people will be joining the program via a link from the museum's website and watching with us today from across the country and around the world. A recording of this program will be made available on the museum's YouTube page. And we invite those who are here in the audience today to also join us on the web for our *First Person* program streams throughout the month of April. Please visit the *First Person* website, listed on the back of your program, for more details.

What you are about to hear from Jill is one individual's account of the Holocaust. 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 the map points to the location of the city of Cologne. Jill and her family lived in Lechenich, a small town outside of Cologne.

The Nazis came to power shortly before Jill was born in 1933. In this photo, Jill (who is on the right) and her older sister, Inge, picnic in the Eifel Mountains in 1937 with their mother, Clara, and their aunt and uncle. On November 9, 1938, the Nazis carried out a nationwide pogrom against Germany's Jews, known as Kristallnacht or "The Night of Broken Glass." Alerted to the danger, Jill and her family fled to Cologne. This is an historical photo of Germans passing by a vandalized store of a Jewish shopkeeper.

Jill's family decided to emigrate from Germany and in June of 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 extended family on their farm in Kenya. Jill is in the middle between her grandparents. Behind Jill, from your left to right, are her uncle, sister, Inge, and her mother and father. In 1947 the Bergs came to the United States and settled in New Jersey.

Jill and her husband, Kurt, who is also a Holocaust survivor, had lived in the Washington, DC, area since 1974 but in 2016 moved to Long Island to be closer to their children. I am pleased to let you know that Kurt, who is in the front row next to Mr. Louis Smith, will be our First Person tomorrow.

Jill and Kurt have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren who are 10 and 2 years old.

Jill enjoyed a very successful career in real estate. She became active as a volunteer with this museum in 1992 before it opened. She was to be found weekly at the museum's Donors Desk until the Paulys move to Long Island. Since moving to New York she has spoken publicly on behalf of the museum several times including at the United Nations for the opening of the museum's traveling exhibit on Propaganda.

With that, I would like you to join me in welcoming our First Person, Jill Pauly.

>> [Applause]

>> Bill Benson: Jill, thank you so much for joining us and agreeing to be our *First Person* today. We're so glad you made the trip down from New York.

You have a lot to share with us in a pretty short period, so we'll get started. You told

me that Kristallnacht, which took place in November 1938, was the catalyst for the decisions and direction that your family's life took during the Holocaust and the war. You were very young at that time, just 5 years of age. Let's begin with you telling us a bit about your family during the war and during the events that led up to Kristallnacht, your early years for you and your family.
>> Jill Pauly: The only history I can really tell you about what was going on before Kristallnacht is what I heard from my parents. I do know that they kept me in the house for five and a half years. I didn't go to nursery school. I didn't go to kindergarten. I wasn't even allowed to play with neighborhood children. Yes, because of the Nazis. They were not allowed to play with Jewish children because they were not Jewish and I was not allowed to play with them because children talk. And part of might family's survival was based on secrecy. They did things they did not want anything about their lifestyle or their behavior to get outside the four walls of the house. And it was a chatter box.
>> Bill Benson: You were the chatter box.
>> Jill Pauly: I was a chatter box. And I had no company. I was socially -- children need other children.
>> Bill Benson: Tell us about your parents.
>> Jill Pauly: My parents?
>> Bill Benson: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about them.
>> Jill Pauly: My father was a descendant of Jews that my grandmother told me the roots of the family left Spain during the Inquisition and moved their way north. Whether they lived in Italy on the way I don't know. Maybe. They landed up in Germany. No, they landed up in Holland from Spain. We don't know -- I don't have the history other than what she told me. And from Spain they wandered over to Germany and lived in a city.

And in my grandmother's time -- she was born in 1870, so her mother was probably born around 1850, 1845 -- there were revolutions and expulsions that she had read about and that she knew about. She passed that information down. She told that to me when I was a little girl. She was well read.

And my grandmother must have been -- I don't know. I didn't know her but she must have been very bright. My father and my grandfather were cattle dealers. From the day that Hitler came to power she would not allow any business money to go to the banks. She didn't trust the banks. Which was very clever. She wanted the money that they had accumulated -- they were quite well-to-do. The business was four uncles and my father. It was a big cattle business. She was the boss. She carried it all on her tummy, under her dress. And she said she wanted the money out.
>> Bill Benson: Out of Germany.
>> Jill Pauly: We were Orthodox Jews, religious people. And nobody in the family was a smuggler. How was it going to get the money out of Germany?

