**United States Holocaust Memorial MuseumPRIVATE**

**Interview with Simone Liebster**

**February 5, 1991**

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**SIMONE LIEBSTER**

**February 5, 1991**

Q. We're in the City of Aix-les-Bains, France, and we're doing an interview of Simone Liebster, her life story, and she'll be tying in that of her family because of its connection to her personal life. So we'd like to begin with, if I may call you Simone.

A. Fine.

Q. Would you like to tell us your full name?

A. My full name is Simone Arnold, married, Liebster.

Q. And where were you born?

A. I was born in Alsace-Lorraine in a little village, but I was raised in the town of Mulhouse.

Q. All right. And would you give us the date, please, and your age?

A. I was born in 1930. So that means that I'm now over 60.

Q. All right. And what is the name of your mother and your father?

A. My mother's name is Emma. My father's name is Adolf Arnold.

Q. And where were they born?

A. They also were born in the mountains of Vosges in Alsace-Lorraine, my father in the village of Kurt (ph), and my mother in Olderland (ph). That's just the village next to it.

Q. I see. And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

A. I'm the only child.

Q. I see. What type of work did your father do?

A. My father was an artist. He was working for the largest factory of printing material. And he was working there, first of all, as a designer, and then he became a colorist. That is, a counselor in artistic work for printing materials. He was working 55 years in the same place.

Q. I see. And what type of education did you receive?

A. We had a wonderful family life. Family was very quiet. Artistically inclined, of course. Music had a big part. My father was playing violin. I got some piano lessons. We so had nice time together. He gave me also lots of painting lessons. We used to do everything together. My mother also was a very fine person. She used to work with me. Everything was play and laughter. We were just a happy family with no problems whatsoever.

Q. And what type of a school did you attend?

A. Well, first the local school. And then afterwards I went in this time they had school which was called middle school. It was a school between the common school and the high school. And I was in that school when the war started off. I also have to say that we were a very religious family. Very strong Catholics. And God meant a lot for us in my whole life. As a little baby and child already God was the center of our home.

Q. I see. What was your town like when Hitler came to power? If you can remember when Hitler came to power in Germany, What was the talk in the community? Do you remember that at all from your parents or from

other neighbors?

A. Well, I was too small. I was, you know, only three years old when Hitler came to power, but as I said, in 1937-38 we came in contact with the Bible, and through it and through Jehovah's Witnesses with a book called the Crushik Against Christendom (ph) written by Brother Tersha (ph), and this gave some X-rays of letters and testimonies from witnesses who have been in concentration camp. So from that date on, of course, at home we would speak about what the system meant. It was against freedom. No freedom of speech, no freedom of action, a lot of talking about that. But the Alsatians, they were divided, you know. There's something I have to say about my home country. People used to say German is the fatherland and France is the motherland. So that means that the Alsatians have been as much on one side than the other. And there was lots of dividing in the houses. Some for, some against.

Q. What was it that attracted your family to Jehovah's Witnesses?

A. It was just plain Bible truth. As the Bible came in our home, Bible reading became a very important part, and they realized, especially my father realized, that the outstanding point of a Christian would be to live according to love, love your neighbor as yourself. And he used to cite lots of times the Text of John who says that Cain was a man-slayer, and everybody who doesn't like his neighbor would be like a man-slayer. So he believed that he had to impress on his family, his wife and me, the fact that love of neighbor is the main thing. Never to harm anybody in no ways. This was his view. So when he found that in his Bible and found other Bible truth, well, he decided that other people should know about it, and he became a very active Witness just shortly before the war.

Q. Do you have any pictures of your parents that we might see at this time, perhaps back in that period of time?

A. Well, I have only one picture, or two I should say, with my father. This is my father and me when I was about 6 years old in the mountain region. And the other one is --

Q. Would you hold that up a little bit?

A. And the other one is my father as a young artist back in 1916. No, that's not a good one. Excuse me. This is a good one.

Q. Okay.

A. So those are the only two pictures I have of my parents just before the war.

Q. I see. Now, what did you expect then when the war started with your new religion?

A. Well, we expected to be arrested. We knew that it was impossible in this regime, the Nazi regime, to keep our high standards of neutrality and love of the neighbor when pressure, political pressure had come upon us. So we knew exactly. We were expecting to get in trouble, but we didn't believe it would go so fast because we had no problems with our neighbors. It was a peaceful family. So we thought that maybe we could get through a certain time, you know, but things turned out differently.

Q. So when was the period or what year and month do you remember that it all collapsed?

A. It collapsed the 4th September 1941. My father was arrested in his working place. And he was brought to the police. But we, my mother and myself, we didn't know anything about that. So two o'clock in the afternoon, the time my father would come home from work, the bell rang. I opened the door. I thought it was my father coming in. And there were two men shouting, "Heil Hitler." They were the Gestapo. They came. They sent me in my room, and they had a cross questioning with my mother. They wanted to have the addresses of all the Brothers. They wanted to know if we had the Watch Tower, if any secret connection. And that went on for four hours in our apartment. And my mother was doing a wonderful job. She never would betray anybody. Worked very hard. One would write down her answer and come back on it. Every time they would think they could squeeze something out, they would just come back on it. And during that time I got scared because I thought, we have a Bible the Germans don't like because it has the name Jehovah in there. It's the Albert Frieder Bible (ph). I knew where it was. So I went hiding that Bible in the garden of our neighbor, thinking that it would be better that the thing wouldn't be home. Well, the police didn't check our house, and we felt a little bit surprised about that, you know. At the end, that is, four hours later when they left mother, they were shouting from the street. We were living up in the second floor of the house. They were shouting from the street, "If you want to see your husband, he's in our hands." And they said, "Anyhow, you won't see him anymore whatsoever. And you and your child will be soon in the same place." And my mother cried, "That doesn't depend on you. It depends on God." So we knew that he was arrested. And mother went to prison to find out if she could get in touch with father, and it wasn't possible. We didn't know where he was. She wanted to get money. The bank was closed. She wanted to go working. The working car was taken away. She couldn't work anymore. We were staying without money. They arrested daddy on the day of payment. He had his whole payment of September month with him. So we didn't have any money. We didn't have -- my mother couldn't work. There just wouldn't be work for this kind of people like we were, you know. So there was a group of Witnesses. There were only about 30. They gave mother some work, mending and sewing. So she would go to one and then the other. And

a Brother, a good friend of my father stepped in to do the raising, the spiritual, and material also. And Brother Kerr Adolf was a very important Brother in connection with the Watch Tower, which we got in France, which we copied nights, put it in German, and sent it over to Germany. And he was one of the main link in this underground work. And I had the privilege to work in this underground until I was arrested.

Q. And how old are you at this time while you were doing this?

A. Well, I started out at 11 years. And we would go the first Sunday each month to a certain place to get the Watch Tower. It was put in a certain place. And we would come down and have the translation done. And so it happened that the Congregational Communals became a link for the Watch Tower to go over to Freiburg, Germany and to some other parts, of course.

