

*Kindertransport Association Oral History Project*  
*Interview with*  
RUTH SAVOCA  
November 13, 1993

KEY:

- [brackets] describe action in the interview
- *Italics* indicates a word in a foreign language, spelled correctly
- {*italics in bracket*} indicates a word in a foreign language that may be incorrect
- {brackets} indicate indecipherable words

[FILE: EL\_B\_10\_RuthSavoca\_11\_13\_93\_mp3]

Interviewer: My name is Renata Weinstein, and we're in Ellenville. It's 7 o'clock on 11/13/93, and would you state your name?

Ruth: My name is Ruth Savoca.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Ruth: In Berlin, Germany.

Interviewer: In what year?

Ruth: 1929.

Interviewer: What were your parents' names?

Ruth: Arthur and Marie. The full name? [request to remove distracting earrings]

Interviewer: What was your parents' last name?

Ruth: Majerowicz.

Interviewer: How long had they lived in Berlin?

Ruth: Well, they were there all of my time, which was ten years, but it was prior to that, because I had a brother who was 11 years old, and I have a sister nine years older. So I would imagine they probably got married in Berlin, and that was their home.

Interviewer: What did your parents do for a living?

Ruth: My father was a tool and dye maker. And actually during the part that I could recall during my existence there, he had rather a difficult time with jobs. And so we also acted like (I guess you would say) maintenance people of the building, like janitors. I guess you would say that, where you would keep a furnace and keep it clean.

Interviewer: When you say your father had difficulty with a job?

Ruth: Yes. I guess through his background of being Jewish. I would assume that's what it was, that he had difficulty finding work in his particular area. So when he was out of work, that's what he would do to supplement his income.

Interviewer: And what did your mother do?

Ruth: She helped in doing that, in upkeeping the— It was an apartment house that we lived in. We got an apartment free to live in, in order to take care of the building.

Interviewer: You talked about sisters and brothers. Can you state the names and ages?

Ruth: My brother's name was Kurt, and he was born— If he was born 11 years before me, 1929, so he was born in 1918. And my sister was born in 1920. Wasn't she? And her name is Irma.

Interviewer: Did anybody else live with your family?

Ruth: No.

Interviewer: Did any relatives live nearby?

Ruth: Yes. My father had a brother not too far away, and there were others, because he was one of a large family. So there were other sisters and brothers that were nearby. And my mother had her father not too far away, but he had been married a second time, and there wasn't a big closeness there, I don't think. And she had cousins who lived outside of Berlin. But that's all. We weren't really a big family unit.

Interviewer: Was your immediate family close?

Ruth: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: What did you consider yourself religiously? Was your family religious?

Ruth: Well, my mother was Catholic, and so we sort of didn't have a very religious background. I don't know whether it was due to that, or whether it was just the way it

worked out. When it came to holiday times, we did observe some things, like Chanukah. I guess the happy times, more. And, well, we had a special kind of mirror. It was almost shaped like a Christmas tree. So my mother would put some dress-up ornaments on it at Christmastime. But we didn't have a lot of money, so gifts were not a big issue. And I guess celebrating wasn't available, really, to do too much. But that didn't mean that we weren't happy. You know what I mean? In those years, you didn't have to have very much. I had a doll and a most beautiful carriage. I've never seen them over here that way. And I was very happy with that, and I didn't look for anything else. And the other things I liked were helping my mother. I liked to really follow her around, I guess. If she dusted, she'd give me something to dust with; and if she baked, she'd let me help her bake; and things like that. My brother and sister being so much older, they weren't too thrilled about me when I arrived, I understand, because they much preferred a dog. And I was sort of a burden, I guess. They had to do some babysitting sometimes. And their being so much older, it felt to me more like being an only child.

Interviewer: Were you closer with your mother than the older children?

Ruth: No, I don't really think so. I think only as far as my being so much younger, that I just needed more attention than they did, at the point that I'm remembering better, from eight or nine. Before then, there's no impression in my mind about it.