So this picture that you showed in the mountains, that uncle took my aunt on vacation and they met a Dutchman -- it must have been 1929, `30. No, even a little later. Hitler must have already been busy. So my uncle, because of my grandmother, asked him if he could help us get the money out. He was a very prominent Dutch Jew who had permission to go to the queen. He was a court Jew. So they trusted him.
>> Bill Benson: The queen of Holland?
>> Jill Pauly: The queen of Holland. And he sent them a smuggler.
>> Bill Benson: And that's how she got the money out.

>> Jill Pauly: That's how we got the money out, on the day I was born.
>> Bill Benson: 1933.
>> Jill Pauly: May 1, 1933. And my uncle, my mother's brother, was sent to follow the smuggler to make sure he was taking the money where he should and he got caught. They didn't let him across the border. He went to tell -- called my aunt that he couldn't make it. And she said, well, you better come home; you had a baby niece. So he came to the hospital to see my mother and me.

That man, I could sit here -- my Uncle Herman, incredibly courageous. I could sit here and talk about him all day. He had left in 1937. He worked for the Berg Brothers. That's my maiden name. And the business was closed by the Nazis. He had no income anymore. So he moved to Holland. He left the country in 1937 with his sister and brother-in-law. They were living in Holland. And they had contact with this gentleman. And later on they became very important in our escape.
>> Bill Benson: Absolutely. Let me ask you. You had mentioned earlier that secrecy was very important. An example, I think, was the Nazis, when they came to power -- it was forbidden to keep kosher once the Nazis were in power yet at considerable risk your family consider continued to do that. Tell us how they did that.
>> Jill Pauly: Kosher slaughtering -- the slaughterers are trained a certain way. In my family there were three. They were used to doing what they wanted to do. Very few people told them what they wanted to do. They were independent people, normal people, and they liked meat. They decided they didn't need to give up the meat. They had their own. The only problem was, where were they going to kill the animals without being given away?

So one of the uncles -- his part of the business was slaughter and selling the meat. So what did he decide? He had a righteous gentile in there with him. And the two of them found the animal. My uncle did the slaughtering. And then he took a gun and he shot it into the animal's head when it was dead so that the Nazis next door wouldn't say that he slaughtered. They heard the shot. They killed the animal.
>> Bill Benson: And if I remember right, the ritual knives used to prepare the meat were hidden away, like up a chimney.
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, yes, in my house where we lived. The special knives to do kosher slaughtering, different sizes.
>> Bill Benson: So if the Nazis came to your house and found those --
>> Jill Pauly: No, they didn't find them.
>> Bill Benson: But it would have been a serious matter.
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, they would have arrested everybody.
>> Bill Benson: Show me a little bit about -- Inge, your sister, four years older than you. So in that period, you weren't yet in school. Had Inge started school yet?
>> Jill Pauly: Inge had to go to school. You had to go to school when you turned 6. She was going to public school in Lechenich. And she was being butchered by the children, by the teachers. One day coming home -- I don't know if she traveled with a bus, probably. One of the boys attacked her and she turned around and gave him a bloody nose, which was an accident because she didn't know she had the power to give him a bloody nose. She was 6 years old.
>> Bill Benson: You told me she was very feisty.
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, yes. So she came home and my parents decided that she can't go to public school anymore. Thank God. You know, everything happened -- children later or tortured terribly. So she was sent out of town to live with my grandmother where there was a little

schoolhouse, one room, where the teacher taught four, five different levels. He was a genius. All of those kids learned beautifully. She was there for a year or two.
>> Bill Benson: Away from the family.
>> Jill Pauly: Away from home.

Kristallnacht she was back home. I don't know -- she could have only been visiting. She had to go to school.
>> Bill Benson: Let's turn to Kristallnacht. That was November 10, 1938. Tell us what you recall about that horrible night.
>> Jill Pauly: Ooh. First of all, I didn't understand what was going on. It was cold. My grandparents had a coal stove in a very nice room on the upper level. And for some reason in the broad daylight I was in there with them. Maybe because it was so cold. A man knocked on the door at 9:00. My father was dressed to go to synagogue. They went to synagogue every day, twice. And this was a righteous gentile, a nice guy, a friend, who told my father, "Don't go to the synagogue." "Don't leave the house." And my father said, "Why?" He didn't know anything. And he said, "Something terrible is going to happen. Just don't go to the synagogue." And he left. And they caught him. So they punished him. I don't remember how.
>> Bill Benson: For alerting your father.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. He was demoted in his job.