Q. So all of the Witnesses at this time in your little town were not put into prison?

A. Well, after my father was arrested, some other Brothers were arrested. There was Brother Hube (ph) was arrested. He died in concentration camp in Dachau. He was 64 years old. He was a faithful man with the hope of heavenly reward for his faithfulness. There was Brother Sarin (ph). He had two children. Brother Lenz (ph), who had five children. And Brother Dosman (ph). They all were arrested. And we expected mother and I to be arrested, and we were waiting for it, and it didn't come, you know. So there was a little time when no one was arrested. Some calm. And then suddenly two families were sent off. The Gestapo come nights and say you take your luggage, 30 kilos luggage, each one, and you go to south of France. Now this family was Chadonney (ph) and Chalar (ph). They were -- they had to leave all their house and everything, their belongings, and they were brought to south of France. Then after that came the arrest of a Sister. There is a lady who studied with my mother who became a Witness. And she started off discussing the Bible. She was working in a restaurant. She started off discussing the Bible with a man. He wanted to come to the underground meeting. Mother gave her the counsel not to let him come. Just keep on studying. So he got impatient, and after two months of that, he turned his collar. He was a Gestapo. And he arrested her. So he was mad because he couldn't get into the group through her. So during this time, her own -- no, this was Sister Gret (ph) was her name. And her sis -- Gret's (ph) sister, who was also Witness, was in the hospital. She just went for an operation. And two days after the operation, her husband came with two Gestapo and her husband said, "Now this one is also a Witness. I don't want her home anymore." So they arrested her. And she got a shock. She lost her speech. For over one year she couldn't speak anymore. So she was put to camp. And during all this pressure time it looks like they forgot my mother. I was gone already. I was already in prison when this happened, you know. This happened after my departure.

Q. All right. Well, would you tell us then what happened to you, how old you were when you were picked up on that day and so on, how it all came about.

A. This is quite a story. As I said, I was in the school. And, you know, the regime, the Nazi regime, asked that every time a teacher would come into the class the class would have to stand up and say "Heil Hitler." Now, something very peculiar about that which I would like to mention, which I think is interesting. When the priest used to come into the class, he would greet the class by the words, "Blessed be the one that comes in the name of Christ." And as soon as the Germans were there, the same priest would say, "Heil Hitler, blessed be the name -- be the one that comes in the name of Christ." And in all the schools they put the picture of Hitler down -- up and the cross down, so you had just in every class, you know, the picture of Hitler, and underneath, you know, the cross, because Alsace-Lorraine is a very strong Catholic country. So when the priest came, I didn't want to stay in his class, so I had to wait outside. And when I was waiting outside, the teacher came by. I didn't see her. So I didn't salute her. So she came back on me. She asked me to salute with Heil Hitler. I refused. She asked me why. So I told her that according to the Bible, the heil belongs only to the highest because he is the name that is given in which salvation can be given to men, not through a man. So she got upset about that. She crossed the road and went to the main director. So my teacher called me in the following day and said, "Don't do what you do because you cannot resist the German spirit." He even gave me the counsel, he said, "I am a Baptist, and you can see I am saluting the flag with the left hand, not with the right. And when I do so, I say to myself, God knows I don't want to, though this is only to save my life, but my heart is with God. So do the same thing. Salute with the left hand." I said, "I don't compromise. The heil is only for Jesus. I just cannot compromise." So the following day a letter came along, and the letter read that a child is not subduing to the ideology of Nazism and so on, and the government will give it a week time to think the situation over. If not, the child has to leave school and go back to common school. And it was written underneath on that paper, it was written, "This letter has to be read by Simone Arnold." So Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I did nothing else but go from class to class in all the classes and have that letter read to the children. So I read that letter about 60 times, about 60 classes, boys and girls, you know. And on Saturday morning when we came to the class, no teacher, nobody was there. The children were all seated. Comes the director, and the teacher comes in, so the class was already scared. Nobody knew I had -- I was the one that had the trouble. So he started off giving a talk about the freedom -- yes, the freedom -- of Nazism, giving me the choice. I was free to choose to stay in school or to leave and what that meant for the future, of course, and then something he said, "Now the child who recognizes himself gets up." So I stood up. Everybody in the class went "Ohhh," because they didn't believe I would be the one. So they said, "All right. We give you five minutes, five minutes from now on. Here is your papers to leave the class, or you salute in front of everybody. Get up here in front of Hitler's picture." That was the cross and Hitler's picture on top, you know. So I got up there, and my heart was beating. My head was just thick like that, you know. I felt almost like fainting. And I just said "I just want to be faithful, faithful, faithful. I want that paper he has in his hands. I want nothing else but the paper. I want to leave." So he got up. He looked five minutes on his watch. You could hear a fly flying. The breath got really heavy with the children, you know, crushing situation. And suddenly he stood up and said, "Heil Hitler." And the whole class "Heil Hitler," standing there, stiff like anything, and he took the paper and run away. So that was the beginning of the problems. That was suddenly. And one day I had to go to the common school. Mother came along with me. And there the director said, "I do not accept the child who doesn't salute. I don't want her." So mother said, "All right. Give me the paper. I cannot keep the child home. The child has to go, according to law, to school. So give me a paper." She said, "I cannot raise my child myself. I don't need you. But I need your paper. You give me the right to do it." So he couldn't do that. So he said, "All right, she will stay here, but the promise that she doesn't talk to no one at school about the reason why she has been sent off from high school down to common school again. I don't want any propaganda. Not a word." To tell you the truth, this is easy to say, but it's hard to live because children get very mean. When I got up to that class, they said, "Ha, you are back here. What did you do? Did you steal? Did you lie? Did you" -- and I had to keep quiet. I just couldn't talk. So it went on for weeks and weeks. And suddenly, the child who was seated next to me -- I should say they sent me in the end of the class with the mention nobody should take care after me. No lesson. No repeat. Nothing. Just like I wouldn't be there. I was very small. They put me with the tallest one in the back. Just forgotten in the class. So I was next to the tall lady. That tall girl, I should say. And then one day she said to me, "Oh, I figured out why you have been sent off from high school. You are just a French patriot. You're just against the Nazis. And you are fighting for the French government." Well, that was too much for me because that's not the reason I was there. So I just said to her, "No, I'm here because I'm a Christian." She said, "No, I'm a Christian too." I said, "That's not possible because a Christian just gives the heil to Christ. He cannot give the heil to a man. That doesn't fit together." So then we started off talking about the matter, and she refused to salute. Now, when she refused to salute, the teacher knew I was talking. So the whole thing went over and over again. The next point I had to go to the Gestapo. The Gestapo came. It was supposed to be two psychiatrists. They wanted to know how I reason. So we went with mother there. There was a room, whitewashed. My mother had to sit behind me. I got a big glass in the face. One would ask me one question, and at the same time the other one would ask me the other question. It went about like this, just an example. "Give me the names of the five continents." And at the same time the other would say, "You had a meeting last night, did you? Yes or not." The other would say, "Give me the name of the river, the River." And the other said, "You got the Watch Tower on the board. Did you? Yes or not." And it went on like that for almost one hour. And I got weaker and weaker and weaker. And suddenly the phone rang and the men had to leave, and I couldn't conclude anything. And I'm happy to say even so I was a child and I knew everything, I knew where the Watch Tower came from and where it went when it was done underground, I was able to keep quiet and not give out the names of the other Witnesses. So after that, most probably the director of the school, I guess, got some news about this. He decided that my class should go to a Hitler camp. The whole class was supposed to pay for it on top of it, you know. So I thought I better refuse to go there in the beginning because in those Hitler camps they would salute the flag in the morning, in the evening, and the songs and all that. So I thought I better refuse in the beginning. It might be very hard, but at least it won't be every day. The class left for 14 days. So when he heard that, he got so mean. He took me in his class. He was having the class going up and down and up and down on their feet for about three hours' time. And he was there and he said, "It's because of her. It's because of her." Then he called every child to give him back his work, you know, and he was slapping the face with it and throwing the thing in the class. "It's because of her." And he expected the whole class to get on me when I came out of the school. And it was the opposite. Those children were smaller ones. I was 12 years old then. They must have been about 9. They came to me and said, "You keep going. Keep strong against him." They didn't know why. They absolutely didn't know the reason, but the fact they most probably didn't like the man, so they felt that my resistance would be to some good against him. So at the end of the week he asked me to do a certain kind of work a Witness just wouldn't do. Now, this is also peculiar to war time. The Germans asked -- that is the Nazis asked -- to bring every week three pounds of material to school, which would be bones or paper or material or cans, empty cans. And this, of course, for war reasons. I never brought a single paper in there. So it was written in a border. My border was completely empty. So he knew I wouldn't do that. So at the end of the week he said, "Now you go there where the stock was and you put the paper in one corner, and you put the bones in the other, and you put the cans in the other, and you work in there." So I was standing there, and I refused to do that. So when he came, he asked me why I hadn't worked. So I said, "As a Christian, I don't work for war." He said, "That's stupid. What does paper to do with war?" I said, "Well, if I take the paper away and the material away, I have the cans, and the cans I know is going to work for war." So he said, "That's stupid because when you work in a garden and raise potatoes and the soldiers are going to eat the potatoes, then you are also responsible for war." And I said, "Well, I'm not responsible for what a man does with the potatoes when he eats. I'm responsible for moral reasons. I just won't do that work." So he jumped up again. He was beating me with the edge of the hand in the neck. And I fell unconscious in those bones and papers and everything lying there until the kids came out from school. They found me there. They took me home. Mother got the doctor. The doctor said I should stay home a few days because I got hemorrhages. And two days after, the police came, caught me, brought me back to school, and the doctor said -- they went to the doctor and told to the doctor, "The next time you are writing one of Jehovah's Witnesses sick, you go to concentration camp. Those people have no right whatsoever." So in the meantime, the end of the school year came. I should say that in between somewhere I was called to the judgment, a regular judgment. And they are going to speak for the judge how good it would be if I could be a Nazi. I would get free schooling and so on and so forth, and a nice home and so on. And if not, the penitentiary home, and then afterwards the concentration camp. And they gave me the opportunity to sign exactly the same -- the same declaration they had in concentration camp. You know, they could resign, in camp. They could -- there was constantly a paper where they could resign their faith. How shall I say that? It was a document which was ready. The only ones -- only the Witnesses had that. Nobody else could go out of the camp except the Witnesses. There was a paper they could go to the commander and ask to sign a resignation -- is that English? Resignation? Is it? A resignation that I am not a Witness anymore, you see. So he gave me the resignation, and he gave the condemnation. So I signed the condemnation. So I knew from that time on that I would be arrested from one day to the other, you know.