Interviewer: What was your town like?

Ruth: Berlin? It was the— I think they called it Moabit area, and it was not far from Unter den Linden. So there was always {lights} going on. It was a very nice section, and we had a wonderful zoo. It was a nice place to live, until things started happening.

Interviewer: Were your parents' friends Jewish or not Jewish, or was it mixed?

Ruth: Well, there was some mixture, but I would say that maybe my father knew a few people that were Jewish, but I think that most of the friends that came visiting, that were friends of my sister and my brother, were not Jewish. And in fact, in these buildings they had very large storage areas, and my sister and brother had made one of them into a room so that they could have dancing there with a gramophone, and have little parties. Because I remember sneaking down there sometimes to see what was going on, when nobody was looking and I could get away. So there were some good times, and then there were some horrid times that came along.

Interviewer: Did you go to a Jewish school?

Ruth: I did, the last year, because then it was not permitted.

Interviewer: But from the beginning?

Ruth: In the beginning, I went to a public school, from— I think you started at age five, and until I was nine. And then I went to the Jewish school that was close to my home. I could walk. I remember that. And I stayed there until I went on the transport.

Interviewer: Your mother was Christian. Except for Christmas, was there any other part of her religion that she {bestowed to} you?

Ruth: No. No. I didn't go to church. I think that we did go to a synagogue once or twice for certain occasions, but she never took us to a church. I never remember her doing that.

Interviewer: What grade were you in before you left for the Kindertransport?

Ruth: You know, I don't know how grades went in Germany.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Ruth: Ten.

Interviewer: After you went to the Jewish school, were you still friendly with people that—

Ruth: Well, I really mainly had one child that I played with. Her father owned a restaurant in the building. It was like a part of the building that we lived in. And so I was very close to her. And that didn't seem to make any difference, because she used to invite me because they had an ice cream making machine, and she used to invite me to come, because it was one that you manipulated by hand. And she knew that I liked to do it as well as her, and we also used to like to taste the ice cream, because in Germany they made wonderful ice cream because they used fresh fruits. So it was a treat. So I do not remember her parents saying that I couldn't come anymore. But it was maybe a little different because it was a restaurant, so you went through the building, and maybe because no one else was aware of it.

Interviewer: And she lived in that—

Ruth: Yes, yes. She lived in the building, apparently, so it wasn't a matter of walking somewhere.

Interviewer: Do you remember when things began to change?

Ruth: Well, yes. I mean, I remember Kristallnacht, which everyone who lived in Berlin— I don't even know if it happened any other place. But I remember them breaking up the stores and starting the fires. And I watched them taking people away in trucks, the men that lived in the area. So I did see all of that. And certainly there was always a lot going on, since I was near Unter den Linden, and that's where most of the speeches occurred,

because that's where their headquarters were. So I used to see Goebbels and Goering. I saw Mussolini when he came for a pact, I guess. Well, of course, once things got that bad, then my parents tried not to let me out. They couldn't go out that much themselves. They didn't really bother my mother, as far as know. But my brother, during the latter part of '38, he escaped to Holland. And my father tried to do the same, after he successfully got into Holland, but he was not as successful. So he had to spend a night, I guess, being held by the police at the border, but they didn't detain him to send him away to a camp. So he returned home. And then he was all right until after I left.

Interviewer: What do you remember personally about the night of Kristallnacht?

Ruth: Well, I wasn't out that night. I just know that the next day— I mean, I know that they set fires. They didn't only really do it that night, because I remember seeing fires, so it certainly couldn't have been that night. I don't think we would have gone out anywhere. But I remember that the next day we saw so much of the windowpanes that were smashed. And they weren't cleaned up right away because they did it to such a great area. I can see that, but I can't tell you exactly if it was that day. I'm assuming it had to be after, before it was cleaned up, that perhaps my mother took me to school or something like that.

