**Erwin Tepper**

**00:00:30**

**Okay. Just for purposes of the woman who's gonna be transcribing the printed transcript, if you could start, Dr. Tepper, by just stating your name and spelling it for her.**

Well, my name is, uh, Erwin Tepper, and it's E-r-w-i-n and then T-e-p-p-e-r.

**Okay. And you were born where, and when?**

I was born in Vienna, and I was born in November 14, 1931.

**Okay. I'd like to start, and realizing, of course, how young you were at the time, but I'm interested, Dr. Tepper, in what kinds of memories, if any, you have of your family and your family life as a young boy in Vienna prior to your coming to the United States.**

00:01:31

Yes, as I said, I was [clear throat] born in Vienna and my parents, uh, my parents actually came to Vienna from Poland because my father wanted to study at the university to become an accountant, and in Poland he was not admitted to the university, so he came to Vienna. We had a fairly large family in Vienna, mainly my father's family, and, uh, what I do remember, although I was a relatively youngster, we lived in a nice apartment, uh, up on the third floor, as I recall. The area was a quiet neighborhood because it was very near what they call the...the Dunno [sounds like] Canal, which is the Danube Canal, and there was a nice park there which I visited, and I remember going there and riding on my scooter, and at one point I fell and I put the blade of the scooter bell right above my eye, and that was a mess. Uh [clears throat], most of the time, as I said, I was a youngster, and we had as a, we went, I went to school there, of course, kindergarten, first, and second grade, and the family social life really revolved around our relatives. I recall, uh, people coming to our house just to sit and discuss – we had no television, obviously, but I have a picture of, uh, my father and, discussing something or other with a relative and my mother playing chess with a...with a relative, and, uh, I probably was in a crib sleeping, and, uh, so it was quiet, it was peaceful.

00:03:21

My best friend actually lived downstairs, and we communicated by me pounding on the wall and he was, he would pound on the ceiling. We were both in the same grade. He was not Jewish, and, uh, an interesting thing, what I do remember is thanks to him, sort of, uh, I was arrested. This happened after the, uh, annexation of, uh, Austria by Germany. Jews were not allowed into the, uh, parks. Well, I didn't know anything, and the park was very close to our house. It was perhaps one street to cross. We were allowed, my friend and I, to go to the park without parents, during the day, of course, and he went, and I couldn't go, and I said at one point, course I was a little kid, I didn't say it just the way I'm saying it now, but I said, “The hell with this, I'm going with him” So the two of us went, and, uh, and I remember we were playing, and somehow or other, a police, a young, well, I won't say what I thought of him, anyway, a young policeman came, I don't know how he knew that I was Jewish, but he started to arrest me and drag me off and I put up some big fight, kicking and screaming and hollering. Uh, I heard this from my mother. [clears throat] We got to the police station, and I was officially charged with trespassing, resisting an officer, disrespect of an officer, and assault and battery on an officer. Course I was about five and a half years old. And, uh, I guess the guy was ready to throw me in jail and throw away the key, but the desk sergeant, or what you would call the de-, today the desk sergeant somehow got ahold of my mother, and she came, and the desk sergeant basically told her is get, you know, get him outta here, just make sure it doesn't happen again.

00:05:19

And that was, uh, that much I remember, but, uh, other than that I had a...a very nice, reasonable time in Vienna. I don't remember any, uh, particular, uh, incident, uh, except, as I said, we lived near a park, and I remember the park whereas I went there very frequently just to walk, or, as I said, ride my scooter, hang out with my parents, and so on. And the other thing I do also remember, my parents, liked to walk, so, so to speak, we took walks in the quote unquote Vienna Woods, and, uh, I do have some pictures of me even as a little baby in a carriage, uh, just having a picnic. And that's a-, I don't remember that much more else, really.

**So, Doctor, the park that you mention....**

**2nd voice: Try to avoid the “as I said,” because we never know whether we will have heard you say that.**

Right.

**SP: It's a lot to keep in mind, I understand that. The park that you mention, was that the Prayter [sounds like]? Was that the big park that was near you, or am I thinking of someplace else?**

00:06:44

No, the Prater was an amusement, park, with the big ferris wheel and so on. That is not the park that I'm talking about. This was just [clears throat] a park along a canal, just a nice place to walk and sit and relax. It was not the Prater. The Prater was a big amusement park, with the appropriate rides and ferris, the famous ferris wheel.

**Right. And would that have been a place that you would have been to as a child?**

00:07:16

I think I might've been a little bit too young. Uh, if I re-, I don't recall, to be honest with you, uh, but I would think, in a park, I don't know if there would've been much to do for a four and five year old. I honestly don't know, but, uh.... I mean, the closest thing that I can remember to that would be when I came to the United States, I went to Coney Island, but I was a bit older then.

**We'll get to that. Did you not have siblings?**

No, I'm an o-.... No, uh, I was an only child, uh, which I guess I didn't mind. Uh, as I said, I had friends, I went to school, and, uh, my father and mother took me very often with them. Um, even back in, well, when I was in Vienna, obviously I was only five or six year a-, I was only from age of, age one to age six and a half, but, uh, I don't recall a babysitter. And if you go even further, I don't recall a babysitter even when I came to the United States. I was with my parents almost all the time. They were my best friends, so to speak.

**You had mentioned that your father had studied to become an accountant. Is that in fact what his occupation was?**

00:08:51

My father wanted to be an accountant, and he went to the University of Vienna, but he had to leave, or quit, because I came along, and obviously there was a financial problem with raising a family. So my father never completed his university training. Uh, he worked, after I was born, he worked, uh, as a retail, in a retail shop selling women's lingerie, and eventually he became the manager of that shop, uh, from, I guess 1932 until he left in, you know, in 30, in '38 and so on.

00:09:32

But he always knew accounting. He liked it. Even, uh, here in the United States he worked as a, uh, c-, what they call cutter in the garment industry, and during the war, the, uh, his boss, knowing that he knew, and was accounting, he sort of made him unofficially the assistant accounting of the firm, and I remember my father worked during the day as a cutter, [inaudible] know what that means, and at home, he did a lot of the books for the firm that he worked with. And his, to me, his greatest, uh, fame was when I finally started working after medical school and all that, my first year, and I proudly had to make out an income tax form, so I made it all out and I said, “Gee, look, Daddy, I made money, and, uh, I owe the government,” I don't know what it was, hundred dollars or something, so my father said, “Lemme look at it.” And he looked at it, and by the time he got through, the government owed me fifty dollars. I have no idea how he did it, but after that, I made out my income tax and I always gave it to him, and, uh, he did pretty well. He liked, he loved accounting and figures, but officially he was a member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and he was a cutter in the garment industry.