Q. Well, what was it about your belief that was so strong that kept you going on --

A. Well --

Q. -- with this resolute stand?

A. I should say my mother, the letters of my father, the help of Brother Kerr, that all kept my determination alive by the reading and always my mother used always to stress the point that love for God is the only way to prove love to man because after God will help to do the things God wants us to do, and this is positive for our neighbors. So instead of looking on the neighbors what they do all believe, rather look on God what he's asking from us, live according to it, and then you will do good around you. So this was constantly given to me as a teaching. She always mentioned that a Christian shouldn't be double-minded. Christian should be humble, shouldn't resist with a resisting spirit but with the integrity spirit. And she always made the difference between resisting and integrity. Integrity is one thing, and resisting is another. And she always said, "You don't resist. You do everything you can to live in peace with your neighbors, but the integrity gives you the borders as far as you can go." So this helped me along all the time because the time came where I had to stay away from my parents. There was no contact anymore. But she really knew how to get that point specifically across, you know. So it happened that I went back to school. The children had come back from that camp, you know. And the whole class was against me. Nobody talked to me anymore. I wondered what was going on. Came the last day, school day, before the summer vacation. They gathered the whole class together. All the classes, I should say, boys and girls.

Q. About how many?

A. Oh, about 800. And they had them on a square with the flag in the middle for the flag ceremonies, the three times Heil Hitler, you know, and the song, the songs, I should say. There were two or three different songs. The children were standing there all with their hands lifted up, you know, and they had me in the middle of it, completely isolated. And I was standing straight. And inside shivering, cold. I get the same feeling, you know, being a very, very small little chick completely lost. And the speech came that the school is going to have a demonstration, what it means to be resisting to Nazism. And the ceremony went on, and I expected that I could get beaten or something would happen to me. And nothing happened. Nothing. Everybody left. I wondered what was going on. I went home. I had a funny feeling, a feeling of emptiness. I don't know. I was walking home. I said, "What does it all mean? Such a big demonstration and nothing to it. No punishment. Nothing to it." I opened the door of the apartment. My room was on the end place. The door was open. My clothes was lying there. Mother wasn't there. On the table, a letter. I looked at the letter. The following morning at 8 o'clock was the time for departure for the penitentiary home. So my mother was on the balcony. When she saw that I had read the letter, she came over, she took me in her arms and she said, "You know, Simone, you're now going to be a grown-up girl. You'll be off all by yourself. Your God, our God, will help you. Jehovah will be with you as long as you are faithful to him. So take this as an education for your future life. What's going to happen now will help you later on during your lifetime. And I'm sure that Jehovah is going to help you." So the following morning, I went to the station with my mother. And there were two ladies waiting for me. And I was supposed to take the train to go to Konstanz in Germany where the penitentiary home was located. And mother wanted to go with them. And the lady said, "No, you just cannot come." She said, "Why not? That's a regular train. I can take the regular train." So she took a ticket and went on the train. Now, while we were on the train, those were the old trains where you had to go on the trains on the platform. On every end of the wagon would be a platform, you see. So while we're traveling there, mother said to the ladies, "Now, can I step on the platform with my child? I would like to talk to her." And they said, "All right. As soon as you come in when we go into a station, you know. Okay." So we made the trip from Melhouse to the Swatzvelt (ph) to Konstanz. On the platform it was raining, cold. It was night. June 1943. It was cold. It was raining. And there my mother took me in her arms and she went over Bible examples like Daniel who was faithful in the lion's ditch and the three Hebrews and the fire oven and the first Christians, and she brought out the faithfulness of father who was already in camp three years and so on. And she kept giving me counsel how I should be polite and work hard and never have any problems with submission or with the -- I mean, a child who was agreeable was polite. And even so the people wouldn't be nice to me, I was supposed to be nice to them. And then she gave me a counsel, a counsel that truly went on all my life. She said, "When a person gets mean in front of you, instead of looking at the mean face of the person, instead of trembling," well, she said, "Simone, why don't you look at far above and see how the angels agree to your integrity, your steps of integrity. If you can visualize the satisfaction of the angels and of God and of Christ, you just won't see those ugly faces anymore." And I can say that it is true. This has helped me along. So we came to Konstanz, and as we arrived in that place, well, a lady there said that she couldn't take me because the papers were not yet there. So mother asked where we could go overnight. So she said, "Why don't you go to Meersburg -- that's the other side of the lake -- for the last night, and you step in tomorrow." The two ladies were excited. They didn't want that. But we managed to go to the other place. We went to the hotel, and after the hotel we went to a vineyard. It's a country with vineyards. We went to the vineyard because mother didn't feel like being able to talk in the hotel because of the ears of people around, you know. She wanted to go out. So there with mother we had our last prayer. We were singing a song together. It's an old song which said, "Shall we meet again? Yes, in the resurrection," because we expected to die. We just didn't think it would be possible to go through living with this whole pressure on us. So there we were on our knees, and we prayed and we sang together. We went back to the hotel. For the last time my mother put me to bed. And the following morning the things went very quick. Had to take the boat. We came to the house. The door opened. As soon as the lady saw us, she called another girl. She said, "Take her away." I couldn't say goodbye to my mother. It was just like that. They showed me my bed, how the house was running, and that was it. It was just like that. It was a complete different atmosphere. As human like it was the day before, it was like a prison door. Well, the house wasn't a prison, I mean, but it looked -- the impact was really that, you know. So you might wonder maybe what kind of life there is in such a home. Well, this home was about 200 years old. It was founded by Visenbark (ph). He was a bishop. Wouldn't give his property to the church but gave it to the City of Konstanz for orphans. And Hitler changed it over to a penitentiary home for girls. And there were about 35 girls there between 6 and 15 years old. All those girls were there for reasons of bad conduct, thieves or things like that, you know. We had no right to talk to each other. Never. Not a word. We got up at morning at 5:30. We only had cold water to wash. We had 37 children. No men do the work. All the works were done by the children. We made our own food production, the garden, everything. The wash was still washing in the hands, you know, with practically no soap. And that brings up my first experience because when I came there, it was in the morning, the 10th of June. They gave me six pair of socks to mend, with the mention of nothing to eat tonight if they're not done. And they had to be done very nicely, not just putting them together, you know. One stitch after the other like embroidering. Well, my mother had taught me sewing and cooking before I left. That made my life very easy in comparison to the others who came there and didn't know anything and got beaten until they understood what they should do, you know. Whatever they would give me to do, my mother had thought of it. I had learned it before with her the easier way. So I did the mending, but I was crying and crying and crying, and the tears were just running down, and the socks got wet. It was a hard time to get the wool through, but anyhow, the evening and the night I was crying and crying. And there I got hemorrhages again. And in the morning my bed was flooded with blood the first day. I said, "Goodness, what's going to happen to me now?"