Interviewer: Right after Kristallnacht was around the time you were now sent to the Jewish school?

Ruth: Oh yes. I was already, I think. Maybe that's when it happened, or right around that time, yes, because that was '38, and I left either in the end of July or beginning of August 1939, on the transport. So I would say that I probably was already in the school.

Interviewer: Did you have a sense of fear when walking on the streets in Berlin, and to have changed schools?

Ruth: Oh yes. Yes, because you saw so many uniformed men, and especially, I think, the SS with their black uniforms were frightening to a child. They all looked so big anyway, when you're small. And they were mean. If people didn't salute them and they caught you, they didn't hesitate about beating that person. So they were frightening. Certainly I remember being frightened, yes.

Interviewer: Do you know how your parents heard of Kindertransport?

Ruth: You know, it's something I never asked them. But the way I got onto it actually, of course, had to be because I had an aunt who lived in London. She probably went there around the time, if not before, that I was born. And she had a knitting business there. And she happened to have had eight children, herself. But the uncle that I had, who was not too far away from me, had one son. She got him over first, and then I think that's how it came about, I guess, that my parents asked if she would take myself and my sister as well. My sister, of course, didn't have to go on a transport. She could travel by herself

because she was 19—which is what happened. My aunt wasn't too crazy about doing it, because she had done it for another sister, who then, on her way, met a man, a Belgian, and she never turned up in England. And unfortunately, because of it, she died, because she stayed in Belgium, and when that country was occupied, she lost her life there. My sister left a little before me because she went to Holland to be with my brother for two weeks before coming on to England.

Interviewer: When exactly did you—

Ruth: It had to be the end of July or the beginning of August of 1939 that I left.

Interviewer: Do you remember discussing it with your parents?

Ruth: No. the way it seemed to me anyway was that one morning I got up, and they had put my possessions together, and told me that they were taking me to the train station to go to my aunt in England. I can't even remember any feelings of something coming up, something impending. I would think that my mother would not have wanted to tell me anything about it beforehand, because she would have known how I would have felt, since I always hung onto her skirts. So I think that she just left it to the last moment to tell me, so that it wouldn't be more traumatic than it was.

Interviewer: Did you bring anything special along?

Ruth: Well, I couldn't bring the carriage, which I loved. And I had a beautiful doll's house that one of my father's friends had made for me out of cigar boxes, that was really unique. So I knew there was no way of anything like that. But I could take my doll. But for some reason, I guess, the Germans took that away on the train. So I didn't have that, even.

Interviewer: Did your parents take you to the train station?

Ruth: To the train station, yes. They didn't travel with me any farther than that. I still remember— I don't know if you're been to Europe. You've seen the high gates that they have, that they close after a train is ready to leave? That's what I remember, is being on the train and looking out and seeing them behind those gates.

Interviewer: What did that feel like?

Ruth: Well, to me, I think it felt probably like that I was desolate. And I just couldn't imagine where I was going or what there would be. That's all that I can remember about it. I don't even remember very much about the trip. I remember them taking that and the earrings from my ears, because I had pierced ears. But I don't remember very much about talking to other children or anything like that. I know I went from the train, after we stopped at

Holland, onto the boat. But I don't even remember who met me at the other end in England. It's a complete blank.

Interviewer: Do you remember specifically what happened on the train when they took away—

Ruth: It was just that as well as having people who were in charge of the children, I imagine, Jewish people who they allowed to watch over us to a certain extent, they had the SS and the SA men patrolling up and down. And maybe they had a child who they thought that your possession would be welcomed. So that's the only think I could think of. I don't know if they did that as a general rule or— I only remember that it happened to me.

Interviewer: At this point, your sister was already in {England}?