So then there was hysterics in the house, screaming and yelling, what to do, where to go. It was a bit late. Two old parents. My grandmother was in a cast. She had broken her leg. She was 5'5", heavy set woman. We weren't in that room more than five minutes and she jumped out of her chair and said we're running away; we're leaving; get the cars, call somebody.
>> Bill Benson: This is your grandmother.
>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. She didn't know that at that point that the gentiles who would drive us would be in big trouble. But they had good enough friends who risked their lives to get us out.

And when we left house, my sister and I were screaming like banshees because we were separated from our parents. We got in the car with our grandparents. We smelled smoke and saw flakes. And it was from the burning synagogue that was only a block away.

My grandmother, again, very bright, she put us on the floor of the car, face down on the floorboards. My grandfather put his feet on my sister. She had her feet on me. And we weren't allowed to move. She didn't want us see the fires along the way. We didn't.

It was a 17-mile ride to Cologne. And after about 15, 20 minutes we calmed down, stopped crying, and she let us get up. And I remember seeing the fires. Those were the synagogues and the stores that were burning.
>> Bill Benson: And being vandalized like the one we saw in the photograph.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. You know, what the family went through, the very first inkling that my mother and father got that they had to leave the country was in 1929.
>> Bill Benson: So before Hitler came to power.
>> Jill Pauly: That's right. My sister was 1 year old. My father employed a man to clean out the cattle -- you know, the place where the cattle were. And he was not fully I.Q. He was low I.Q. but he needed to make a living. And he came over one day and said to my father, "See that wheel barrel over there?" I wasn't born yet. Inge was born. He said, "I would put my wife, my young wife and my baby in that wheel barrel and I would start to walk out of Germany."
>> Bill Benson: He told this to your father?
>> Jill Pauly: Yeah. So my father knowing that he wasn't -- he said, "Why would I take my wife

and leave the country? This is my home." He said, "I went to a meeting. I was invited to a meeting last night." you know, they had those basements meetings. "And they told me, I heard, what they're going to do with you people. And I'm telling you, get out of here." 1929.

He went into the house and told my mother. And he said to her, "What do you think?" She said, "You know what? Children and people with low I.Q.s tell the truth. Listen to him." Then he started working on trying to leave the country. And we didn't have anybody in the United States to sponsor us. That was one of our big problems. We had no relatives or close friends.

>> Bill Benson: So you couldn't get visas.

>> Jill Pauly: No.

>> Bill Benson: Just to continue on Kristallnacht. You fled the family home and drove to Cologne. Where did you go once you got to Cologne?

>> Jill Pauly: We went into an apartment where my mother's retired aunts and uncles lived. Some of us lived there and some of us -- some had to live somewhere else.

The men in the family, on Kristallnacht, got in the family car and drove the car for 24 hours, didn't stop.

>> Bill Benson: Your father and uncles?

>> Jill Pauly: All the uncles. And I want to tell you something funny. I went back to Germany. It was the first or second visit in the `80s. And I went back to my hometown. And a lady came to visit me. And she said, "What was your father doing at the gas station on Kristallnacht?" I said, "If he was at the gas station, I presume they were getting gas for the car." "Oh." And I couldn't figure out -- she was 10 years old and she saw him and she was Nazi. She could have gone in the house and reported that she saw the Jews at the gas station but she didn't. Luck. And I find out 40 years later.

>> Bill Benson: So they gassed up and took off and where did they go?

>> Jill Pauly: To the woods. Stayed in the woods for 24 hours.

You know, it was called off the next day like this. All action had to stop. It was called off. So they came out. They knew they were in big trouble.

>> Bill Benson: For the audience, this was happening everywhere in Germany, the same night.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. Well, we don't know what other people did, only what we did. And I will tell you, I think a very large percentage of our luck in survival was based on having righteous gentiles who stuck their necks out for us; helped us in every way for several years.

>> Bill Benson: And of course, on that night thousands of Jewish men were arrested but your father, fortunately, your uncles, they went to Holland. Right?

>> Jill Pauly: Not right away. They came to Cologne for the Sabbath. And my father decided he has to go into hiding, just like Anne Frank's father. He decided on going into an attic. And there must have been an attic in the same building where we were staying. He took, for trial, took my mother and the two of us into the attic to sleep. And luckily my sister had terrible screaming nightmares. We couldn't stay there. She would give them away. So that was the end of that.

Then they got in the car and they drove one, two, three -- three men drove into Holland. We were only an hour from Holland by car. And they got caught. And that was a very difficult situation, very, very, very difficult.

>> Bill Benson: So once they were caught by Dutch authorities --

>> Jill Pauly: Dutch Nazis.