Q. Were you hemorrhaging from the nose?

A. No, no. I was a girl and I started off a woman's problem, you know. So I waited until the teacher came. The first one who came across said, "What happened?" She called a girl. She said, "Show her how to wash her sheet." So I was standing there outside, without shoes. The shoes were taken away the first of April till the first of November. We're barefooted, standing outside with cold water with that thing to wash. I couldn't get the stain out of that thing. I was rubbing, rubbing, completely -- my hand was bloody from rubbing, you know. It was hard, the material. And I started crying again. There I cried and cried. Then she came out of to the door. I still can see that woman. She stood up and said, "Ah ha, you're crying? Why, ask your Jehovah to wash your sheet." Well, I looked at her, I dried up my tears, and I promised to Jehovah never should I cry anymore in this place because this cannot be that a Witness is giving a bad witness the strength God has given. And that was it. She did lots of times try to get me out again in the same condition, but this had helped me, you know, straighten up a little bit my sentimental reactions. So no letters from the parents. No contact. Nothing for several months. And then something outstanding happened. When we had to work in the afternoon, either the garden or washing house or whatever, whatever you did, you always had a second girl with you. You couldn't even go to the toilet alone. They would always give you someone with you, you see. So in the afternoon, we got the work, and that peculiar day I was supposed to go to get some fruits out in the garden. But this was in the front of the house, and no child was supposed to go to the front. That was just on the edge, you know. So I asked -- my name was Maria in this place. Simone being French, they didn't want to pronounce a French name, you know. This is against Nazism, the French language. This is forbidden. So they called me Maria. And she said, "Maria, you go there and get this fruit in." So I said, "With whom?" So she looked and she said, "Not much work. You go alone." Well, I went there. It was near the street. And the whole property was surrounded by greens, you know. You couldn't look in. But on that particular place where I was supposed to work there was one of those trees dead. So you could look through. I was there picking up those fruits. Suddenly I heard a voice, "Simone. Simone." I looked. And who was on the other side but Brother and Sister Kerr. They come in the morning. They wanted to see me. And they're told "No visit. No right to visit." But in the afternoon before they took the train back home disappointed, they thought, let's walk once more in front of the property to get the feeling of the place. So there I was, and he said, "Your mother is fine. She's very, very strong. She keeps going. The letters of your father are good. And how are you?" I said, "My faith is as strong as it was when

I came." We didn't talk much, but that really brought a lot of help to me and to my parents because they could go back and say to mother, "We have seen her face, and she's doing all right." So after that I was in total isolation until November. In November they called me again for another judgment. They wanted to see what it had done to me, you know, the hard life and everything else. I should say that on Sunday, the children would go to church. Well, the first Sunday, the two Catholics went to Catholic church and the 33 Protestants went to the Protestant church. So I thought I'm going to ask if I could read the Bible. Now, we had Bibles because it's made mostly of Protestants. So Bibles were there, you know. So, okay, the first Sunday, the director -- she was an elderly woman -- she gave me the right to read the Bible. Now, when the Catholic teacher came back, the one who told me the story that God should help me to wash my sheet, she heard that I had read the Bible. She got upset about it. And she decided that from that time on, on Sunday I should do the cooking for the whole house. So from that day on, I did the cooking for the 35 children and the special cooking for the teachers. I was too small to twirl in the pots, so I had to step on a ladder in order to be able to turn the big pot because 35 people that's lots of -- that's quite a quantity. And I couldn't read the Bible anymore. But about the same time, that lady asked me too to clean her room. It was already privileged work, you know. And by cleaning the room, I was supposed to go every day under the bed to clean under the bed. There shouldn't be a bit of dust nowhere. And I was lying under there, and I should say that I was able -- I was able when I came to the place to get a little Bible into that home. And I put that little Bible underneath the bed in the -- what do you call -- where the mattress is on --

Q. Springs?

A. The springs. Thank you. To put it in the springs. And she was lying on there. I was always thinking I hope the Bible doesn't fall on the floor because the lady was lying on the Bible. Every day I would go cleaning underneath, I would read my Bible there. There was a way to keep Bible reading.

Q. It was under her bed.

A. Her bed, yeah, in her room. So when judgment time came upon, well, the same problem. The resignation was against there, and the other one, so I guess I did again sign the other one. And that was something because I was there before the paper, and I don't know why -- I still don't know why -- I took the paper and went signing it on another table, but I couldn't tell why I did that really. It was a feeling something could get wrong underneath. And according to the reaction of the judge, that must have been true. There must have been another paper underneath, a negative one. He got so mad about it. Most probably he thought that the negative signature would be sent to my father. And he got really excited and he said that I couldn't be recuperated. I was really the worst kind of person you can find and so on. He was nice to me before. The way he switched around, something wrong must have happened. Father told me later on that he got the double, the double of what I had signed. And he got beaten up because of it, mistreated because of my stand. But he was happy and took the stand in spite of the fact that he got mistreated, you know. So anyhow, from that day on I couldn't get letters. Then the sister in between my mother got arrested. I shall tell you later on about my mother's arrest. But in between my aunt came to visit me, the sister of my mother. And she would take along the Watch Tower. Now, the first time we had a little walk together. The second time we're two hours together. The third time we had the day off. And there is an interesting story about it because the lady said, always the teacher, she said, "Well, why don't you go with Maria to Meersburg." Now, Meersburg was the last evening with my mother. Why she wanted me to go there, well, I suppose that she had some reason. Anyhow, we went there, my aunt and myself. And we went back to that vineyard where we had our last prayer with mother, and there in the vineyard we were studying the Watch Tower. And a time came where we were to take the boat to go back to Konstanz, and then suddenly I said to my aunt, "Well, if they ask me what I was doing the whole day, I won't be able to fill out the day because we were doing too much reading." So she said, "Let's have a quick look on the castle." There's a castle from the Middle Age, you know. We wanted to go there, and it was closed. It was closing. You couldn't take it anymore. So we bought cards, the inside sights. And on the boat, I was studying those cards, the cards she took along. And on Monday morning the teacher said, "Maria, why don't you tell us -- why don't you write down what you did yesterday." So I gave her whole details about the castle. And due to that, she said to my aunt when she came back, "Maria loves the lots of Germany. She loves the castles. So why don't you go and see another castle." I never visited the castle. We stayed in front of it with the Watch Tower and looked at the castle through the cards. So Jehovah helped me along to get spiritual food a few times. We couldn't write to each other, you know. I couldn't write to my father. I couldn't write to my mother. It was not possible.

