United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Ruth Meyerowitz
September 23, 1998
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Ruth Meyerowitz, conducted by Ben Shapiro on September 23, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Riverdale, NY and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

Interview with Ruth Meyerowitz
September 23, 1998

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Ruth Meyerowitz -- is that --

Answer: Meyerowitz.

Q: Meyerowitz?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Conducted by Ben Shapiro on September 23rd, 1998, in their home in Orange, New Jersey -- West Orange, New Jersey. And this is a follow up interview to a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum videotaped interview conducted with Ruth Meyerowitz on February 20, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. That -- that -- that being done, we can actually talk. So, before we even start it, I -- I mean I -- I do a lot of interviews and some I -- I -- I'm always so particularly a-appreciative to have the chance to -- I mean, apart from doing the interviews, just having a chance to talk --

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: -- to people who've had -- have -- ha-had experiences, to me that are remarkable and this is just certainly one of those examp-examples of that, I mean, even be -- apart from

this I'm al -- I'm -- I'm always want to do this -- do the interviews for the museum, I'm always -- like to tell the people I'm talking to just how appreciative I --

A: Hm.

Q: -- i-it's -- it's an extraordinary opportunity for me to have a chance to talk to someone with -- talk to you an-and talk to you about your experiences.

A: Well, mm, it's good that you are -- feel that way, because I wouldn't want to talk to someone who's just doing this, you know, for --

Q: Well, yeah, of course, it's -- it's a means --

A: -- you know, if --

Q: -- you know, it's some --

A: -- without feeling a-anything about it.

Q: Yeah. Yeah, it's something that I've -- you know, I've read a lot about it, thought a lot about, but to --

A: Mm, mm.

Q: -- actually have those, you know, first hand experiences, people who've experienced history --

A: Mm, mm.

Q: -- it's -- it's -- i-it's remarkable. A-As -- a -- I guess as you knew from -- from our conversation and from the -- from the letter that this -- as opposed to the interview you did before --

A: Yeah, but --

Q: This one is -- is -- is more -- probably will m-more focus on your experiences after the war.

A: Right --

Q: Although we'll need to talk -- I mean, that shouldn't -- you know, we should -- you should feel free to talk about [indecipherable]

A: Mm-hm, yeah, right, right.

Q: -- appropriate, but -- one thing that I wanted to ask about, specifically, just from looking at the other interview, I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about what your family was like fr -- you know, from -- from your childhood. What -- I mean, were they -- I mean, you know, things like was it a religious family or were you -- you know --

A: Mm. I think you couldn't -- you couldn't grow up or live in the city of Frankfort, in Germany, without being touched by religion. There were -- of course the city had undergone all these movements of -- when the reform movement started, they went to that one extreme and then they went to an -- the other extreme and throughout reform movement and -- but generally, a-around 1850 or so, Rabbi Samson Raffelhirsch be -- came to Frankfort. He was Orthodox and there was an -- a t-tone of Orthodoxy all throughout the city. The stores were -- Jewish stores were closed on Shabbas, except for two department stores that were owned by Jews, but they -- they -- they were open. And most people kept kosher. My school was not the real -- Samson Raffelhirsch religious school, it was a school that had been opened in 1804 by a secretary of one of the Rothchild's. They had seen to a Yeshiva Baharim and walking around and they f -- and

Rothchild felt they should have a -- a secular -- or any kind of education. So he commissioned his secretary to start a school for -- for them and out of this grew a school that was called Filantropine, which was -- because of it's beginning was -- had the -- had a philanthropic connotation, but by the time when my brother and I went, my father was joking that it cost him as much for our education as a -- what a German workman would earn per month. Well, not quite, but, you know, something like that. So this school really -- also [indecipherable] Samson Raffelhirsch school, they were always Orthodox and there was no question about it. This school, when -- when -- it had started experimenting with Sunday schooling and with Saturday schooling. They didn't write on Shabbat, but they ha -- they had school on Shabbat. And then they gave that up again. By the time we went -- this went on through the century. By the time we went to school, it was fairly -- well, the people who went were -- who went there were -- not the very Orthodox. So my parents kept kosher and we kept Shabbat, we kept Eviomtop, but we didn't -- it wasn't as the other school. Now, but I remember we were 43 children in the beginning and I -- I don't know -- I think one confessed that she didn't -- that that family didn't keep kosher, and everybody else did. So, if -- if that answers your question -- I don't know if it's enough. I mean we -- my parents belonged to a synagogue that was burned down in 1938 in the Kristallnacht, that would be considered, probably Conservative by today's standards, even though it was different. There was still the mareetzah, with women upstairs and men downstairs and other things, but it -- but it -- and it didn't have a -- an organ like the Reform synagogue -- that one Reform synagogue that's still standing in

Frankfort now, but it -- it was a little less str-strict than the Samson Rafellhirsch's sh -- synagogue.