Ruth: No, she was still in Holland. She arrived in England after me. So I know I came to my aunts, and my cousin, the boy, was there, who's four years older than I was, who was my father's brother's child. And we were very close, even though there was four years' difference between us. And we always used to sneak up to the roof when he came, and I guess talked between ourselves. Once we had a little tiny— they called them ladies' cigarettes. They were like an out-sized match that you would light a candle with, that's in a glass, you know? He brought that once, and he said we had to try it. So we did things like that, even though I was really much too young for any of that. So he was like an anchor when I got there. And he was protective, excepting that of course we stayed together a very short time, because he was going on to an agricultural school that my aunt felt might be good for him to go to. So he went. I don't know where he went, but wherever it was, it was a farming area.

And I went to school in the east end of London, but maybe two days, three days afterwards, it was evacuated, and I went to live in Sussex. Haywards Heath, Sussex. And of course it was again just foster homes. And since I couldn't at that point speak any English, there were people that felt uncomfortable with it, I guess. And so I moved about four or five times before I finally settled in with an older woman. And I liked it. She was in charge of a cricket team, like making the teas for the cricket team. And I liked that. we would get up at five o'clock in the morning and make little English sandwiches.

Interviewer: So after you stayed with your aunt for a while—

Ruth: Yes. Just a short while, maybe a week or so.

Interviewer: And you didn't speak English.

Ruth: No.

Interviewer: But your cousin—

- Ruth: Well, I don't think he knew much. Well, he may have learned a little, because in Germany, after ten, you would have had to take up two languages. That was a prerequisite. That was part of the curriculum of the schools, I guess. So if he chose a language, he may very well have had some understanding of it, because I know he took me to the movies to see a Jesse James movie. I always remember that too. And he must have explained it to me. So he must have understood something of the language.
- Interviewer: While you were at your aunt's for that short period of time, had you heard from your parents at all?
- Ruth: Yes. They wrote. And in fact I continued to hear from them. Once the war started, the American Red Cross used to exchange letters between us.
- Interviewer: At that point you left your aunt and—
- Ruth: And moved to Sussex, with the school. Yes.
- Interviewer: After that point, what happened?
- Ruth: Then I went to the school that I was evacuated with. And I had one teacher who— There were no other German children evacuated from this school, so I was the only one who spoke German. And she helped me teach me English by pointing to items, and she gave me the English word and I would give her the German, and that's how we exchanged things. And that's how I learned to speak the language. I guess children at ten, it must be much easier to pick up another language, because it only took three months and I could speak it. I don't know that I could understand everything, as far as the book learning, but they understood that, I guess, and worked along with me.
- Interviewer: At this point, your sister had arrived already?
- Ruth: Yes, but you see, she was 19, so she was considered an enemy alien. So at first they had thought that they would intern her, but she went to live with cousins of mine who had a clothing store. And she herself had been taught to— Well, she was a dressmaker. So this is what they did in the store. They sold ready-made things as well as making clothing for people, to order. And so she stayed with them. And since that was in the east end of London, she could only travel a radius of eight miles, and I was 20 miles away. So she couldn't come to see me. But when I finally moved in with this one woman that was my last home there while going to school, she used to take me into London occasionally to see my sister, even though at that time the bombing had started. But she took me anyway. And that was the only contact, other than writing, that I had with my sister.

But then when I was 14, I had gone to be taught shorthand and typing in the evenings, or in late afternoons after school, and my sister had paid for that for me. She wanted me to

stay at school, and I said no, I wanted to work. And I got a job with a lawyer. Nothing fancy. It was sort of like a clerk, I guess. And I did that for a year.

Interviewer: You were 14?