>> Bill Benson: Dutch Nazis. What happened to them?

>> Jill Pauly: I didn't know until a couple of years ago that there was a party of 30,000 Nazis in Holland.
>> Bill Benson: And they arrested your father and uncles.
>> Jill Pauly: And on the other hand, they also saved a lot of Jews.
They arrested them, put them in a prison.
>> Bill Benson: So now here you are, your father and a couple of your uncles are in Holland, a rested. It's your mother, you and your sister, grandparents. Your family then, because of the events of Kristallnacht and all that led up to it, really sprang into action about trying to get out of Germany. Tell us what they to get you out of Germany.
>> Jill Pauly: They had sprung into action before Kristallnacht, yes. But it wasn't -- not that it wasn't urgent but they hadn't found the right venue.
>> Bill Benson: Right.
>> Jill Pauly: We were in Cologne. The three men were in prison. They couldn't reach out. But my mother's brother, the one I told you about who followed the smuggler, he was in Holland.
>> Bill Benson: This is Herman?
>> Jill Pauly: Herman. And he was a partisan. And what he did, he would go to the water -- there was a big water between Germany and that part of Holland. People use to the swim across to save themselves. And he would sit on a bench at the water's edge with raincoats. He wore several raincoats. He took newspapers. And he sat there and he read. And how he had the contact that someone was coming in, I don't know. Must have been an organization. And he gave them a coat and a newspaper and said sit on the bench.
>> Bill Benson: Once they swam across the river.
>> Jill Pauly: Just sit there on the bench after I've left and you've dried off a bit. So that was him.
Ok. Well, he saw them being arrested. And he followed them. He got out of the car and he asked the Commandant of the camp there, the police station, "What are you going to do with these men?" He says, "What do you think I'm going to do with them? I'm sending them back to Germany tomorrow morning." So Herman says to him, "You can't do that." "What do you mean I can't do that?" "You're not allowed by law to do that. You have to have written permission from the Hague to send these people back. I know the law."
Where he knew the law from, I don't know. It worked. He says, Ok, I'll put them back. And if you don't have the paper here by tomorrow morning -- a certain time -- they will be gone. He ran to this connection, the queen's attaché that the family were friendly with. He went to the queen with papers and she signed, allowing them to stay in a camp, a detention camp in Holland because they already had the papers to go to Kenya.
>> Bill Benson: They did. Ok.
>> Jill Pauly: I didn't know that. I just heard that from my sister, I think, the other day. They already had some of the papers. They just needed maybe shipping, you know, whatever.
>> Bill Benson: So now they're still detained, still in the camp, but at least --
>> Jill Pauly: They're not under the Nazis.
>> Bill Benson: At that point. And you just mentioned that they had visas for Kenya. Tell us why Kenya as the place to go and how you were able to get visas to go to Kenya.
>> Jill Pauly: Well, people here would understand what the situation was, the pressure was like. If somebody had mentioned going to the moon, they would have taken that -- first people on the moon. They just wanted to get out and couldn't. The United States wasn't letting them in. Other countries weren't letting them in. And they wanted to live.

Where were we?
>> Bill Benson: How you ended up in Kenya. What made that possible?
>> Jill Pauly: One of the uncles was married to a woman who came from a very wonderful, highly intellectual family. Her cousin studied at the University of Munich, early, in the 20s. He heard Hitler speak on the street. He let the family know that the day he's through with his studies, he will be out of Germany. And he went to England and started a chemical factory with a partner. And he brought out his brother in 1937, and put him in law school in England. I guess he hadn't finished his studies. He got his degree in England. And then that young man had to go to work and he was offered a job by a prestigious law firm in Nairobi. So he went to Nairobi.
>> Bill Benson: So that's your connection.
>> Jill Pauly: That was the connection.