Q. Did you ever receive anything from them?

A. No. My aunt brought me -- because she was in freedom, so she could get our letters. And she would make the contact between one or the other, you see. And this kept on for 11 months. And then war condition made it impossible. So I didn't hear anything from my parents from August was her last visit, August '44 until April '45. Completely cut off, absolutely. Now, what mother's concern -- what I should say -- let's go back to my father's arrest because father was arrested, as I said before. It was not possible to find out where he was. And then suddenly we heard he was in Shimlick (ph). Shimlick (ph) was a special camp for the Alsatians. They made this camp -- every Alsatian who wouldn't work for the Nazis would go there for six weeks or something like that, you know, and then put in freedom again. And they told him, "Don't talk to no one but your soul. If you do talk about something, you go to concentration camp." So they came back, you know, thin. They wouldn't talk to no one. They would just follow the, you know, the houses like that. Each time you want to talk to them, they were afraid, they would go in, close themselves up. So everybody knew this was a terrifying condition. So the time came when we heard that daddy was there. He made his six weeks there, and then it was Dachau. He went to Dachau. All five of them went to Dachau. And there daddy told us quite a lot when he came out afterwards, you know. He is an artist. One SS had some contact with him and asked him to repaint his kitchen. So, okay, daddy was doing his kitchen. So he said, "You know, you're really an artist, and I think we -- I could use you for designing for printing material, you know. But in order to get you out of Dachau, you have to paint boxes where the army would hide pieces of military material, you know." Well, daddy said, "Well, this I won't do." The SS couldn't understand that he was accepting to work for him and not for the army. And father said, "Well, you are a human with your rights. You have -- it's your right you have a clean kitchen and a clean home. I'm not going to refuse you a clean home. But I'm certainly not going to work for war. Now what you're asking is for war. And that's why I don't do it." So he got again excited about him, you know, and he brought the whole matter in front of the commander, the head. And there daddy explained that they were making fun of the Witnesses, fun of Jehovah's name, and daddy got so shocked by the way they were talking against God, and he told them, "Sir, please don't use the name of Jehovah like you do because it's the Almighty's personal name." And then suddenly there was a silence in there. And daddy expected to be executed because of having dared saying that. And he said nothing has happened. But a few days later, he was taken to the doctor, and the doctor would inoculate him for malaria. He took a fly in a little cage and had it on his arm, and the fly was eating his blood. They figured out if he would survive on this or not because before about two or three months before that happened he had typhus, and he was 14 days unconscious on typhus. So the doctor thought that maybe he got an immunity of typhus, which would help malaria for the soldiers in North Africa. They were working for that. So daddy was walking around with a fly in there eating him up, and he didn't get sick. And one day he was on the list for extermination. The truck came to take him out to get exterminated. He was just stepping on it when the doctor came by and said, "What is this one doing here? I'm not through yet with experiments. So come down and come with me." He brought him back, and the experiment went on a little while, and then they decided to send him to Mauthausen, the extermination camp, which is the worst than Dachau. Now, in Dachau he said he had occasions to talk to some Catholic priests. There were quite a few Catholic priests in there. And daddy had talks with them, and he would ask them why they were in camp. And mostly of the priests they were there because either they were giving some food to some prisoners or they would have given some help to escape or hide Jews or would do any kind of, well, I should say, good works. But in reality, human good works. They had nothing to do with the standing of rights. They were not there because they were Catholics. They were just there because they were humans and they were resisting the system on the human basis, but not for integrity to a God. It was two different things. And mostly of the priests they agreed with father when they said they were not there because they were Catholics. They were there because of resisting the inhumane way the Nazis were handling the situation. As a matter of fact, Jehovah's Witnesses were the only ones who had the neutral stand because of their faith. They had no hatred against nobody. They were just there because integrity keeps us through God's principles. Daddy also told in Dachau he used to see the Nazis singing songs of Christmas, making big Christmas trees and singing religious songs, and they were covered with blood. They had drunk, they went out killing people, and they come back and they started off again singing Christmas songs. And I can say all his life after camp daddy couldn't hear any songs anymore. That always brought back to his mind those terrible sights of bloodshed through the streets, you know.

Q. You mean the songs about Christmas?

A. Yes. He couldn't stand them anymore because he said it was something awful to see, people who were singing Christ's birth covered with blood. Anyhow, he was sent to Mauthausen, and in Mauthausen he was sent first to the camp because Mauthausen has lots of little camps all around. So he was sent to Mauthausen Gusen. You might have heard about the stairs of this camp where the prisoners had to carry their stones on the back, hundred seventy-five or hundred eighty-five -- I'm not sure of the number -- up and the killing that was going on there. It was something awful. He was working there for several weeks. And one day a Brother came, another Witness. He was from Konstanz, too. He made some electric repair. And he saw the triangle on father. So he got him out of the stair of the camp of Gusen, and he could bring him over to Ebensee, knowing Ebensee they had a system. It was a pool with hot water in there, and they would put some kind of chemicals in there and a cloth and put prisoners in it to walk this way, this way, this way, this way, this way, this way, to do the washing. They had water under here as hot as possible, the dogs behind, to get them turned round, round, round.

Q. To act as an agitator within the water.

A. Yes. So daddy was working in there. One day he got an order from an SS. He started to have troubles with his hearing. He didn't get the order. And he saw just the dog jumping at him. The dogs when they jumped, they jumped on the throat. He just could see it. So he switched over. He fell on the stair, and the SS put his foot on the neck and crushed the whole face in the stair. But he escaped. His life escaped. So he was there until the end. That was father's story. Now, what mother's concerned. My mother had brought me down to Konstanz, she came home, and she just couldn't stand the apartment anymore. Whatever she looked at, the paintings of daddy, the piano, my dolls and everything, it was too much on her. And she asked the Brothers not to come to visit her because she knew that everybody that would come in her house would be photographed and get in trouble with the Gestapo. So she had no contact anymore. And she also would go to no one for the same reason. So she decided to go to her mother, to her farm. Now, grandmother wasn't favorable for the Witnesses at all. She was raised a strong Catholic and she was Nazi-inclined, I'm sorry to say. Grandfather was French, as I said in the beginning. Grandmother was German. And she had her reasons. I guess they were human reasons, good reasons, because in World War I, the French Army had taken her eight cows away, and she had to raise Five children with no milk and nothing. So she got a hatred against the French in favor of the Germans. I mean, that's easy to understand. So when the Germans came, she was happy. And now since she couldn't follow our reasoning, well, that worked against us. But anyhow, mother decided to go to her mother because in between she got sick and she needed help. So my mother was working up there in the mountain, very hard work. And she was there about, let me see, two and a half months or something like that. One day -- well, the house is along in the mountains, and one day a man came up, and he had an order to arrest her. And he asked her, "Which way do you want to go? Through the village?" because she was supposed to go to the other village where my father comes from, "or out through the woods?" She said, "The shortest way. The shortest way is through the woods." He said, "All right. You go through the woods, and I'll go through the village." Well, it was obvious that he gave her the occasion to freedom because the border was only a walk from there to go over to the French side. But we were hostages. Father was arrested. I was already gone. So she realized that that wasn't the thing to do.