**And I'm assuming that your mother, in Vienna, was a housewife?**

00:11:11

Yes. [coughs] My mother was a housekeeper, uh, in Vienna. Of course, when they came to the n-, to the States later on, uh, she did work, but also she worked in the ladies, uh, underwear, in the ladies garment industry. Uh, my, a cousin of ours, and we moved to Bridgeport eventually, and he had a factory and my mother worked there. And, uh, perhaps later on I can tell you a story about my mother working and not working.

**You've alluded to this, and you've anticipated pretty much my next question when you talked about the not so amusing story of being arrested as a five and a half or six year old. I was gonna ask you what kinds of memories you have, both generally once the Anschluss happened in March of '38, and more specifically, if there are any memories at all of the impact on your life and on your family's life of Kristallnacht in November of 1938.**

00:12:23

The, uh, after the Anschluss, again, I was a fairly young kid and I don't remember very, very much. I do remember being taken out of one school, which was 'cause after the Anschluss, Jews were restricted in public school to a quota of like one percent, and I do remember being removed out of my normal school, where I had been going with this friend that I told you had, where we went to...to the park, and I remember that.

00:12:55

Other than that I don't reme-, remember very much difference, except on Kristallnacht. I remember my father never came home from work that night, and I presume, I mean, to me it didn't make that much difference, I didn't know. Uh, my mother apparently was quite worried, and in the evening our apartment was visited by the Brown Shirts, in other words, the, I ge-, not the official police or the Gestapo. The Brown Shirts, as you know, were basically the bully boys of the Nazi party, individuals who had no rights whatsoever, basically, but they knew where every Jew was living in our apartment. They came to our apartment, looking for my father. They came in, they didn't ransack or anything, but they looked in every room and every closet for an adult. My father was not home. They left. The next day my father didn't come home; he didn't come home the next night, either. So he was away for two full nights, and my mother, of course, was frantic. Um, you also must remember, we had no phones. The phones were taken away from all Jews.

00:14:16

The third night, my father came home. He was fine; everything was all right. What had happened is a bit of a story. He was, as I said, he worked as a manager of a women's lingerie shop. In the summer of 1938, he was laid off. He was laid off. He was basically let go because the store owner, who was not Jewish, uh, wanted to have the store Aryanized, in other words, no Jews working there. So he had no job. But now came Kristallnacht, and what actually happened, my father's boss was not a Nazi. Somehow he knew what was going to happen. He got ahold of my father during the day. How we did it st-, to this day I don't know, 'cause we had no phone. My father spent that night and the following day and the following night hidden in the back of this guy's store, where he had been working previously. So as I said, the man was not Jewish, but he wasn't gonna have any of this, and he hid my father until it was safe to go home. And he did come home. And actually, his boss also took some risks when he was discharged. He gave him a letter of recommendation, and he stated in that letter very clearly the only reason he was let go is because he's Jewish, and we want our store to be Aryan. And I, so I think that took some risk.

**I hate to ask what may sound like a ignorant question, but I'm not entirely sure.... I know lots of people like your father were rounded up at Kristallnacht, but I'm not sure exactly what the purpose was for those kinds of arrests taking place.**

00:16:11

They were just, to my knowledge, those arrests on Kristallnacht were just because you were Jewish. They dragged you off, and if you put up a fight, they dragged you off more. Quite a number of Jews, as I know si-, I don't know just what you read about that, they wound up in Dachau, in concentration camps. Quite a number of Jews were killed, and it was just a matter of, if you were Jewish, they could do whatever they...they liked, and if you remember the history of the Kristallnacht, it was because a Jew killed a German ambassador, somebody or other in Paris. And it was just supposedly a, uh, popular uprising, which of course it wasn't, because to my knowledge, and to what most people know now, today's, it was very well planned.

**Needless to say, life changed very, very dramatically for Jewish families, and even more so after Kristallnacht than even after Anschluss.**

00:17:25

Yeah, there were quite a number of changes. A-, again, in...in my situation, 'cause I was so young, I don't remember the real, real details. Uh, I do remember, from what my mother told me, that there was problems shopping. Uh, the Jews were not allowed to shop during certain hours of the day, but they were allowed to shop from 12 to 3 in the afternoon. There was only one problem is, in those days and even today, most of the stores are closed from 12 to 2. So yes, you could go shopping; the stores were closed. Um, and the major problem that my parents did tell me was sustenance. My father had no job from nine-, from the summer of 1938 until he eventually went to England in the spring of 1939. Most of the Jews [coughs] were sustained by the Jewish Welfare Committee, so to speak, of Vienna. Jews s-, many Jews still worked and had an income, and they shared it with everybody else, et cetera. And to my knowledge, that's the way we survived. And as I said, we had a fair am-, number of relatives, uh, in Vienna, my father's, uh, relations, so we had a big family. My f-, well, my father's siblings, out of, my father was one of, I think, five. His oldest brother and his oldest sister were in the United States. They moved in the '20s. And another brother was in Argentina. He moved there in the '30s. A sister stayed behind to take care of my grandfather in Poland, and a third brother died, e-, e-, from tuberculosis. But my grandfather was like one of nine children, so we had a very large family scattered in Poland and in Austria-Hungary at that time. And I think that's how we survived.

**Now before we move on to your story in terms of the episode that brought you to the United States, it sounds as if your father managed to leave Vienna even before you did. So could you tell me a little bit about what you learned later? Because presumably you didn't know at the time exactly what was going on with your father, but I'm interested in you telling me about your father's escaping from Vienna.**

00:20:18

My father [clears throat], I don't know the fine details, but I, my fath-, my mother and father, uh, heard through, again, through the Jewish Committee of Vienna, of a group from the United States coming to hopefully take some children whose parents couldn't go. But, and I was put in and I was chosen, but my father, I think, also requested or somehow put in an...an application. I can't give you the details, but he left Vienna, I think through the auspices of Highoss [sounds like], and he went to England and spent time there in a, uh, refugee camp, in a Jewish refugee camp, called Camp Kitchner *[Camp Kitchener, a refugee camp near Sandwich, Kent]*. He left probably about two or three weeks before I left, or before I was chosen and left, and so he left first, I left next, my mother was alone for about two months. But again, since my father was in England, again, perhaps through Highoss, my mother came to England, but technically not as a refugee, but she was, came to England with a job and waiting. She became a servant to some family in London. So officially she was not a refugee in that sense; she was a hired hand. But that's how both my parents got to England. I came to the States directly, but as I said, my father came to England, my father in this refugee camp as a refugee, my mother as a working homekeeper or something of that nature. Of course, they knew each other and they communicated, and I suppose on the weekends they met and saw.