I learned this only a few years ago when we got the letters. There was a man in the law firm, a Jewish man, who was highly respected by the British. They trusted him. And he was able to get permission -- they wanted -- if you read the letters, it makes your hair stand on end. First of all, they wanted all the money that the Bergs had taken out of the country to be forwarded. They thought that would be a good idea so that they could use the money to buy the right place for them where they could be -- thank God that didn't happen. Then they asked for a list of people who we wanted to bring to Kenya. Naturally the parents of the woman who got us out, right, and her sister and my mother's aunts. 26 people. I saw the list.
>> Bill Benson: So you were able to get visas for 26 people -- no. Ok.
>> Jill Pauly: No. They didn't want old people because they might become a responsibility to the state. But I don't know how they let my grandparents in. They knew that they were cattle farmers. The Kenya government was looking for white farmers to buy in the highlands of Kenya to keep it away from the blacks. You know, the indigenous blacks were like semi-slaves under the British. And they wanted really to make that whole settlement white. So they encouraged them where to buy. And it was very beautiful there. And they bought a farm. And when they bought the farm, there was enough money left --
>> Bill Benson: And "they" being?
>> Jill Pauly: The five families.
>> Bill Benson: Five families. Ok.
>> Jill Pauly: Wait a minute. My grandparents, my parents, and three sets of aunts and uncles.
>> Bill Benson: But you're all still in either Germany or Holland at the time it was purchased?
>> Jill Pauly: No, no. The Dutch ones didn't come on the farm. They came later.
>> Bill Benson: Tell us -- I'm being mindful of our time, Jill. Tell us how you got out of Germany. Your father is gone. Your mother and your grandparents and children -- how did you get what it took to get out of Germany? That was something you had to arrange.
>> Jill Pauly: We had to go for papers. Papers, papers, papers.
>> Bill Benson: And those were costly, right? The papers were fairly expensive if I remember. Right?
>> Jill Pauly: Everything that the Jews bought had to be paid double. And they had money in Cologne on the bank. And during those weeks while they were waiting, the women went shopping. And my mother went and bought everything for us -- clothing for eight years, 10 years, already made because you couldn't get anything in Kenya. There were I don't know how many, 10 lifts, nine lifts for five families, lots of stuff, two cars, sewing machines, refrigerators. They didn't want to leave the money in Germany.

>> Bill Benson: So you're planning to take all of this with you to Kenya.
>> Jill Pauly: But it didn't get there. It was stolen at the piers. That was a setup, too. Two of them got out -- two lifts. Two lifts.
>> Bill Benson: Two out of nine or 10.
>> Jill Pauly: And we had two uncles that came after us.
>> Bill Benson: Just so our audience knows, not only did you want to buy the goods that you thought you might need for a long time, you weren't allowed to take any money out of Germany.
>> Jill Pauly: No, 10 mark a person.
>> Bill Benson: Which was equivalent of a couple of dollars.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes. And they accepted all the rules they just followed through. We had to go to the Gestapo a few times. We were kicked out and then went in again. Papers. Constant papers. And if you had yellow papers and you got to the train and were ready to go and the papers were supposed to be pink, bingo. You didn't go. So that was a big stress.
>> Bill Benson: Fortunately at some point you were able to get the papers.
>> Jill Pauly: And they were the right color.
>> Bill Benson: In the right color. And then start the journey.

Tell us about --

>> Jill Pauly: Well, it wasn't that easy. My mother had a dying mother, lung cancer. My grandma. And there was skepticism about whether she would make it. My mother said, "It's a long, hot trip to Kenya. Do you think you feel strong enough?" She said, "I don't care if I die on the train tomorrow. I'm not staying here." That saved my life. Because if my mother had stayed, we would have all been killed.
>> Bill Benson: If your grandmother refused to go, your mother would have stayed and you --
>> Jill Pauly: Right. That was luck. We don't know what these things are. They're just luck.
>> Bill Benson: So once the decision was made --
>> Jill Pauly: She had to be carried into a car and carried on to the train. And that was extremely dangerous because Nazis had absolutely no interest in sick people. They killed them. And we wanted to stay together. So a man came who was related to one of the women going to Kenya and he carried her into the train and into the car. He had been held. We left a month after he was released.

I just want to inject this. One of the women who was going with us, her husband was in the jail in Holland. She married him during this time. She went to Holland and married him in the camp and then had to come back. She -- I lost my thought.
>> Bill Benson: Telling about the woman who married --
>> Jill Pauly: Ernie -- Elsie, yeah. Her brother came. Carried my grandmother into the car. And into the train. And he had been -- this was a big risk for him. When her brother was sent to Dachau, her mother couldn't manage alone. She made an appointment with the Gestapo. She was 21. And she got the appointment. She was a young, good-looking girl. She went to see him and she said, "My mother can't continue without him. Would you please release him from the jail -- or from Dachau? He didn't do anything" and the Nazi said, "I'll see what I can do." And she left. And a month later he came walking down the street. I mean, did she have guts? She had something else. I don't know what it was but -- she just died two months ago. She was 100.
>> Bill Benson: And so he was allowed to go with you, leave with you.
>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: So you left Germany by train. You made your way through Italy to Genoa. Do you remember that journey at all?
>> Jill Pauly: Uh-huh.
>> Bill Benson: Tell us about that trip.
>> Jill Pauly: That's when I grew up. Yeah. Because my mother sat us down and she said you are not to ask to go to the bathroom; you are not asked to drink anything; you're not allowed to fight; you're just allowed to sit still and you'll be in the carriage with me and Alma and I'm going to watch you.