Ruth: Yes. And then I felt that I didn't want to stay there any longer. You see, I guess at ten, if you leave your home and you're completely on your own, as I was, you grow up and you become an adult. You're not a child anymore. So I went to school because I had to, but when I felt it was time, then I thought I would like to work in London. So I told my sister that's what I wanted to do. And the war was still on, and it was to the point where the lightning bombs had started, the rockets and the buzz bombs. Those two things were just starting at that point. But she said okay, if I wanted to come, I could. The problem was, where was I going to live? Where she lived, there wasn't space. So she did find a family for me to live with, but they had three daughters already. So sleeping was not a problem, but five people, to get up in the morning, and me becoming a sixth, to get ready to go to work, bathrooms were not like here. You didn't have a bathroom for guests and things like that. So I was there a little while, but it got to be difficult. Then I had another aunt, other than the one who brought me over. We were not close. Who knows why? But she had two sons and a daughter. But the two sons were grown. The daughter was a little younger than myself. So I was probably 14½ or whatever, going on 15. And so I tried living there. But that didn't work out either. So I wanted to live in a room by myself. But my sister said I was too young to do that. So she said, well, she would look around, and she found the hostel, {Keysehoff} Road. So she said that if I wanted to stay in London, that I would have to go there.

Interviewer: At this point, what was with your parents?

Ruth: Well, at that point we were not getting anything from the Red Cross anymore because the bombing was really pretty severe. My father had jumped off a truck on his way to Auschwitz, and he was living underground. And my mother, they didn't bother her. So I imagine that she was working at something in order to keep herself alive, and through friends, I think.

Interviewer: You didn't know this at that point, that your father had jumped off—

Ruth: Yes. Well, it must have been in the letters. Well, no, it couldn't have been, because the Germans edited that. So I don't know. You wonder sometimes. You lose the sequence of things. Maybe I only learned about it afterwards. Probably that's what it is. But yet I knew that my brother was in a concentration camp once Holland was invaded.

Interviewer: Because after Kristallnacht, he had gone into hiding?

Ruth: Well, yes. Towards the end of '38, he had gone into Holland. And Holland, being a small country, was invaded by sleuths of refugees. I mean, it wasn't only Jewish people who

were leaving; it was priests and, oh, people that perhaps had deformities of some kind, which Hitler didn't allow. There were all manner of people, probably political people who didn't have the same views as Hitler. So what they did was, they formed a camp. It was an internment camp. And they put these people to work so that they would not be a burden on them, because as I say, Holland is a very small country. So that's what he did. He worked within this camp. And in fact, he met a girl whom he married and had a child with. But they both ended up in regular concentration camps. We know that my brother died in— Was it Belsen? But they separated. They thought they would stand a better chance. So she went to Auschwitz. But we could never find out the end result. There were never any records of her or the baby. But in another segment of this kind life, Sharon (my niece) found out as much as she could through the Red Cross, and put together, I think, very interesting material which she's turned over to the museum, the Holocaust people, so that it can be entered. Because there are a couple of things that are not easy to find. And some people don't even want to part with some of these things, for whatever reason they have themselves, for holding on to this memorabilia, or the only thread that's left.

So anyway, so I went to work in London in the West End for RKO Radio Pictures, while the war was still on, and lived in the hostel for one year. And then I met a girl in there, in the hostel, from Czechoslovakia, and she and I were sort of kindred spirits. She had left the hostel before me and found a room in a boarding house or whatever you call it, and she was after me to take a room there too. And that's what I did. My sister then allowed it. I still wasn't probably more than 16, but she allowed me to do that.

And then of course the war came to an end, and we started searching for my parents. And it took a little time, because my father did live underground, but though he had many terrible experiences, he came out of it. And then he had to find my mother. And then the Russians walked into Berlin, and were probably equally as cruel as the Germans. And so they left to go to Munich. And that's why we had a hard time finding them, because we couldn't hook it up.

Interviewer: So your father did go back to Berlin and he did get your mother?

Ruth: Find my mother, yes. But that, we learned once we found them and started writing. That's how we learned that story. And then my sister started proceedings to get them to America. But that was later on, because she met a GI and came over here as a GI sweetheart.

Interviewer: When you were with your sister, when she let you come to London, was she kind of taking over the role of a parent?