[From british National Archives web site: The Kitchener camp, a derelict site which had previously been an army camp, was taken over by the Council for German Jewry at the beginning of 1939 as a result of pressure from the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland to rescue threatened Jews from Germany and Austria. Conditions for admission were that inmates must be aged between 18 and 40 and that they have a definite prospect of emigration overseas. The camp began receiving refugees in February 1939 and ended with the outbreak of war in September after which most of the inmates chose to enlist in the British army.]

**Okay. We're gonna now move on into the Brith Shalom part. I'm gonna ask a sort of director's question: If you can, as much as possible, maintain eye contact with me, rather than look down. I know it's a natural thing to do, but it looks a little funny on film to see somebody looking down, so just a minor point. Again, knowing how young you were, not withstanding that, what do you remember about the the process in which your family, one, learned about the possibility of you coming to the States, and, two, what you and your family had to go through in order to be chosen for that operation.**

00:23:27

The information that was disseminated throughout the Viennese community, the Viennese Jewish community, uh, came, I believe, from what they call, uh, the Jewish Cultural Organization. That's an organization, I don't know that much about it, but the official name was called the Yiddish [inaudible], and the first I ever officially ever knew anything about it is when, if you would look at my birth certificate, it was not issued by the hospital, it was not issued by the Polish government, my parents were Polish, it was not issued by the Austrian government. It was issued by the Jewish Cultural Committee of Vienna. Thus I became, and my passport states very clearly, that I was a nonentity. I was a frender [sounds like], a stranger. I was stateless, officially from the day that I was born. Now that same committee, in 1930 ay-, uh, 1939, I am sure was notified by the Brith Shalom group that started, or was going initiate, this exodus to the United States. And [clears throat] my father said, I guess, said, “Fine,” and put in an application. Uh, I know my cousin also, my mother's sister's boy also put in an application. Uh, I can't give you the exact dates. Uh, I know, you know, they wanted birth certificate, who you are, and so on. I presume, although I don't know for sure, they may have also asked, you know, do you have any relatives in United States, and so on. We did, but I don't know. You put in that application, and then there was a series of interviews, with, uh, Mr. Gilbert Kraus, his wife, and there was also a doctor's, uh, guess his name was Strauss, Stauss...?

**Schless.**

00:25:46

Doc-, uh, yeah, Doctor Schless, that was his name. And you had an interview with Kraus, with Mr. Kraus. I believe also Mrs. Kraus was there, but I'm not a hundred percent sure, and I presume also that Dr. Schless was there to make sure that you sorta passed the quick physical. After that interview, you heard nothing until one day a letter came and said that yes, you, Erwin Tepper – or the letter came to your parents, and it said, yes, Erwin Tepper was chosen. Now, the next question that always comes up to me is how in, not how – I was chosen. Fine.

00:26:33

Why was I chosen, for instance, and not my cousin? To this day I have no real idea, although somebodybremarked in one of the books relative to this whole business of getting the children to the United States, that perhaps they were looking for children who didn't look particularly Jewish. So I was blond and blue-eyed. Uh, I didn't have a hook nose. So maybe that's why I was chosen. But my honest answer to that is I have no clue. All I know is that I was chosen and the parents were given, the letter that came to the parents gave you basically 24 hours to make that decision. You were asked to, yes, if you agree, bring your kid, bring your child to this particular place with all the appropriate papers, and we'll get started. And that's really all I remember. I don't particularly, I do remember vaguely the interview. What was I, what I was questioned about, who, what, when, and where, I do not remember. But I do remember being led into a room, and the questioning was not with my parents. I mean, my parents were waiting outside. That much I do remember.

**And I assume, Dr. Tepper, that you have a conscious memory of why you were there?**

00:28:08

To be honest, I don't really [clears throat] the fine, the finite circumstances of why I was at this interview. I knew, I think I vaguely remember knowing I was going someplace. Again, the whys and wherefores I was going, I wasn't really too clear. I was only about six and a half years old. But I knew I was going someplace. I can't honestly tell you whether I remember that I was going alone, or with, or my parents were coming with me [buzzing noise]

**Let's pause for just a second. . . . Okay, let me just remind myself where we were. We were talking about the recollections or lack thereof of...**

Right.

**...of the choosing process.**

I really know very little about it.

**Uh-huh.**

And that thing that I told you about not being Jewish, that comes from that book [coughs] by Bahmels [sounds like].

**Yeah, which I [inaudible]. Okay. Well, then let's continue on, and let me ask, again, to the extent that you have them, of your recollections of, anything at all about leaving Vienna, including saying goodbye to your family, your parents, any memories at all of the process during which you were preparing to leave your family and Vienna.**

00:29:50

Yeah, once, uh, we were notified, or my mother was notified, because she was the only one left, that I was eligible to go, uh, [clears throat] I don't remember that much. I remember packing a small suitcase, and I remember my mother wasn't exactly too happy in that sense. Uh, I don't mean happy, but, you know, so sorry and saddened, and then I remember getting on a train at the Vienna railroad station. I don't remember the exact moment and so on and so forth. Um, I vaguely remember sleeping in Berlin in a dormitory. That's all that I remember. As far as being told what happened, I did, uh, a piece and wrote to other, uh, children, and they gave me information as to what was going on, but my own personal recollections, for reasons [clears throat], perhaps they're psychological, but I don't remember really very, very much of the actual time from when I left Vienna, uh, until I arrived, uh, in New York, in the United States.

00:31:32

Uh, of course we know [clears throat] there was a stop in Berlin. If I look at my passport, the visa stamp is from Berlin, issued by the Berlin Consulate, not by the Viennese Consulate, um, and it states the date that we left Hamburg, 'cause we went from Vienna to Berlin, from Berlin, the next day we went to Hamburg and left, and we stopped in Southampton to pick up passengers, and that's when my father, who, as I said before, had come into England before I left, my father was there, I do remember that, and him coming aboard with a camera, and I have pictures that he took during our stop in Southampton on the boat. Um, I don't remember very much about the trip across on the boat. I don't remember being seasick, uh, and I don't remember.... I guess I must have had a good time, because [clears throat] I don't remember anything bad. And then I remember getting off in New York. But for some reason, which I've never been able to figure out except as...as I think [coughs and clears throat], excuse me, maybe it's psychological, I just repressed it, I don't have that much recollection of the actual time interval between leaving Vienna and arriving in New York.