Q. Could you show us a picture of that, perhaps?

A. Oh, yes, certainly. This is a picture here. This picture has been painted by my father in 1945. That is after camp. It shows the village where my father was born as well as the house where my mother was raised. So this is a place where my mother fled when she left, when she was alone. And she was working here, you know. My grandparents used to have a farm. You have this, which shows you the same house from the other side. That means that this tree is this tree. It's just the opposite. So mother was here, and the man came from this village, which you don't see here. He came up this road. He talked with mother here. And mother ended up going down here and turning over, decided to go here through the woods, the shortest way, where she had to come to the police station. Now, this route my mother was doing regularly when she was young. She was 14 years old, and she was working down in this village. So she went up and down. It's also the place where she met my father because my father came from here, you see. So she had lots of memories, positive ones. And as she was walking through here, she knew that the border was here. The border was just on the top of those mountains. The other side was the French territory. Here's the Alsace territory. It was considered being Germany. She knew that if she would go over there she would have a chance to escape, of course, because she knew all the little roads in there, but we were hostages, and she knew exactly that that meant that father would lose his life. Maybe me too. So she decided she better go down there.

Q. Okay. Thank you. To go to meet him then, rather than try to escape.

A. That's right. So she went down there, and there they gave her a second occasion. Because she had to go to the police station in Melhouse. It was about 20 kilometers further. She had to take a train, and there again they let her go alone to the train. And she would have been able to escape once more. But she believed that to that point she had to face the facts. It was her turn. And so she decided she would go to the police. Now, when she came to the police, he said to her, "I'm sorry." It was a German man. He said, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Arnold, I have to arrest you and send you to Gestapo. I just couldn't do it otherwise." Now, the police station was across the street from the priest's home. That's what you saw when you looked out the window. And the policeman looked out the window and he said to my mother, "Mrs. Arnold, many dogs who are hunting a rabbit, the rabbit can't go away." And he was looking across the street when he said that. That's a figurative sense. "Many dogs who are hunting the same rabbit, the rabbit can't get away." Well, mother was brought to the Gestapo, and the Gestapo sent her right away to Shimlicki (ph).

Q. Which is near where?

A. Shimlicki (ph) is the same camp as daddy was in but the woman's camp. And this is located in Alsace-Lorraine. It's next to the Strudehoff (ph). Strudehoff (ph) is a camp which is located in the mountains, the same range of mountain which you have seen on the picture. You go further up to the north near Strasbourg. So she was there, and she was doing some sewing work. And when she was sewing a -- I think it was a cover, a bed cover or something, they took the bed cover away and they gave her a military jacket to mend. So she refused it. She said, "I don't work for war. Give me any kind of work. I will do it gladly, but I won't work for war." So they put her in the bunker, solitary confinement. And there, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, until the jacket is mended. Well, first day over, second day. Buchta, was the name of the camp commander, came along and said, "You crazy woman. Do you think we all military men are wearing mended jackets? This jacket is going to serve for other prisoners." My mother said, "You could have told me that yesterday. All right. I'm working for prisoners." So she started off mending. But she took the shoulder pads away. She changed the back. Closed it down. She took all the military signs away. She mended the thing. The following day he came and he was all happy. He said, "Ah ha, I got you." And suddenly he turned away and said, "What did you do?" "Well," she said, "you told me it was for prisoners. I don't think you'd give prisoners jackets that look like military jackets. They could escape on it." But he had her there for several months in that bunker. And he got her out, and it started all over again. She refuses a second time. And then they put her in the bunker, which was the worst thing you can imagine because it was underground. She could see just on top of her cell a little bit light. Somebody would walk very close, she could see the shoes. That's all she could see. No light. Only daylight would come in a little bit, you see. No artificial light. Nothing. And this was next to the place where they tortured the prisoners. And the blood would come into her cell, and she stayed there for three months in this condition. And afterwards they took her out and then put her with women who had -- you say that in English -- syphilis?

Q. Syphilis.

A. Syphilis.

Q. Venereal disease.

A. Yeah, to contaminate her. And after that the war condition, the condition in general, the camp being in Alsace-Lorraine, they decided to move the camp to Gaggenau. That's on the other side in Strasbourg, German side. And there she was. She was to go to Ravensbrück because she was heading for the woman's camp, but because the bridges and everything were broken down and time to go on. Anyhow she stayed in Gaggenau awhile. And while she was there she was working in an SS home, mending and sewing, and so she was quite an artist in sewing, and she started off coughing and take creme. She couldn't work anymore. She just stayed in the barrack. And that is also a start in which there was a happening of standing. One day the responsible for the camp, the commander, said whoever wanted to go working in the field to get potatoes out of the ground can go. And there was one of Jehovah's Witnesss from the home town who never had seen a potato plant in her life decided to go. So she was taken, and it was an old man who took her to the field. The Germans were gone. There were no men anymore. The women were alone home because all the men were on the front. So they got prisoners out to get their potatoes in and things like that, you know. So the man said, "Why are you in camp?" She said, "Because I'm Jehovah's Witness." He stopped talking. They came to a crossroad and he said to her, "This place here, they sell milk there. The lady who's there is an old lady. She's one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I'm going to the village and get me some cigarettes. And I meet you here again." So she didn't know if she should go there or not. Anyhow, she went there. It was an elderly person. When she heard that she was a Sister, she gave her a little bottle of milk to drink. And Rose said, "Please, let me take it to the camp. My spiritual mother is dying. She has no strength anymore. She's only a few days to live. If I could get that milk in." She said, "All right. You come by every day and get your little bottle of milk, and I show you how you can bring it in. You take your jacket, hang it over the arm, and the sleeve on the top, you put the little bottle in there so the white won't show up."

Q. Now, what do you mean by spiritual mother?

A. That's a good question. It was my mother that took care of the Sister whose name is Rose Gusman (ph), and when she was young, she had studied Bible studies with them, but also prison counsel. She was a true mother to her because she was standing alone in life. She would give her all kinds of counsel. Even sewing, even cooking, even everything, you know. And that's why she called her spiritual mother because she got

everything from my mother. Now, another thing, the place where mother was

working, when she couldn't go anymore, another Sister, spiritual sister, a Witness, I should say, would go working there, and knowing that mother was condemned to die, because her cough she had was a hunger cough. Every day she would go through a garden and take two carrots and sew them in the sleeve from here to here. Because she realized when she had to go in camp she had to put her hands like that, you know, and they went searching this way. So she found out they were searching just from here on so. She put the carrot a little bit above the thread and sewed it in there, and with those two carrots and a little bottle of milk my mother survived. She was completely on the edge. This gave her sufficient strength for the last part. Because a time came they decided to move that camp, you know. So they had the people march, and she was supposed to go to Ravensbrück, and they had them walking very early mornings and very late nights, not in daytime, and of course a lot at nights. And in daytime they would put them in -- what do you call it -- bottom of the house --