Ruth: Yes. Sure. She supplied me with clothing. Well, I was working so I was able to pay for the room myself, and I was able to buy whatever food I needed. There wasn't much around anyway. But living with that friend of mine, we were able to share our coupons. And then I had made friends, and they would invite me for dinner sometimes. But

rationing was of an entirely different nature than people who talk about it here in America. We had very little as the war progressed. But sometimes, as I say, you could go to restaurants. I don't know what you found, but there were naturally restaurants.

Interviewer: So during that time when the war began, it was tough in terms of eating and—

Ruth: Oh yes. Yes. There were lots of things you couldn't— We liked it very much when we found that Canadians and Americans came, and we could barter for pantyhose (or stockings; I guess they weren't pantyhose in those years; I guess they were stockings). But nylons. So we were wearing pretty ugly things made out of lisle; that was a cotton. So yes. And that's pretty much my story, I guess.

Interviewer: So the war ended and your sister began searching for your parents. At the same time, was she searching for Kurt separately?

Ruth: No, because we had already known. We had already learned that he died, so there was no need to search. See, there had to be a way that we heard that through the Red Cross too, though, because I remember being still an evacuee at school when we learned of that, because he died in '44. It was late into the war that he died. Maybe letters were coming through very seldom, but still coming from my mother, because it had to be from her that we heard, because the Germans had told her that he died, I think they had said, of pneumonia in a hospital, and that they had done all they could, which was of course not true. But that was one of the documents that the museum was interested in, the telegram from the German government. So that's how we learned. And I'm sure that until maybe very much towards the end of the war, that perhaps the Red Cross just couldn't manage it anymore, maybe with so many other things going on, that letters were not always their first priority.

Interviewer: I also heard that it was dangerous.

Ruth: Of course, yes, because these had to be people too who had to smuggle this stuff out, because the Germans certainly weren't going to allow anyone to write letters and inform anyone of all the things that were happening, in fact. So I guess you have to understand that, first of all, if I'm 64, this is going back a long time, and it's not something that you think about a lot, because it was so very painful, a lot of it. And yet there were lots of things. I remember having a good time too. There were (they used to call them) tea dances, and I used to go to them in the afternoons. They had turned Covent Garden into a dance hall. It would be something like in New York, what's the name of that dance hall?

man: Roseland.

Ruth: That's it. [laugh] Yes, something like that, it would be. And it was a lot of fun. That's when the jitterbug was big, and a nice kind of dancing, you know, the close dancing. In England they had wonderful concerts. You could go to the opera. You could see ballet.

Even though it was limited, but during the war you could do some of that. And then after the war, of course, I was there until 1948.

Interviewer: That's what I wanted to ask you. So your parents got back together in Berlin—

Ruth: Yes, but it took us quite a long time to find them. And we didn't do anything really concrete until my sister came over to America. She came over in 1947, in June, and she got married in July of '47. And then she first arranged for me to come. And then when I came over in '48, then my brother-in-law started to prepare the papers. Then I guess we knew, by that time. Maybe it wasn't even '48, maybe it was '49, because my parents didn't come until 1950. But they were not very healthy. They stayed with my sister for— I don't know if it was even a year. And my father found a job as— I don't know, maybe you call it a machinist, certainly in the area that he knew, tool and dye making, that kind of thing. And they bought a little house in Huntington.

Interviewer: So you all ended up in New York?

Ruth: Yes. Well, by that time, 1950, I was working in New York. I was living in the Bronx and I was working on Wall Street.

Interviewer: You were how old?

Ruth: Then I was 18. Well, 19. I came over, I was 18 that year, but when they came, I was nearly 21. So I didn't see them for 11 years. And it was rather strange. You knew they were your parents, but something during those years was lost. You can't make up 10 to 21. It isn't that you don't love them, because of course you don't stop doing that. But there's not the same responses in you. First of all, my father was very disappointed. He expected me to be a lawyer. And I said, how did he expect me to become that? It wasn't so easy, you know. Their organizations weren't going to keep on helping you, and I didn't feel it was right that that was up to my sister. She wasn't my mother and she wasn't my father. She may have been willing to do it, but I was not— Of course later I was very sorry that I didn't listen to her and continue on, because as you know, education is probably one of the most important things in your life. But it was okay. I became a legal secretary, and it was okay.