**Did you know that you were going to see your father in England?**

00:33:21

I don't think so. I think that was a surprise. I do know that I, we were all told that we were going to stop in England, but that's all. And then, as I said, my father came on board. To my knowledge, he was the only relative of these 50 children that was indeed on board at that point in Southampton. And, uh, and of course he got off and.... I never saw the actual photographs until my father came over, obviously, with the photographs.

**To say the least, it must have been a bittersweet moment, because on the one hand, you're seeing your father who.... I know he hadn't left all that long before you left, but a little bit of time had passed, and, of course, at that point, particularly as a six or seven year old, you had no real way of knowing when you would next see your father.**

00:34:27

It's...it's true that when I saw my father there, as I said, I...I guess I didn't really think about the future, because I don't really recall being that much involved in the decision to send me away or not to send me away. The most that I can recall to date is I know I was going away to see relatives, because [clears throat], and to me, seeing relatives was no...no big deal, because we, as I said, in my life in Vienna was very much centered around other relatives, so it was quite common, oh, well, you're gonna see Uncle This or Aunt That, and, uh, even during my stay in Vienna, vacation time, during the summer, for instance, I remember more because [clears throat] Vienna [clears throat], excuse me, was quite hot in the summer. My parents came from Poland, so almost every summer that I can remember vacationing from Vienna was in Poland. My mother took me to Poland. My father stayed to work in Vienna, but my mother and I spent at least a month or two every summer in Poland with my grandfather, with both my maternal grandfather in place called St'nee [sounds like], and where my mother came from, a little village called Doni-, Donina, which was about ten miles south [clears throat], where the family had, I think it...it was a, uh, lumber mill, where they, uh, sawed big pieces of trees into boards of lumber. And so to visit relatives was no major event, so to speak.

**And the relatives that were living in the United States at that point, do you know where they were, where they lived?**

00:36:41

My relatives in the United States at that point were most, well, my aunt and my uncle were in New York, New York City, and that time, back in the late '30s and '40s, I would, I believe that all of my relatives here in the United States were living in New York City [clears throat], in Connecticut, and one or two families, upstate New York. It's only later, after the war, et cetera, that some people moved out to California and so on. But my father's oldest brother and oldest sister were in New York, in New York City.

**Right. And so you said, understandably, very few memories of the journey. I believe it was about a ten-day ship journey, more or less, something like that. Some of the other kids have told us about eating strange foods, things like that. I'm wondering if there are any recollections of your arrival in the United States. What, if anything, comes to mind when you think back? And indeed, it's a complete coincidence, today is June 3rd, which is the day the ship arrived.**

00:38:20

That's right. Yes, when we arrived [clears throat] in New York, I do remember, an enorm-, looking over from the ship, an enormous crowd on the dock, and the waiting, and the luggage. It was just total, absolute chaos, and we were just herded around to go here and go there and not get lost, and I think we were placed on buses almost immediately, from the harbor in New York to [clears throat] the camp that was prepared for us by the, uh, Brith Shalom organization in Collegeville, Maryland, or in Collegeville, uh, Pennsylvania, which was outside of Philadelphia. Um, as I said, we certainly spent no time in New York at all, and we were sort of whisked away, uh, and in the camp [cell phone rings]....

**So we were talking about your arriving at the camp and around that period.**

00:39:35

Yeah, when we got to the camp, which was v-, very nice, uh, big, plenty of places to play [clears throat], and food was excellent, and there were interesting foods for us, and the one thing that I do remember very clearly was we were given a dessert, which was some kinda jelly, nice and red, with slices of banana in it, which was, of course, jello with b-, slices of banana. Now in Europe, I do remember, I don't think I had eaten a banana maybe two or three times in my life, but here was bananas, and everybody thought, “Oh, that's great!” And of course we very carefully [clears throat] scraped off the jello, because we thought the the jello was the preservative for the bananas. It took a while to figure out, yeah, you're supposed to eat the jello, too. But that much I do remember, with the jello, we were standin' there scraping it off, and then somebody, [smacks lips], “Mmm, that's pretty sweet,” and that...that much I do remember. And of course there were other things that we hadn't seen, corn, for instance. That was something, I don't ever recall seeing it in Europe. Maybe I did, but I don't remember. But I remember the thing with the jello, and I vaguely remember corn being a little bit, corn on the cob being something unusual, uh, you know, how do we eat this?

00:41:13

And, uh, but [clears throat] the camp was good. We had plenty of places to run and play. But the most important thing, and this I remember clearly, our most, we had two most important jobs at camp. Number one was to learn English. We had English cla-, well, we had English classes going back to the boat. Every day on the boat, we had English classes, trying to learn English. At the camp, every day, and, in fact, I think they hired a professional teacher at the camp to teach us English, and we hadda write home, or write to our parents at least once a week. And I think, uh, that's true, and that much I remember. And then the rest we had company, and, uh, again, I don't remember the details, but, uh, talking to other people, uh, when they wrote to me about things. Uh, we celebrated the birsday, birthdays, you know. Ev-, every time somebody had a birthday during that summer, got a little birthday cake, everybody sang “Happy Birthday,” and so on. So they tried, and they succeeded, at making everyone happy, contented. I'm not saying that they weren't people who, uh, missed their parents, but they certainly made it as comfortable as possible. And again, going back over and over again to learn English.

00:42:49

Now [clears throat], how do you learn English to a group that was from kindergarten age up to teenagers, because we had kids twelve, thirteen years old. One child had his bar mitzvah there. And we didn't have classes, you know, you didn't have kindergarten classes and you didn't have, uh, seventh and eighth grade classes, but every Sunday we had a class, and what do you do in the Sunday papers, you read the funnies. It's a great way to learn a language, because you have the balloons. You can read and you can look at the picture, and figure out what's going on. And to this day, I can tell you, I read the funnies on the daily newspaper and on Sunday first, and then I go read the rest of the papers. And I still think that's a great way to learn English, with the letters and the balloons, people speaking, and then looking at the pictures. And this, of course, was opposed to what perhaps some of the other children told you, about the movies that we saw on the boat. They were all in English with no subtitles. We had no idea what was going on, but we would argue after the movie, trying to figure out what the movie was all about, but it was fun, I hope, I guess.