Q. Basement?

A. Basement. Thank you. Put them in basements and nobody would see them, you see. So they were walking for, oh, days and days. Couldn't get any train. Everything was bumped, you know. And one day they were locked in, in the basement, and suddenly one of the prisoners said, "It's funny, but it looks like nobody is here anymore." So he tried to open the door. He could open it. He looked out and the SS were gone. There was freedom. Everybody was happy. Everybody was running toward the allies, except mother. Mother said, "I'm not going to leave Germany with my child there. I want to get my child first." So she started off walking and walking, hitchhiking. There came a truck. She went on the truck. It was an uncovered truck. And suddenly there came a bomb attack, flying down. So the truck stopped. Everybody was thrown out. And she was thrown on the street in the hard part of the street. When she got up, her whole face was bloody. Her urine was bloody, but she kept walking. Walked to the station. There's something I would like to stress. In this time the Germans, as such, the nation, the people, the common people, were humans. And when they saw an elderly lady or somebody who was hurt or a pregnant lady, they would have priority. So when she came to that station, she got priority because her face was burning. She went to the Red Cross. They had nothing for her except a black stuff which was supposed to clean a little bit the wounds, you know, to put that on. And she got on a train. She was favored because of that face. She got on the train. The train didn't go far. It wasn't the right train anyhow. She had to, you know, go to right at a certain time, and the train didn't go there. She had to just get on again. She went again to the Red Cross to find out if she could get treated. They had a yellow powder. They put a little bit of yellow powder on it, on that black. And she again got priority to go on the next train to Konstanz. When she came to Konstanz, she thought, "I cannot go like that. They will get scared when they see my face." So she went to the hospital. They had nothing anymore. They had a little bit, shall I say, you know, the wrappers you make around a wound.

Q. Bandages?

A. Yeah, very small, and they just would put together, you know, the wounds which were completely open. Just a little bit designs on her face, you know. Now, that day when she came we were in the basement because of the bomb attack on far away from town. I was trained as a nurse in case of a bomb attack, you know.

Q. They trained you at the school?

A. Yes. And we had a hard wind behind us because we had wonderful trees in this place, and they were cut down so the border would be clear, well, the border of Switzerland. And we girls were four of us. We cut down those trees, big trees, sawing them through, getting the roots out of the ground in order to be able to plant potatoes. It was work the last part I was there. So when she came, we were just working at that and went in the basement. And I got up. We had no right to leave the basement, but I don't know, something pushed me to go up. I still don't know why I went up. I did go up. And I met my teacher. And I said, "Um, um, um, what is going to happen to me?" I never was disobedient. And no matter I always was careful, and there I was disobedient because I was not supposed to be there. I had nothing to do upstairs. She looked at me, gray eyes, cold, and nothing happened. And after a little silence she said, "Maria, your mother is here." She opened the door, she called me in. I didn't recognize her with that face. And I got my embroideries. I showed her all the work I had done. That's the way we were taught to react in case somebody would come to the house to get a maid, we were supposed to react a certain way, you know. We were taught we should bring up our sewing and everything. So I just did that to my mother, you know. I showed her everything. And she just was as cold as I was. We looked at each other. And then she said, "I would like to take my child." She said, "No, it's not possible. She's here under judgment, and only a judge can get her free." So she said, "Can we go together and see the judge?" She said, "All right. Maria knows where it is. So you go." So in the afternoon we went to the judgment hall. Everybody was gone. Everybody was fleeing. There were no judges anymore. Secretaries. Nothing else. My mother was pleading and pleading and pleading to get the paper, and they all said, "We can't. We can't. We can't." And when I heard her asking for my freedom and asking to get me back, that voice, that fight, It was like my mother again. Yes, she was my mother. Yes, I was crying, crying for hours. Oh, it seemed that all the tears that I had kept for years they all came out at once. But we came home to the house and I couldn't go away. So she stayed there several days, giving a helping hand to the house. And one day they said, "Mrs. Arnold, you better go away with your child to the Swiss border. We don't want to have a French girl here. It's a French army that is heading to Konstanz, and we just don't want any problems with the French. So please go away." So we went away through Switzerland. And I have to say, it was wonderful how the Swiss acted, helped us, with food and clothing and everything. But something I cannot forget is that first day when we arrived, they had us undress completely because they were afraid we would bring sicknesses into Switzerland. I was 15 years old. I was there. My mother was naked. I was naked. And I saw her misery. That body. Something unbearable. It was really shocking to me. I think it was a mistake. They shouldn't have handled the same way the Nazis had handled the people. They handled the same way in reality, you know. Well, anyhow, we wondered what we would find when we came home. We found our home like we left it. We didn't expect that. We knew the SS wanted to live in our place, so we thought most probably they had stolen everything. Now, what happened in reality, it's rather cute. The SS had my father and my mother in camp, and I was in a penitentiary home by a different authority, the children's authority. It had nothing to do with the Gestapo. So they said, "Well, we have to pay for her education, so the apartment is ours." And they closed the apartment up by judge. Now, the Gestapo came along and said, "Well, we have too. This apartment is ours." And they also closed it by another judge. So the apartment was closed up by judges. One couldn't go in without the other. They were fighting back and forth for two years' time, two years gone. So when we came home, everything was just right there.

Q. Everything was the way it was, intact?

A. Exactly the same. Exactly the same. Now, in the street everybody had lost their stuff because it was no-man's-land. There was shooting going on three months' time. We had the windows -- the shades closed so nothing has happened inside. But the other ones had the shades open because they had to go out of their apartment and everything open because in no-man's-land. That's how they handle the situation. So they lost lots of furniture. They lost lots of things in the street. And on our way from concentration camp, came home, and found everything. But -- there was a but -- we had no news from daddy. Absolutely no news. Every day we would go and check and no news. And one day on top of the list was father's name Arnold, Adolf on the dead list.

Q. He died.

A. Yes. That seemed unbelievable to us. And it was a feeling that couldn't be. Just couldn't be. We were out three weeks home. In the afternoon the bell was ringing. Came Sister Kerr. I opened the door, and I said, "What surprise." She never used to come in weekdays because she was working. She said, "Simone, I am not alone. Your father is with me." And there between the first and the second flight my father was standing. He hardly could make it up to the second flight. He came up. I didn't recognize him. Four years he was gone. He didn't recognize me either. I had grown up in between. He went straight to mother. Mother wanted to talk to him. He didn't hear anymore, not one word. He had lost his hearing. It was a reunion. We made a prayer together. It was joy and tears, laughter and sorrow, everything together. But we were together again. Daddy was fighting for months and months between life and death. Mother also had a hard time. He couldn't work. Even so the place he was working had kept his place open. He could come back, but he had no strength. And he couldn't be a counselor anymore because he couldn't hear. So he decided to try to work and keep his family going by redoing some artwork for printing materials. And he got a specialist on it. He did a wonderful job on that.

Q. Could we see some of that, please?

A. Oh, yes. Oh, it happened that the place he was working was trying to go into Africa to do the printing for the African people. And so he started this type of work is called called fancy (ph), and it's specialized for Africans. This is the design he made. He made it, of course, on paper and then it was reprinted on material and sent to Africa. It was this style. This other one, for instance, this is Calacrete (ph), the City of Calacrete (ph). Those are poppy flowers all around. You had to be very careful not to use anything the Africans wouldn't like who was taboo. This was his artwork. He had different kinds. This one, too. Now, this was a well-known family. It was a well-known family. The name is written on there, as you can see. And it was made especially for anniversary. She was 30. It was an anniversary for a special occasion.

Q. Elephant.

A. Uh-huh. This is all kind of work. This is the same as Calacrete (ph) but with color. We had this one before in brown. This is just with lighting. Good color. This is another type. Now, he is the creator of this type of printing. Using only three colors he gets this effect. By working or putting one color on top of the other, he gets all this effect. Now, this work is actually in the Museum of Art in Mulhouse because he is the creator of this type of printing. And this is the same thing. There's only three colors in there. He gets the reaction by putting one color on top of the others. It becomes a different shade. This is also --

Q. And all of this was produced after the war?

A. That's all since 1947. He worked until he retired. 1947. He retired in 1963. 48 years he was working in the country. Gold letters. I see letters from the department, the government -- Where is the other one? The occasion of a visit, the union between France and the African union, community, French-African community, and the different cities involved. There was also Brasaville (ph). I already showed you the other ones. And it shows General de Gaulle over there. You have de Gaulle on there, all the cities which are in the French community. And on the bottom this is the sign de Gaulle used to have, the V, victory, with this cross in it. So he did that for that occasion. He was a very good artist.