Q: Mm-hm. And -- I mean what -- what -- how would you describe your -- o-obviously your fam -- I mean, they could afford to send you to that kind of school and -- and --

A: Yeah.

Q: Would you describe them as -- as --

A: Oh, just probably middle class. I mean, we weren't ju --

Q: -- middle class or [indecipherable] class or --

A: Not -- maybe middle-middle class --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- if that's what you mean. I don't think they were -- we were extremely wealthy. My mo -- my parents were -- were young and my father had started a business, so perhaps if all that hadn't happened, we ha -- would have been in -- you know, maybe -- but we were very comfortable and there was no -- but you know, I -- I can't remember -- I can't think of us as being comfortable in the sense that we would be in the United States, because from the moment -- I was three years old when Hitler came to power, so everything was overshadowed by this influence -- you know, this -- this cloud hanging over us, so you can't do even -- money wasn't -- of course it was important, but money wasn't always, you know, the important thing.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. How -- how did that -- how did that affect your -- the way the family -- your family was together and the relationships within your family. The sense of

kind of growing up, you know, under this -- kind of this growing kind of cloud and -- do you think that drew family together or -- or --

A: Yes, yes, I -- you know wha -- I always thought that my parents had the perfect marriage because I don't remember that they ever fought. They were just always sticking together. Because I think that the outside problems were so great that there were no inner tensions. Sometimes I wish they would have looked more to the outside and would have wanted to leave and -- you know, and argue, I don't want to be here any more. One of them should have said, "I don't want to be here any more and let's get out." But they didn't and I can't -- I'm still trying to puzzle this out. I don't know why my father didn't leave. I mean, they relied on -- there were reasons that -- that I -- I'm trying to -- I try to understand, but they really -- their marriage really seemed to be like they didn't argue. They didn't -- and they were very supportive of each other. It's not that they lived side by side, but that they were really -- it was really a very close relationship.

Q: Thinking about that now, do you -- wha-what are your -- some of your thoughts about why they didn't?

A: That's what I felt, that they put up a united front against the outside forces.

Q: Mm-hm. But wh -- but why do you think they didn't -- why -- do you -- what do you think about why they didn't leave?

A: Why they didn't leave?

Q: Right.

A: Well, you know, first of all, everybody wanted to go to the United States. People were talking about not going -- not wanting to -- well, of course, many people went for Eur -- to European countries -- other European countries and of course, they were invaded there. I mean, Holland and Belgium and France and of course, the people who were sent to Poland in 1938, that the -- this expulsion of the Polish Jews, that brought on Kristallnacht, ostensibly, becau -- that's what the Nazis said. But they -- they were all destroyed, so there was really no -- no real point to -- of course we didn't know this at the time. Everyone always said, "Oh, look at this crazy man. Look at him in the -- in the newsreels, pounding the table and screaming away at --" I mean, this has to end -- this can't keep going. Of course, it ended, but 12 years too late. So one of the things I f -- my father -- I felt my -- with my father, was j -- he -- my famil -- my father's family originated in the medieval Frankfort ghetto. And then, when all these things with the Reform and the Orthodox happened, the fa -- this branch of the family got tired of it and they moved to Bratislava and they became well known rabbis, the Sofa family. As a matter of fact, we had a megillah that was given -- made by the Sofas to -- for my grandfather's wedding. And it was given to him as a gift, my grandfather had it with him, my father had it. When my uncle went to Israel, my Uncle Abba, in 1936, he wanted to take it with him and my father said, "No, it's got to stay with the oldest brother." And of course it was destroyed. Otherwise that beautiful thing would have been now in Israel or perhaps with me or in a museum or somewhere. So, my parent -- my father reali -- my father kept his Czechoslovak passport, because for business, when he traveled, the

Czechoslovak passport was accepted everywhere. Czechoslovakia was at the time the only republic in Europe. They were highly respected and their passport was accepted everywhere and he relied on that to be able to get us out of Germany, which ultimately didn't work. But -- so he, in traveling, h-he was comfortable thinking that, well, he hears from everybody that the Nazis would stop -- of course later on the -- this -- he couldn't go any more. This was just in the very beginning. But he heard that well, the Nazis, I mean, who'd look at this nonsense, this is going to stop soon. And I think that's why they sat. And people started going to S-South America and they wrote back such terrible reports. They couldn't wait to get back again and things like that, so I guess they didn't want to subject us to this.