**I'm also told that watching some of the other summer campers who were there playing baseball was a bit of a mystery to all of you Viennese kids, who, of course, knew only soccer, not baseball.**

00:44:24

I presume so. I don't...I don't really remember that, but I...I wouldn't be surprised. Uh, there were other kids in the camp. There was a r-, river there, and there was another camp across the river or something of that nature, as I recall, and, uh, I think were was some, we had some visitors and so on, so that whole summer was well worth it, and again, it made us comfortable, it made us learn [clears throat], and then we all left the camp, obviously, at the beginning of the school year curriculum, and we were factioned out to either relatives and foster homes and so on.

**And where did you go, after the summer?**

00:45:05

After summer I went to the Bronx, New York, to my aunt, my father's oldest sister. She took me in. She had two children of her own, two girls, who were, I guess shhhh-, about, they were older that I was. Uh, the oldest probably was six years older than I was, and the second one was about three years older. But we lived in the Bronx. If you n-, you know the Bronx, it was way up near Van Cartland Park, the last stop on the Jerome Avenue line, and we lived, again I was fortunate, I lived right next to a park. My official address was 95 Reservoir Oval. If anybody knows anything in the Bronx, there was a reservoir there, which a few years [clears throat] previously had been turned into a park, and, uh, we lived on this side, on one side of the street, and on the other side was the park. And it was nice. You, again, you went in, they had swings and playgrounds for the kids, and that's where I lived for about two and a half years.

00:46:19

Uh, and then, uh, well, the other problem, I'm sure you've heard from others, was school. I was officially supposedly, had I stayed in Vienna, gone into third grade. Now here I am in the Bronx. All right, I've been in the United States for two months, two and a half. My English, shall we say, was not the greatest. So [clears throat] I went to public school, P.S. 96. I was put into kindergarten. What do you learn, you know, what do you do with a kid who knows nothing? You start him in kindergarten. So here I was, the tallest, biggest, heaviest kid in kindergarten, and, uh, I had a good time there, I remember, and the kids, it's interesting, the kids, as I recall, no one made fun of me, even though I was bigger and older than all the rest of 'em. And I learned to play, you know, we played in the playground, as I said, in the park, and I slowly skipped, I mean, I didn't spend the whole year in kindergarten. Once the teacher thought I had [coughs] learned enough English, I was put into first grade, because the knowledge [coughs] you could present in either the German or the English language, and even in math, I mean, if you ask me, “What's two and two?,” it's either four or feer, what's the d-, the language made no difference as long as you know how to add. So the overall knowledge that they were looking for me, and I heard this from the other children, was how good was your English. Your knowledge was all right, because you had already gone to a certain school in Europe, all the way up, as I said, to teenagers. Their interest was learning, again, English. And no one in the school there spoke English [sic]. There may have been one or two teachers who were Jewish who spoke a little Yiddish, but basically you learned English. When I learned so much English, I was put into the next grade, et cetera. And eventually we moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut, and there I caught up with my grade, and as I said, in kindergarten in New York, I was the oldest kid in kindergarten. When I got to Bridgeport, Connecticut, into the third grade, I was one of the youngest kids in third grade, so I had caught up. And I think all the other children had, went through the same ritual of catching up to their proper grade [clears throat]. Maybe in the older groups they were a half a grade behind, but basically we caught up, and I caught up, and it was fine.

**While you were at the camp during the summer, do you have any memories at all of either of the Krauses?**

00:49:10

I do remember Gilbert Kraus, particularly sitting in with English, helping English. I don't have that much recollection of Mrs. Kraus. Uh, I just...I just don't remember or recollect. But I do remember Mr. Kraus as a, in, reading to us, trying to get us to read and think in English, which I think, uh, is very important now, especially what they're going through [clears throat] with a lot of the immigration today. I mean, there's nothing wrong with keeping your old language. I can speak German, and I always have. But having said that, learning English did nothing to detract from growing up, uh, as a Jewish child, the learning Yiddish, maintaining my German language and so on [clears throat], some Jewish heritage. And I think, I have had arguments with people, uh, when I went, in my own, with children, you know, you go to parents/teacher groups, associations, and they're talking about specializing, and, uh, I remember having a big argument. They wanted to hire a teacher to teach math in a foreign language, specifically Spanish, and I told 'em, “You're out of your minds. Two and two is four, whether you're talking about English, German, Spanish. If you're gonna spend money, hire the teacher to teach English. The mathematics will come without any problem.” And, uh, as I said, I have, I've had arguments with this along, as my children were growing up. And my children, uh, actually spoke German also, because my wife was from Switzerland, my mother-in-law lived with us for ten years, she was older, she never really...really learned English, so my children learned Swiss German, and they can still speak it today, and they can speak English. There's nothing wrong with that. So, and we were, I was very proud that my children were bilingual, English and German, and I don't see anything wrong with that. And in high school, actually, one, two of 'em took French and the other one took Spanish. That, you know, in the United States, how much chance do you get to speak? In Europe, if you sneeze across the border you gotta know the language.

**Now I'm assuming, Doctor, that once you and the other kids, by the end of the summer, when you left the summer camp, that there was certainly no formal means by which kids stayed in touch with each other, and I am under the impression, as we were discussing earlier, that there's been one or two sort of reunions over the years. But going back to the earlier years, before I forget, I wanted you to tell me the story of how you at some point later, I'm not sure exactly when that was, had an unplanned meeting or re-meeting with one or two of the other children in the group in Bridgeport.**

00:52:44

Well, after we left the camp, and as I said, I moved to Bridgeport, uh, I...I moved to New York, I had no contact with the other children. Um, I did have contact through my aunt because, uh, she was somewhat interested in the Brith Shalom. She maintained contact with the, uh, overall president of the Brith Shalom group, as I told you, uh, Levine. But I had no contact, and then [clears throat] we moved to Bridgeport, and I grew up in Bridgeport. That's really where I grew up. I got there at third grade and I went through high school in Bridgeport. There was no reunion [clears throat], there was nothing, until early in 2000 and 2. I don't know which organization, but there was an organi-, it was, there was an organized convention of Holocaust survivors in Chicago. There was a subsection of that group for children, and, of course, the Brith Shalom group was included, and the children's organization, they were various groups that had brought children over, as you know, and then there was this, uh, young lady, Iris Pozner, who had looked into the number of children that came without parents. So before that convention took place, there was a call for a sort of reunion of the Brith Shalom group in Philadelphia. The Brith Shalom group had sold the camp, and taken that money and built an old age home, so to speak, or assisted age home in Philadelphia, and there was a meeting there, as I recall, of the Brith Shalom children that were available and could come, et cetera.