So of course I said, well, Why are you being so strict? What's going on? She said the danger is they might separate us and I don't want to be even considered for that.
They had a plan if they were separated but I can't tell you that plan. I don't know it. But recently, about six months ago, I remembered that the Gestapo came into the cabin but I couldn't trust my memory. So I called Inge and she said, yeah, they did. They came to check our passports or whatever they were checking and then went out again; left us alone.
>> Bill Benson: So you made it to Genoa. And then you boarded a German ship.
>> Jill Pauly: Mm-hmm. A Nazi ship.
>> Bill Benson: And the ship took you to Kenya. Tell us about that trip because you do remember that, and particularly one incident -- more than one incident. You had a good singing voice. You were a little kid. And it came to the attention of the ship's captain that you could sing. What happened?
>> Jill Pauly: Well, if anybody here has grandchildren and you don't know how to occupy them, just call me. I'll tell you how my grandmother occupied me for six years.

We got on the ship. It was dreadful in general. It was hot and stinking and dirty. We had no money. Everybody was miserable. We were there just over the Sabbath.

Oh, I have to tell you about my grandfather. He was 79 years old and very, very positive about leaving but he was strictly, strictly Orthodox and he wouldn't eat even off a plate on the ship. So how are you going to get him to Kenya if he doesn't eat? So this lady I just told you about, she called an organization in Berlin.
>> Bill Benson: The one who went to the Gestapo.
>> Jill Pauly: The one who was a little -- not aggressive but that's the way she was. She called an organization in Berlin and she ordered kosher meals for all of us for the ship. And the kosher food came to the ship. [Laughter] We had kosher food going to Kenya. Because my grandfather wouldn't eat.

And by the way, in Jewish law that's not absolutely -- you don't have to keep that law if your life is in danger. But he didn't think that far.
>> Bill Benson: He insisted and it worked out.
>> Jill Pauly: It worked out. And once we were on that ship, I was so happy. I realized what my problem was. I was sun deprived. I kept myself busy. There was no other little girl my age. It was just my little boy cousin who was a monster. He did terrible things.
>> Bill Benson: And your sister Inge who was four years older than you.
>> Jill Paulwhy: And I was in charge but he listened to me, he didn't listen to anybody else and we were afraid that he would get us into trouble. But I seemed to be able to deal with him. He was 2 years old. Inge -- he opened a little gate so he could fall into the ocean, would you believe? And she pulled him back.
>> Bill Benson: And so your singing caught the attention of the ship's captain and you were asked to come and sing to the officers on the ship.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. And what do you think I was singing? What did they teach me? I sang all the German folk songs because that's what my grandmother taught me. But while we were in Cologne, the holiday of Passover came and I had an uncle, a great uncle, who sang at the opera. He had a magnificent voice. And I loved singing with him. And he taught me the whole book of the Seder to sing in Hebrew. And I was singing it. It was right after Passover. So the aunts were terribly frightened that I would sing that Hebrew stuff to the Nazis. So they kept me up all night. I remember being in the cabin. And my grandmother made it clear only to sing the folk songs and I understood.

I think I remember singing once but the lady who just died told me, no, you sang every day for two weeks.

>> Bill Benson: They brought you back for encore performances night after night..

>> Jill Pauly: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: After a several week journey, you find yourself arriving in Kenya, a place so different than Germany that it's hard to imagine. What do you remember what it was like for you and your family in Kenya?

>> Jill Pauly: For me it was great. I loved seeing my father. He stood out from all the people.

>> Bill Benson: He was already there.

>> Jill Pauly: He was already there. He was wearing a European suit and hat. Nobody else was wearing that but my father. And we were very happy to see him. And then he took us to a hotel where he had booked overnight. And from there we went by train to Nairobi.

>> Bill Benson: I just have to interject here. If I remember right, the day the ship docked in Mombasa was the Sabbath.

>> Jill Pauly: I think so. He wouldn't leave the ship. Unless he could walk -- no. They talked him into -- he had to get in the car. There was no way. It was beastly hot. And he went. Somebody got to him.

>> Bill Benson: He got off the ship.

>> Jill Pauly: His son got to him, my father.