Interviewer: So you were working in New York. Did you get married soon?

Ruth: I got married the year that they came over, in 1951. They came over in sort of the beginning, I guess, or maybe they came at the end of '50, and I got married in '51.

Interviewer: Does your husband—

Ruth: No, he died ten years ago, nearly 11. And I married a man who was of Italian descent. And even though my father had married my mother, he wasn't happy that I married someone who was not Jewish.

Interviewer: So your first husband was Jewish?

Ruth: My only husband. I never had another one. He was not Jewish. He was Catholic. But as things worked out, they grew to— My mother, of course, didn't care (you know what I mean) what I married. I think she was just probably thankful to be together. But my father got over that, and everything worked out okay.

Interviewer: Did your father live close to you?

Ruth: Well, he lived in Huntington, which was closer really to my sister, because she lived in Bay Shore. Huntington Station, he lived in. But my mother came from Bavaria and she loved the mountains, and she very much wanted to go back into that kind of an environment. And I guess the closest they came to it was, they moved upstate to Worcester, New York, because my father had suffered heart attacks and strokes and couldn't work anymore. And so even though after the last stroke, which had left him paralyzed on one side, he was a very determined person and he was able to walk again, not as before, and not talk as before, but everything was okay. Because he could talk English. My mother never did really learn English. And they lived there, and that was okay. They liked it there, and it was just farther for us to go visit them. It was quite a trip back and forth, especially then when my mother got ill herself with a heart attack. And although she came out of the hospital, unfortunately, they weren't close to a hospital there, and her lungs filled up with water and she died. And that was in '63 maybe. And then my father had a stroke, a year exactly to the day that my mother died, and went into a coma, and died a few days later. So I think '63 my mother died and '64 my father died.

Interviewer: Do you have any children?

Ruth: No. No, I don't have any children.

Interviewer: How was that?

Ruth: Just didn't happen. Just one of those unexplainable things, I guess.

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself a survivor.

Ruth: Yes, very much so. Yes. I think that it's probably made me strong enough to stand all the different illnesses that I had to contend with. It wasn't easy. The year before my mother died, it was really not even a year before my mother-in-law died. So it was three people dying in two years. And you had to be pretty strong to contend with all of that. And then

my husband also was sort of ill on and off, and then became really ill with cancer. And that was tough. So you have to be tough to get through all that, because you almost have choices. You could let yourself go. You know what I mean? So you have to be, I think, strong to decide that if you went through all that, there must be something worthwhile to stay alive for. And it's okay.

Interviewer: Did you ever discuss with your father, after he came back, his experiences?

Ruth: His experiences? Oh yes. He needed to talk about it. I mean, he had to live out of garbage cans. He became quite ill once with terrible boils under his arms, and he had to go into a hospital to have them lanced. And he was lucky that they didn't give him away. And another time, he got a piece of fish with a bone in it, and if he didn't go to the hospital then, he also would have choked to death. So he had pretty nasty experiences during that time of living underground. And I guess, on top of it, he had to wonder how were his children. He didn't know about my brother probably, because my mother and he couldn't meet, because it would have been much too dangerous. But it was on account of Christian people that he survived, because something had to help him every now and then, and give him some food and shelter besides what he could find. As time went on, there wasn't much left in garbage cans, because the Germans didn't have much to eat anymore either.

Interviewer: Did you discuss with him your story, what had happened to you?

Ruth: Yes. He wanted to know about everything. And I guess there wasn't much to say. It wasn't his fault, what happened. He and my mother sent us away so that we would be safe. And I guess he just hoped that we would do as well as we could without them.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Ruth: Oh, you're welcome.

Interviewer: Let me just take a photograph of you for our files.

[End of Interview]