00:54:54

And it was asked that someone present the story of the Brith Shalom group, because we were the single largest group that arrived in the United States at that time. There were other stories where childrens [sic] came in dribs and drabs, two or three there, four there, ten there. We were the biggest sing-, single group, so we were asked to make a presentation, and the presentation was going to be done, was supposed to be done, by Robert, [inaudible] man, Robert Braun, who he and and his sister had been taken in as foster children by the Krauses, and they lived with the Krauses for, I believe, two years. The Brauns had a relative, I believe a cousin or an uncle, by the name of Rudolf Braun, a physician, a general practice family physician in Bridgeport, Connecticut. So the two, when he was ready to take them in, he was also, he was a refugee from Vienna, but he came over not really as a refugee, but anyway, so he had a practice [clears throat], and he took these two children, a brother and a sister, in, and the brother and the sister left the Krauses and they moved to Bridgeport.

00:56:14

Now it turns out Rudolf Braun, the doctor, was my family doctor. My parents went to him; I went to him. He fixed, I broke a r-, my wrist, I broke my elbow, I had a cold, et cetera. He was my family physician, and I remember going over to the office, either with my father, mother, either, and all I remember was there was a young gal who occasionally would help out. I knew she was a foreigner because she had a slight accent, and I thought it was his daughter. It turns out that this young lady who occasionally would help out, you know, in the office, stashing paperwork or so on, was Hannah Braun, the broth-, the sister of this Robert Braun, who was one of the fifty kids that came over with me, but I never knew this. I had no clue. I knew she was there, I knew her name was Braun, and that's it, until [clears throat] I met this, her brother at this meeting in Philadelphia. Now the reason I never knew was they lived in a st-, section of town that went to a different high school than I did. He went to Bassick High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut; I went to Central. We never crossed paths, I never knew he existed, until we met by accident, so to speak, in Philadelphia. Now what happened is [clears throat] he was supposed to write this little talk about the Brith Shalom group for the Chicago convention. He couldn't come. He had a family affair; he just couldn't get to Chicago, so I was asked and I said, “Yeah, all right,” and I was the one that wrote, uh, the, uh, presentation for the Brith Shalom group. Now as I...I didn't have much recollection, so what I did, through Iris Pozner, the lady who organized this 1,000 children group, she had names and addresses of the 50, of many, well, not many, but some of the, I think at least 20 of the 50 children that were still alive, and she had addresses and so on. I wrote to these 50 children, introduced myself, and I said, “Look, I have to say somethin' about what happened to us, and can you please tell me what happened to you?” And I wrote, I said, “Number one, I want t-, what happened in Vienna; number two, what do you remember about the trip from Vienna to Berlin,” I...I wrote out a whole list, “from Berlin to Hamburg, on the boat, at the camp, and what happened to you since.” And they wrote me answers, most of them, and that's what I used as the basis of my presentation.

**Now just to complete your family story, I wanna make sure you tell me a little bit about when and how your parents finally made it to the United States.**

00:59:17

Yeah. My parents got, my father got to England [clears throat] before I...I left. My mother got to England just before the war started, in, I guess in July or August [clears throat]. They were both living in England. One was in the, my father was in a refugee camp; my mother was working as the maid or household something in London. Now I was in the States. My father's oldest sister and oldest brother were in the States, and they started proceedings to bring them over. They apparently gave the guarantees that were necessary, and, of course, since I was in the States already, a son, that added to their visa application so that perhaps they were moved up a few notches. I think that was one of the things in...in the visa bureaucracy, that if you had children here, you were moved up. And they came, uh, I think in 1941, before the United States entered the war, before December '41, [clears throat] and they were also taken in by my aunt. So now, in this little apartment in the Bronx, we had my aunt, her husband, her two children, me, and my mother and father, and, uh, my uncle had a little jewelry shop on Jerome Avenue, and I worked there. I learned, he made a little extra money by, if you remember the Bulova watch company, he was given, he would be sent the innards of a watch, the case, the face, and the handles. He would put the watch mechanism into the case. He then attached the face, the num-, numerals, and my job was to put on the handles, the big hand and the little hand, and so I helped out in the store with the, I sat there with, you know, with the little magnifying glass and it was fun. It gave me something to do. Uh, my aunt could not work. She was actually crippled. She couldn't [clears throat], she couldn't use her right hand at all, basically left hand, but she ran her household with an iron fist, lemme tell you.

01:01:45

And, uh, my father, as I said, his oldest brother was in New York, was president of the Jewish Waiters Union, so he gave my father a job as a waiter. Well, that didn't go too well. My father just couldn't hack it. Turned out we had a cousin in Bridgeport who, uh, had a lingerie factory, and Bridgeport at that time had a, very much a garment industry. He got my father a job in the women's garment, in-, International Ladies Women's Garment Association. We moved to Bridgeport just before the actual war started, and, as I said, I grew up in Bridgeport from third grade up. Um, and of course we always kept in touch and so on and so forth. We had a family circle during the war, and I know that family circle [clears throat] helped quite a number of people getting into the States. We had two sisters who came. They, uh, spent most of the war years in the Dominican Republic, which was pretty, uh, generous in allowing Jews to come in, and I remember that. And it was a lotta fun. So growing up really I was basically an American kid. I spoke English. Uh, my parents went to night school once a week in the public school building to learn English. Uh, my mother worked as a seamstress in my uncle's factory, my cousin's factory. My father worked in another factory until, and of course we needed the money, obviously, no problem, but, and this, I think something you have two things to think about, uh, this whole thing.

01:03:30

Number one, the parents letting the children go. I mean, stop and think, if you were a parent today and some stranger came to you and said, “We'll take these kids and we're bringing 'em over to the States, you may never see 'em again,” would you let them go? It's a big problem, I would think, number one. And number two, in our f-, overall family, I know, one of the biggest thing [sic] was education. From the day that I can remember, I was going to college. It wasn't a question of if you wanted to go or didn't want. Your education did not [coughs] finish with high school. It finished with college. Then you could do what you want. So education was a big deal. I did pretty well in school. I was a smart kid. Got too cocky, but, all right, I did well, and I did honor roll every year except seventh grade, English. I don't know what happened. I was getting all As and a few Bs, and all of a sudden this one marking period, I got, not did I get a D, which is failing, I got a red D in English. I don't remember what happened, but my father and my mother were a bit upset, shall we say, at the least. They never laid a hand on me. C-, my...my...my mother would lay a hand, not, also never laid a hand on me. She would take one of these straw, uh, beaters that you beat the rug with. That's what I got spanked with. But anyhow, I got this red D, and my father said, “This can't go on.” He made my mother stop working so that she would be home when I came home from school. I did my homework.