Q: It's a hardship, certainly.

A: Yeah, well -- what then -- in -- when Czechoslovakia was invaded, in 1938, I think it was, we -- my parents sold everything in a hurry. My father relied on his passport and we made our way to the French border. The borders were closed, they wouldn't let us in. We had to sleep in a farmhouse overnight and then the next day we went back to Frankfort. I've heard of people who followed that same route, but they were adults and they swam across the river -- a river -- illegally and made their way into France. Now, my parents couldn't have done this in [phone ringing] Sorry. What's the next question?

Q: Well, I guess the next question is what -- what do you -- what do you remember about yourself, kind of as -- as a -- as a child? What kind of -- do you know what -- what kind of kid were you, do you think?

A: Oh, I was --

Q: What -- what kind of -- what were you thinking about? What were you -- what did you like doing [indecipherable]

A: I was very sh -- I think I was very shy. My -- I have one friend that went to school with me. His -- he survived because his mother was not Jewish, his father was Jewish and they sent him -- they didn't send him to an extermination camp, though if the war would have lasted a little bit longer, they probably would have, too, but he was survived in Theresienstadt. And he remembers me as being very shy and laid back. But what I remember was that I was not happy in school. I was the youngest, I was the smallest and I just -- I was just not happy. Even though this was a wonderful school and I mean, I remember the -- the little bit of Greek that we learned and the Latin that -- this was an outstanding school and it was the best school in -- in Europe, I think. And whatever math I would know, I remember from -- from the Filantropine. But -- so, that was me, what -- I was shy, I was always afraid. And I -- I think I still am. I don't make waves, I don't raise issues, which is really not good. What can I tell you? This is what happened to me. That's what you --

Q: What -- what do you li -- what were your favorite things as a kid? What did you like to do and what did you --

A: Oh, I read. I read a lot. Well, especially after my uncle -- my Uncle Abba went to Israel, he left behind -- and so, I was six or seven years old and I was reading Ibsen and Checkov. And when I did this in college, I read it -- I ran into it, I said, "Gee, sure, this is

what I read when I was a child." Didn't quite -- but what I was reading, you know, for instance, Checkov -- Ibsen's "Ghost," I ha -- my father had to explain to my what syphilis was. So, you know, you see -- a seven year old shouldn't be inter -- shouldn't be reading these things, but I did. So that was me.

Q: And how do you think the -- the climate of what was -- what was going on in Germany at the time affected you -- your -- your -- you know, I mean, children are very sensitive to what's going on around them and --

A: Oh, oh, a definite ow, I mean h-how could it not have?

Q: Sure.

A: We were -- we had a Nazi living in -- downstairs from us in an apartment and we were children, we fid -- after school if we'd run up the stairs, he would complain that we ran. If a chair was moved upstair -- you know, he could hear it downstairs, so he'd take a -- whatever it was, a broom or something and hit the ceiling because we were making too much noise. It was a real -- you know, so it -- it was awful. And Sunday mornings, there were always these lectures on -- the speeches by Hitler. You went outside, everything was quiet. The church bells -- bells were going on one side and Hitler's voice was coming from every radi -- everybody wanted to show how good a Nazi he was, so they turned on the radios, you know, loud, so everybody could sh -- hear, and then what -- for whatever -- I guess that was the reason. And, so you could hear him talking from one end to another and it is scary. Of course, to me, just the voice was scary, the contents I didn't understand, but the voice and -- and this whole ambiance was scary. We couldn't go

swimming any more, because we were told there were at-attempts at drowning. We had gone swimming in a public park, in a pond. Whe -- a -- all Jewish people, unless they went on vacation, in a -- but the ones who stayed in the city for any time went swimming there. Then the public -- there were public baths and you couldn't go swimming there in -- th-they were closed to Jews, but the other you co -- in the park, for instance, you couldn't go because there were attempts of drownings, so of course we didn't go any more. And people moved from the small towns -- Jews moved from the small towns to p -- fi -- to Frankfort because they felt a little bit safer in the -- in a crowd. So people came an -- into the school -- new students came in. Other students left for wherever they were going. It was -- and the same thing with teachers. So, they were always coming and going and it was -- it was not a very settled situation. However, as I said I was reading and I -- we tried to -- I guess our parents tried as to live as normal a life, but I guess I didn't know any different, because I grew up with all that, so I just went along.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Still, it must have been kind of -- do you -- do you have memories of -- of -- of things progressing and gradually going --