>> Bill Benson: So you spent the first night in a hotel there.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes. I don't know if you heard this. My parents had beds and my sister and I were on camp beds, folding cots. We had to sleep under mosquito nets right away, from the first day. We overcame that. And then at about 5:00, 6:00 in the morning, my mother shrieked horrifically and we didn't know what was going on. A black man in a long white coat and a fez, a red fez. It was a traditional thing to serve ladies tea at 6:00 in the morning. [Laughter] My mother said, "I don't like tea." And she couldn't talk Swahili. She couldn't tell him to leave. It was a riot.

>> Bill Benson: For our audience, Kenya was a British colony. It was under control of the British. So once you were there, it wasn't long before you were actually -- your family, you were labeled enemy aliens.

>> Jill Pauly: Yes, it took about six weeks.

>> Bill Benson: Why were you considered enemy aliens? You were escaping Nazi Germany. So here you are and you're called enemies of the British. What did that mean?

>> Jill Pauly: I learned that here in this institution 50 years later. There were people who stole identities. They stole Jewish identities, I guess. And they were criminals. They were spies. And the British were terrified --

>> Bill Benson: German spies.

>> Jill Pauly: Of letting them in. So they treated everybody alike.

>> Bill Benson: Who was German.
>> Jill Pauly: Who were German. We were enemies of the state. The fact that they were after the Jews didn't interest them. They were afraid that there were people amongst us who were spying for Germany.

My father got there a month earlier and had rented a huge house where we could live until we were settled on a farm. One day we were there a very short time, maybe a month, a black truck comes up and arrests all the men. And they were going to take my grandfather and my grandmother said, well, if you have to take him, you have to take me because I'm his caretaker. So they left him behind. He didn't look like a spy. [Laughter] Nor did anybody else. So they had to go to an internment camp again. But because they had put a downpayment on the farm -- we weren't on it yet, I don't think. They had just bought it. They were released because they would know where they are.

And then once they were on the farm and the war broke out, they all had to do Army service for the British property owners who were sent to fight. The refugees had to take over and manage their farms in addition to if they had their own.
>> Bill Benson: So because the British had to go join the Army, your family and others had to take care of their farms.
>> Jill Pauly: Part of the war effort.

They bought a gorgeous farm. It was 7,000 feet high. On one side where we lived we could see Mount Kenya from our front porch and if I walked up to the other house, on a beautiful day I would see Kilimanjaro. But I looked at it for a very long time before I knew it was Kilimanjaro. It was so huge that you couldn't picture it.
>> Bill Benson: Jill, you're describing briefly and you said you were happy when you got there but it wasn't as easy as that..
>> Jill Pauly: No, it was very difficult. People who didn't speak the language and didn't know British customs and didn't speak Swahili. And you couldn't manage the farm without the help of the black people. But they were wonderful. These people who were uneducated, they were so kind hearted and so helpful. I loved them from day one. And I've always remembered them.
>> Bill Benson: And at the same time, you didn't feel well treated at least in the beginning by the British at all.
>> Jill Pauly: No. We were enemy aliens throughout. My father was a descendant of Spanish Jews, my father's side. And he was one of the people -- had very dark hair, brown eyes, and olive skin. He was considered a black man. And wherever we went in Nairobi he was kicked out. He used to come and visit us. We had to be boarded out to go to school. He never came near the school. He would tell us where the hotel was, where we could come to spend time with him. And when we got there, he was always sitting outside. And I would ask him, "Papa, why aren't you inside?" He said, "Because I got kicked out." They kicked him out. If you didn't have Snow White skin, you were colored.
>> Bill Benson: Jill, during that time, do you know if your family had any contact with family members back in Germany?
>> Jill Pauly: No. They got letters for first year. 1940. And then the letters stopped. And we knew nothing, nothing about what was happening with the Jews. Nothing. It wasn't on the radio. And we had a radio on a battery that my uncle only allowed to be used 15 minutes a day at night to hear the news. So we heard the news of the war. And we heard Churchill an awful lot. But it was not mentioned. No camps, nothing.