01:05:18

She never went back to work until I went off to college, so education was a big deal in my family. And as I said, y-, t-, the Krauses were the heroes, but in my opinion, the parents were the same heroes to let 'em go. And I think everyone did well, from what I know. Uh, I don't know. A lotta parents didn't make it, but even, I think those children did well.

I didn't keep up with that many, but the ones I've kept up with since this whole, uh, reunion in 2000 and 2 and so on, and met a few others and so on, so we've kept up. And the story that I've just told you, uh, I have [clears throat], and the story not only that I told you, but the story that I told at the 2000 and 2 convention, I have been asked to give it, I gave it to my local synagogue, and, uh, I gave it to this, uh, senior citizens development where I now live, and they were all very interested because the story of these children coming over without parents, almost everyone that I talked to knew nothing about it.

01:06:32

They knew about the war, they knew about the Holocaust, they knew about the persecutions of Jews, they saw the pictures, you know, of smashing windows, the shops and so on, adults being dragged off the street. What most of the people in, you know, in this, again, senior citizens development where I live, they're all sorta my age, you have to be 55 or over to live here [clears throat], they never realized that during those years, from 1932 when Hitler came and until the end of the war, that children were also taken off. They were taken out of school, they weren't allowed to do this, they weren't allowed in the park, I got arrested 'cause I went to the park. No one, I think, really knew that the children were also specifically sought out and sorta persecuted. And then the other thing, it's still a little bit of a controversy, do we consider ourselves, let's say our group of 50, Holocaust survivors? We didn't go through the concentration camps, we didn't go through the burning and so on and so forth. But I consider still yes, because if you would read Mein Kampf, there's no question that if anybody has any sense and understands what was written in there, that this was gonna be the ultimate fa-, fate of the Jews. So we escaped from the Holocaust, and again, the other thing is a holocaust is the wrong word, because holocaust comes from the Greek holokosten, which means a sacrifice to God, and by no means were these people burnt any sacrifice to God, and that's why I try [clears throat] at the beginning of my talk, all the time I try to explain, don't think of this as a holocaust, use the word showa, which means disaster, and that's what happened.

**The story of your immediate family, of course, ended well for you. Your parents were lucky enough to make it here and be reunited. I hesitate to ask this, but I will just to complete the story. I know, Doctor, that you mentioned earlier on in our conversation that you had a cousin who had also applied for one of the 50 slots. Can I ask what happened to your cousin, and other members of your family?**

01:08:58

When I [clears throat] started looking into this, I knew that my cousin, who was a...a year older than I was, had applied, because obviously my parents talked to his parents. His mother and my mother were sisters. Neither the parents or the child came to the States and so on, and after the war, as I said, this family organization in New York tried to find out what happened, who happened, we wrote to the Red Cross and so on and so forth, and there was no mention of them. About a year ago, uh, I wrote to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, giving what particulars I knew, name, addresses, uh, birth dates and so on of this family, mother, father, and the single child, and they really didn't have that many records. I mean, the, they...they tried. There's no question about that they tried.

01:10:04

And then, I guess, this, uh, these records became useful or became known that had been discovered in Europe. Uh, I forgot the exact name of the organization and so on. Anyhow, I wrote to them, gave 'em all the particulars [clears throat], and sure enough, they gave me s-, information, but the information even was scanty. The father was, I wo-, was k-, died in Dachau, in the concentration camp. The mother was sent to a work camp, and they have no further information. The child, in 19, I believe it was 43, whatever, the child, I mean, how old, he's a year younger than, older than I was, was taken into protective custody, I think by the Gestapo or by the police, and that's the last anybody has any record. So can only guess what happened. And, uh, said there were other people who [clears throat] looked into their family the way I did and most of 'em never found, or there were records that they were destroyed. My whole, as I said, my father had a big family, so there're a lotta Teppers in the United States that are related. My mother had very few. They all were per-, killed in Poland. Uh, perhaps...perhaps the only good quote thing that came out of it, a lot of 'em never even went into the concentration camps. They were in that portion of Poland, Russia, they were just taken out...out of their village and shot, as far as we know.

**I did notice that, and perhaps you've checked this same source, there is an organization in Vienna that all these years later has posted, and it's available online, a list of all of the Austrian victims of the showa, some 65,000 names, and there are about a dozen Teppers on that list. I didn't jot down the first names. I'm guessing that some of them might be relatives, but I don't know how common or uncommon the name Tepper would've been at that time.**

01:12:54

In trying to find out what happened, uh, what little research I've done, uh, haven't found very much, the particular [clears throat] organization [clears throat] in Vienna I have not contacted directly. I suppose I could. Um, the, what, if they have the names, the last name Tepper, would ha-, wanna know the first name. My cousin, uh, I don't know if I stated this before, but when my father, af-, right after the Anschluss, my father decided he wanted to go, he applied for a visa to the United States. He also applied for a visa for Argentina, 'cause one of his brothers had moved to Argentina in 1930. That brother's son now lives here in the States. He's a, also a doctor, does the same thing I do as a radiation oncologist. He got interested in genealogy. He has dug up people, gone back to the, way into the 1800s, and if I get a list of Teppers, let's say, from Vienna, I would compare their first name with his genealogy list, and I might be able to come up with something.

01:14:19

Um, also a lot of our relatives are in...in, uh, Israel. I went to Israel when I was in the army. I spent two weeks in Israel. I can tell you it's a lovely country, I enjoyed every bit of it, and everybody asked me, “Well, what was the food like?” and I can tell you I have no clue, because there wasn't a single meal for two weeks that we didn't eat in someone, in one of my relatives' place. The only one that was unhappy was my son, who was six months old, he was my second child. He couldn't stand the Israeli milk. He was on orange juice and apple juice for two weeks. He was only six months old, but he would spit out the regular milk, the condensed milk, whatever kinda milk, he would go [makes spitting out sound], pooey. So that was fun. Yeah, we had a good time.

There're some other things that I could tell you about my kids that you can cut it out if you want. My son, my, this is the little kid that I was telling you about, he was blessed by the Pope. He sat in the Pope's lap. He was blessed by the Pope. John, not the earlier, one, the one that was, skinny one. If you wanna hear the story, I'll...

**Yeah, I'd love to hear the story.**

...tell you. I was in....