Q. Okay. Now your father was also an oil painter. Would you like to explain this, please?

A. Yes. This one, this oil painting you are just looking at he did while he was 16 years old. He did it in the art school before World War I. He did some artwork in oil.

Q. Your father was very accomplished. Now, Simone, would you like to show us some of your painting as well?

A. Well, you know, my father never worked on flowers. That's why I guess I started off working in flowers. Those are flower paintings. The ones I did when I was 16 years old, too. And they're in the same art school as my father. And the other ones I did later on. Those are pastels.

Q. What was the art school that you attended?

A. In Malhouse. It's a special art school. It's specialized for and always for designs for printing material. And I would have been able to go to Paris. I had the opportunity, but I preferred to go into the missionary work. So I do only occasionally artwork. Like, for instance, acrylics, you know, things like that. Just little specialized I call them. This is all around here, Aix-les-Bains, where we live now. This is a fall picture. That's also a fall picture. And then the other one is winter. It's all winter. Different hours of the day. This is morning. Nights. This is Aquahile (ph). I also worked -- here they are -- on animals.

Q. On animals as well?

A. Yeah. See? Kitty cats and dogs. Now, this is acrylic. This is same type of work than oil. This is all acrylic.

Q. All right. Now, perhaps your husband could come over. Husband, perhaps you'd like to show us those pictures you have there.

A. Yes. Here's a picture of my mother during the time my father was arrested. I wasn't yet. That's why you see the serious face of my mother. The same time this is the picture when I was sent off from school before I was arrested. Here we are together, my aunt, my mother and I, just a week or so before I went to Konstanz in Germany. And here is the class where I stayed in. I am here. Excuse me. I am here. And this is the girl she had who took a stand by refusing to salute the flag.

Q. Oh, that young lady.

A. Because of her I was arrested.

Q. And whatever happened to her?

A. She's a Witness. She stays in the Paris section. Now, here is my father when he came over from camp. This is the first picture of reunion. We have been out of camp already six weeks when he came. My father had before he went to camp 65 -- no -- 75 kilo. And when he came he had 41. So he was really down. This is Brother Kerr and his wife, the one who came and visited me. Here's the same group with my aunt, and this is the lady that brought the milk to my mother so she could survive the camp. You see this is taken two years later, and you still see on the face my father the camp. He hasn't overcome yet completely. But he was already doing his artwork in this picture. I would like to mention also -- here is the one. This is the house I have been in Konstanz. That window just behind was my bed. That was the director of the house. And here is another picture. Now, this Jehovah Witness was the last baptism my father performed in the bathtub in our apartment before he was arrested. And he was beheaded in 1944 because he refused to serve in the German army. This letter is mentioned in the Year Book of Jehovah's Witnesses under the French history. And his name is Marcel Suter (ph). And he was a very young Witness. He was 23 when he was beheaded in Berlin.

Q. All right. Could we meet your husband now?

A. Oh, yes, of course. My husband, my dear husband. Where is he? Yeah, this is a picture of the whole family. You see? Just four years after the war. Reunion. This is my mother. This is my father. I think this is a very good picture of him because he really -- he was healthy. And that's my aunt, the one who was visiting me. And here comes my husband.

A. (Mr. Liebster) I just found the book Let Your Kingdom Come. This Marcel, which is a friend of my wife, on page 159, "He was neutral until his death." He was executed, beheaded. And this is often used in the publications of the Society. Let Your Kingdom Come.

Q. Would you both like to sit down and tell us how you met? After the war, evidently.

A. (Mr. Liebster) Yeah. I met Simone the first time in Portland at Bethel (ph) on the 48th, 1st November 48th on the 56th.

Q. When you say Bethel (ph) --

A. (Mr. Liebster) Bethel (ph) in Portland. That order of Jehovah's Witness, 124 Columbia Heights. I worked there for seven years in 16 different languages. And Simone had the privilege to come over to the states from France 1950 to back up the preconvention work of the first big convention in the Yankee Stadium.

Q. I see.

A. (Mr. Liebster) I met Simone the first time in '50.

Q. Simone, and what did you think of him when you first met him?

A. Well, this is a question which is pretty much I say at first, really completely at first, I didn't want to hear anything about him because I came from Europe, and I had plenty of stories of concentration camp and so on. And when the Witnesses would say, "We would like that you meet someone who was in camp," I did everything not to meet him, to tell you the truth, you know. But it was not because of his personality, rather because I just didn't want to go over all the things again, you know. And when I did meet him, of course, I couldn't escape. We were invited by the same family. Well, I was impressed by his wholeheartedness, for his spiritual questions. And to tell the truth, I was always fond of a Jewish person coming to know the Messiah and serve His interests. It was always something that attracted me. So slowly things came about because it took about six years until we decided to marry. In between I went to Gilliad School (ph). I went to North Africa, Algiers, as a missionary, came back to France, and then finally we were together.

A. (Mr. Liebster) And I was impressed with her experiences, that her father and parents were in the camp, had the same experiences as I. And the Alsatians and the people I embraced had many things in common and the common background. And she was doing artwork, and I was very interested in decoration work and artwork. So we had many things in common. And this time, of course, not easy to decide, everyone knew that the work is very important, and we were encouraged to stay at Bethel (ph.) As for the knowledge she could come over to do artwork for the printing for the Watch Tower, Brother Nord (ph) told me that in France they have only 4,000 publishers. "If you like to marry her, let you right away go to Gillead (ph), and I send you over to France, and you learn the French language." So I told Brother Nord (ph), I'm now 40 years old. I have learned with difficulty English. I can't learn French anymore to do good work in France." He said, "You have learned English. You will also learn French."

Q. Who is this Brother Nord (ph)?

A. Nord (ph) was the president, vice president, of the Jehovah's Witnesses of the New World Society at this time. So when he let me go the first occasion go from Bethel (ph) headquarters of Jehovah's Witness right away to the Gillead (ph) missionary school of Africa, and he was sending me to France. So we got married in September '56.

A. (Mrs. Liebster) We stayed in Paris.

A. (Mr. Liebster) Six years.

A. (Mrs. Liebster) Yeah, we stayed in Paris, and then it happened that my mother got it hard in

France. And I'm the only child, and we took care of my parents. And, well, there were many Witnesses in Mauthausen in Melhouse because we were missionaries, and it wasn't able to carry on missionary work because the percentage of Jehovah's Witnesses wasn't high. My parents were ready to move to anyplace where some missionary work --

A. (Mr. Liebster) Where the need would be great.

A. (Mrs. Liebster) Would be able to be learned. So it was decided upon Aix-les-Bains, and we came over here. We lived together 17 years we lived in this place, my father and my mother. And I can say that we were very grateful that we could help them. They got to their age 1980 --

A. (Mr. Liebster) 82.

A. (Mrs. Liebster) 81 82 and my aunt 89. They had due to the camp, of course, quite some serious health problems. We could help them along. Max was a wonderful son-in-law. He is a lot to my parents to help them along. Daddy didn't hear anything. So they had a peaceful time here.

Q. May I ask you a question? What type of a town is Aix-les-Bains?

A. (Mr. Liebster) Aix-les-Bains is a place for cures.

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