A: Oh, I -- I -- I -- the real --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- yes, well -- you know when I was, oh, probably about four or five years old, my parents were walking with us in the park and some SS -- no, I mean a -- a Hitler youth boy on a bicycle ran into me and drove over my leg and my parents couldn't complain. If they'd go to the police station, they -- my parents would be arrested or who knows what

they would do to us? So you couldn't because you know, we -- my husband and my -- our sons, went back to Frankfort probably about 20 years ago. I didn't want to go, but my husband had business there and he said, "Oh we should go to the Jewish places," and that's what -- actually what we did. So we went to the -- a -- from where we lived, just -- was about a long block to the school, block and a half. And on the way was -- one of the houses that had not been damaged, or had been repaired, it wasn't pulled down completely. And I recognized it and I told them a story. There was a little girl, who went to school with my brother. Because they were walking home on the same way and he -- he just had a few more houses to -- further to go, we -- I started teasing him that this was his girlfriend and he didn't like it, but whatever. The father had suddenly done something that the Nazis didn't like. They didn't punish him, but they took this little girl and they had her sterilized and returned to the parents. And when you hear these things -- I mean, my -- I -- my parents, you know, it was very difficult, they didn't say anything, because you didn't want to tell children so much. Number one, they would be very frightened, but number two, if they talked, it was dangerous. So it was best if children knew as little as possible. But this particular incident, I guess the -- we were talking about all the ti -- they were tal -- not all the time, but they were talking about it, because it just couldn't be hidden. So, can you imagine how this poor father felt, that they did this to his daughter? It's a little girl, I mean just maybe nine years old. I didn't even know -- I don't even know if they -- what they could have done to -- but whatever it was, that is -- that's what we heard. So you had this kind of fear all the time that you couldn't talk, you couldn't be

loud. You couldn't be -- God forbid, obnoxious in the street or something, you know, because people -- there was always a Nazi waiting in -- in someplace waiting for you, you know?

Q: Mm-hm. Did you -- did you have -- kind of hopes for -- for what would -- what you wanted to do after this was all over? I mean, did you -- did you kind of think, well, you know when this is over, when I grow up, I'll be a, you know, whatever. You know, did you think about those things when you were a kid?

A: Ah, yes I guess y-you do. What I'm -- what I'd -- the people I admired were my doctor, so I figured I should be a doctor. But that was -- I didn't have any other plans, other than that. But I -- it was only -- it was all in the framework of remaining in the city. I never dreamt of anything like Auschwitz of -- obviously not. So, after that, I didn't have -- during that time I didn't have that kind of -- those kind of plans. I mean, survival was what was important, you know.

Q: Sure.

A: And no -- not the plan to go do things, you know.

Q: When you were -- when you were growing up in -- in the 30's, did you -- I mean do you think that as a child, with that -- the -- the -- the -- with what was going on, did that -- did that kind of close off your imagination of the future at all or -- or do you -- do you think that --

A: A-Actually not.

Q: -- or you just kind of didn't -- didn't -- you just figured it would kind of go [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, well, you know, I was always convinced that it had to come to an end. I mean, I -- I didn't -- when I was in Auschwitz, of course, I didn't know if I would survive it, but I always knew that this has to end. I was like -- it was -- is what imprinted in me that it would -- it would come to an end and then everything would be all right and of course people said it, but while you're going through, it looks like it's never going to end, but just somehow you -- I knew it would -- would be -- come to an end.

Q: At -- at -- at what point did that begin to change. I mean, you know, obviously they say it was different when you were at Auschwitz, but at what point did -- do you remember your -- maybe your parents started to be aware, or you or the people around you --

A: Well you --

Q: -- being aware that things --

A: -- it --

Q: -- were really going to get worse before they got better. And I mean a lot worse --

A: Well, you know, it -- it was getting better and it was g -- I mean, it was getting worse and in fact, you know, it was getting worse. But that was one thing, but there was another thi -- instinct in me that said, "This is going to have to end." Whether I survived it or n -- once I got to Auschwitz, whether I survived it or not was, of course, questionable. And very often, i-it was such a struggle to be in Auschwitz, that I -- I didn't want to live -- that

I didn't want to survive, because I figured I'm going to die anyway, so what is so -- I might as well not struggle, and die now. And you know, that's how -- but on another level, an inner level, a lo -- I don't know, I felt that this i -- of course this has to end.