**[logistics discussion]**

**...question, and this has nothing to do with your individual recollections. It's more just pure sort of theoretical, and I truly am asking this of everybody I talk to about the story, and indeed, it's a question that I'm not even sure there's a good answer to, and the question is why the Krauses did what they did, and perhaps it's something you've thought of over the years, being one of the beneficiaries of what they did, with the help of others, certainly. But what are your thoughts? Why do you think they did this?**

01:16:19

I never, obviously, questioned, at my age, what, six and a half years [clears throat], the whys [clears throat] of the whole trip. In later years, I sort of thought about it, simply because it happened to me, and not necessarily that I was any bloomin' genius, and then later on when I got into the story, when I had to do this projection for the convention, I just hadda stop and think of the risks that were taken by certain people, and the whys. And I think the whys, the whole idea of why, I think the Krauses, especially Gilbert Kraus, from what I know, and I'm not saying this to distract anything from Mrs. Kraus, but I didn't know her that well, were just [clears throat] very philathro-, philanthropically oriented. Uh, he...he was a successful lawyer. He was an artist. He had that aura about him that if he felt [clears throat] something could be done that was worthwhile, he would undertake it, uh, and I think he also had, from what other people tell me, had the ability to project to other people the worthiness or unworthiness of the particular cause. The idea of rescuing children initially, at, way back then, was simply because I, well, not simply, because I think he knew that there were other organizations involved, but those organizations were having a lot of problems, obviously with visa, with transportation, with finances. I think that he realized that let's also help. His circle, the Brith Shalom group in Philadelphia, was made up mostly of professionals, so I don't think that there was a monetary problem, or there wouldn't have been, and even if there were, I would be, venture to guess that Kraus, I wouldn't surprised, as far as I know, if he didn't give more than half the money out of his own pocket. And I think he was just an individual who looked at the pra-, who, number one, realized the problem, now this is the basic thing.

01:19:11

As I said before, the, most of the people in the United States knew about the entire anti-Semitic events in Europe, all relegated to adults. They had seen Jews come over from Europe, Einstein [clears throat], uh, all the guys, uh, Korngold, all the...the guys from the...the movies and so on, uh, even, uh, Peter Lorrie, I don't know if you know him, he was Jewish, he was Hungarian Jew. So there was this knowledge of adult persecution [clears throat]. There was not that much knowledge of children's pre-, persecution, but he knew about it, I [clear throat], I'm sure by looking into the other groups that were bringing in children. And I think that started it, and then it was just a question of, of course we have to do it. This is the right thing to do, this is what we can do, let's go ahead and do it. And I think it was just a matter of philosophy, of knowledge of what was going on, and of the ability to do it. And then I think he enjoyed the whole thing, to begin with. I've never, I don't remember that much about him, but I've never seen him when he wasn't smiling. Although there was one story that one of the children says that he had a big argument with an S.S. officer, and he was poundin' the table and so on, but I don't remember that.

**I've heard the same story, but you never know. I never met him, but everything you're saying about him certainly [inaudible] with the way members of his own family have described him. He was somebody who set his mind to doing something and figured out a way to do it, and then saw it through.**

Exactly.

**Wasn't gonna let anybody stand in the way. Well, we've covered a lot of ground, and sometimes Dave has a little detail or two that I miss, but let me just ask you if there's anything else that I haven't asked that comes to mind.**

No, I can't think of anything else. The, my problem is, as I told you, I don't remember that much [clears throat], very little, and as I said, if it wasn't for the letters that I got from the kid or the pictures that my father took, I wouldn't remember anything. Well, maybe I just got psychological wipeout [chuckles]. What can I tell you?

**Yeah.**

**Dave: Just wondering, your father had been out of work for a while, but he managed to make it to England. Did you get support from other family, support from organizations, and how did your mother make it, just in terms of financially, how did your parents make it to England? Do you have any sense of that?**

01:22:33

My parents made it to England, as far as I know, through, I believe through the or-, HIAS organization. Um, how, the exact details I don't know. Um, I've been to the HIAS organization here in New York, but they don't have records of HIAS’ effort to England. If HIAS had brought my parents to the United States, there would be a record here [clears throat], but HIAS somehow, I believe it was HIAS, got them to England, and obviously they must've paid for it because we certainly had no money, and, although, as I said, many Jewish families were still working and earning some sort of a living. I don't think that they would have been able to finance, uh, or be in a position to finance two people going to England, although obviously it's not that expensive as going to the States. But if you have nothin', it's expensive. And, uh, no one that I know of has really told me anything else, so that's my belief. I know it was not by ourselves.

**SP: And so nothing your father told you in later years kind of filled in some of the gaps in terms of his part of the story or your mother's part of the story?**

01:24:04

Not really. Not really. Um, my father and my mother, it's not that they didn't talk about what happened in Europe. They did, because during my y-, growing up years in Bridgeport, there were quite a number of families, not rela-, well, one relative, but other number of families who had been friends with my father in Europe, and they had made it to the United States, and they, we, no television or anything, we just went visiting, you know, two or three times a week to this person's house or that person's house, and, uh, I was never given a babysitter. I always tagged along; I sat and read and so on, and the way they talked, from what I remember, is they were all helped by organizations. Whether those organizations were directly Viennese organizations [clears throat], or HIAS or something, I don't know.

**SP: Yeah.**

**Dave: Do you remember making friends at the camp?**

Mean at the camp?

**Yeah.**

01:25:21

I don't remember anything, uh, particular. Uh, I do have a picture, or no, was it...? I got a picture that was sent to me by Tamar, and it's me, her, and her brothers, so I guess we were friendly. And the other friend was this little girl Vera Aberbach, 'cause she's my little girl, you know, my little, I like to call laughingly now my little shipboard romance. Uh, I have pictures of her, you know, with...with, and, uh, but any particular individual, I can't even remember whether there, I had my own room or I had a roommate. So for some reason or other, I have these things blocked out. I suppose I could go to a psychiatrist one of these days and see what's goin' on, but [chuckles], I'm too old for that.

**SP: When was the first moment you thought of yourself as an American?**

01:26:31

The day I got, I arrived in the Bronx, because everybody spoke English, and in the apartment house where we lived, we had a lot of young kids my age and so on, and the two, uh, sisters that I lived with, they only spoke English, so after a while, I spoke English and I was an American because downstairs in the back yard, we had a little back yard in this apartment house, and everybody would call, “Mommy, I want somethin',” and I used to call up, “Tante,” my aunt. And I was an American when finally I said, “Auntie!” That's when I became an American, when I went from Tante to Auntie. And actually at one point I ca-, I called her Mommy, and she got very upset, and said, “I am not your mother. Your mother is coming. You didn't know, really know, I am your aunt.” She got very upset with that, I remember, so I called her Aunt, from the back yard in, my back yard in the Bronx, that's when I became an American.

**Good. Excellent. Thank you so much.**

All right. You're quite welcome.

[end of recording]

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