Now, my grandmother died in March 1945 and the war was over in May. And I thank

God every day of my life that she didn't live to hear what happened to her family. She had I don't know how many four, five brothers and sisters -- no. She came from eight children. I think five were living when we left. And they all went to the camps they all were transported to a camp.
>> Bill Benson: Her entire family.
>> Jill Pauly: Yeah.
>> Bill Benson: You spent I think seven years in Kenya. Then your family left. Tell us in the little time we have left, tell us why you then left Kenya, why the United States, and what it was like.
>> Jill Pauly: Well, our treatment in school, for me not my sister, was horrendous. The teachers were anti-Semitic. They beat me. I was tortured by a girl who went to school with me, a depressed -- now I would say she was a depressed child. She was beastly. Called me "Dirty Jew" every day. And I put up with it. Not that I was sanguine or anything but I knew it would be better not to get into it with her. Then one day she hit me on the hockey field in my shin with a hockey stick. The pain was just unbearable. I beat the crap out of her. I didn't use a hockey stick.

And I think what was behind it was that I knew we were leaving the country. So if they kicked me out of school, it wouldn't be so bad. She finally got it from me. Uh-oh. And I was pulled in. And I was told I couldn't do that. I said couldn't do what. You can't just beat people like that. I said, "I didn't beat her. She hit me with the hockey stick." Nothing happened to me.

And then on the way out, the gym teacher -- we had gym constantly, three days a week, after school. I was very athletic. I had to be. And the teacher came and put her arms around me and she said, "Jill, you can't behave that way." I said, "What's the matter with you? She hit you too?" The teacher. "No," she said, "I'm Jewish." She was a hidden Jew. I didn't know that. I had a very rough time.
>> Bill Benson: Why did you leave Kenya and come to the United States?
>> Jill Pauly: Oh, my father left because of the two of us. He didn't want -- Inge matriculated, went to theater schools in Cambridge.
>> Bill Benson: So your education would have had to continue in England?
>> Jill Pauly: Inge's. And he didn't want to separate us. And my mother wanted to leave. So we left, came to America in 1947.
>> Bill Benson: Two years after the war ended.
>> Jill Pauly: It was seven weeks on a boat.
>> Bill Benson: I think, Jill, we probably have time -- there's so much more you can tell us about coming to the United States. And again, you've been uprooted from one culture to an entirely different. Fortunately by then you spoke English so language wasn't as much of a problem when you came to the United States.
>> Jill Pauly: No language problem. And the first year in school I got straight A's and became a salutatorian. I didn't do anything. I was way ahead. I was misplaced. Because the principal at the high school in Vineland, New Jersey, did not like immigrants. They were hard work. They had to adjust. So she said, nope, she has to be put down for a year because she hasn't studied American history. And guess what. I didn't study after she let me in either. Didn't like history. Didn't like history until I was full grown and read it all. [Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: And still ended up salutatorian. [Laughter]

One last question before we close. It wasn't very long ago that you came into a

whole bunch of letters, I think 58 letters that had been written by family members between Kenya, England, and Germany. And you described it to me that reading these letters has been very painful and emotional for you. Say a little about that.
>> Jill Pauly: Anything that has to do with what happened then comes forward you later in life, you worked it through. You worked it through so you could lead a normal life. And then when this stuff comes back to you, you get sick. When I saw my father's signatures thanking the man for saving his life, I was just overwhelmed.

Something else happened a couple of months ago. Kurt's second cousin found him here in the museum through a picture that I had donated with his name on it. They came to visit. They were lovely guys and they stayed in touch. And around December they let me know that they're going back to Germany. They're going to -- their mother -- their grandmother and grandfather died very young and Kurt's cousin became an orphan. And these are his children, the orphan's children, who were born in Israel.

So they went back to do genealogy. They had it all done. I mean, they had someone in Germany who did research for them before they came. They found the grave. They put up a memorial plaque. And they wrote me all the things they did. I was sick for a week. The stuff that comes back is very painful because I thought I had worked it through.
>> Bill Benson: And did you read all of those letters that you got?
>> Jill Pauly: No. I can't. Because some of them are not legible. But I read plenty.
>> Bill Benson: We're going to close our program in a few minutes. I'm sorry we didn't have time for question and answers today but when Jill finishes, which she will do in a moment, she will remain on the stage. So we invite any of you who want to, to come up on stage and just meet her if you want or use it as an opportunity to ask a question or take a photograph with her. So please feel free to come up here. We welcome that. We encourage that.

I want to thank all of you for being with us, remind you that we'll have a *First Person* program each Wednesday and Thursday through the middle of August. So we hope you come back. All of our programs in April will be livestreamed plus all of our programs will be recorded and you can find them on the museum's YouTube Channel as well.

It's our tradition at *First Person* that our First Person gets the last word. So on that note, I'm going to turn it over to Jill and she will close the program. And again, please feel free to come and talk to her afterwards.
>> Jill Pauly: Thank you.

Ok?
>> Bill Benson: All right. [Laughter]
>> [Applause]