Q: Mm-hm. How about before you went away, how -- th-th-the final period, when you were in -- in -- in Frankfort? What was -- what was starting -- what was happening then in --

A: Oh, well --

Q: [indecipherable] you know --

A: We -- as -- I told you we -- my father had Czechoslovak citizenship. Our friends from school, most of the friends were sent away in 1942. I don't know how they died, either on a -- on a truck, where they put the gas in or on a -- in a railroad car, where they put -- put the gas in and so but we went -- because my father was a Czechoslovak and then Slovak citizen, we were protected -- and it's very strange, by this -- I think it was -- his name was Tiso, Father Tiso, the president of Slovakia. The area b-by the slava -- where my pa -- p -- father's family was from, became, after the Nazis occupied Czechoslovak, the Czech part, Bohemia and Mulravia, that Slovakian part became inde -- sort of independent, but it wa -- he was a Nazi, he collaborated with th-the Nazis. And when we came to Auschwitz, there were oodles -- I -- I mean, there had been several thousand, but of course they had died at a terrible rate because when they got to Auschwitz it was already -- there was nothing there. When we came, there were at least barracks. But they -- th -- they -- it was totally in -- unorganized and they slept in the winter in the mud. It was terri

-- the things they told us and we could easily imagine it. So, on the one hand, he sent out the young women into -- to certain death and didn't protect them. On the other hand, he went through this diplomatic sham and protected the citizens -- Jewish citizens that were living in different European countries. So we were not sent away until in -- in 1942, when everybody went, and then -- but hit -- the -- the Nazis were losing the war at that point, in 1942, El Allemagne and in -- in Russia, in the different -- Stalingrad and probably Leningrad. So they wanted to show what they could do, they get rid of all the Jews, so they would have this wonderful triumph of losing on one hand, but look what they've done, they've killed a couple of more children and weak people and anyone, you know. So we -- I -- a -- what was the beginning of the question? I started --

Q: You -- when you were talking, you were talking about the -- the period right up until -- or --

A: Yeah, right, well we had -- yeah --

Q: -- the 40's -- early 40's, I guess.

A: So we -- yes, well this was in -- a -- right after everybody was taken away from -- in 1942, they started in with us and we were taken out of the apartment and we had to move in a mini -- it was a mini ghetto. It was a -- an old apartment building in the east part of the town, very old, it had been part of the Jewish area that was for people who came f -- I mean for -- people who came from Poland, didn't have much money, st -- wanted to be close to the kosher butchers and all the kosher areas. So they lived in that particular are -- and the houses were older. People who could afford it, had been longer in the city, moved

out to the west end part of the town. So we were put back into this east side, into one of the streets. And we were not allowed to leave. So for -- a-all -- I re -- know that it was that Hanukkah we were still -- we were there already. So maybe we went in the fall of 1942, that we went in. And the only one who could go out, was my father, because -- it's also a long story -- do you have all this tape?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Okay. My father had a factory of -- man-manufactured leather goods. I mean, not a big factory, like a shop. And -- w-with a partner and in Offenback, which is across the river from Frankfort -- I mean not -- it's a little further. And then it was not safe, or whatever and they moved -- I mean, I don't know any of these details. They moved to a -- a loft in Frankfort in back of the railroad station. When my father -- then his partner left for the United States. We've tried to go to the United -- my father registered for the -- my father had na -- had Czechoslovak citizenship and the quota of -- for the Slovakia was seven families a year, yeah. It -- we had number 77 and we -- so we would have had 10 -- 11 years to wait before we would even be called to the council. Now the council in Stuttgart, he -- he should -- he -- he was a partner of Hitler's and he should -- I hope he rests with -- with Hitler together in hell, because he -- they -- it was a dreadful experience for Jews to go there and he humiliated people and they -- I mean, it's not just him, whoever it was, they -- I'll give you an example. My fr-friend Irma -- my fr -- her father was a lawyer, but when they figured they'd have to leave, he wouldn't be able to make a living as a lawyer, so he became a chef. They were called -- they had quite wealthy

relatives in the United States who put up a s -- the affidavits. They were called, finally, to the council in Stuttgart and he -- the -- she -- my friend passed and her mother passed and th -- they had been given mental tests and sometimes they picked such stupid questions to trap people and then call them inf -- mentally inferior and they're not good enough to come to the United States. So they p-passed all this. And then they found out that the father, when he was 18, had his kid -- one kidney removed. Now, he -- it was healed, he became a lawyer, he became a father. So there was no reason to wi -- to hold him back, but they did. And because of that, the family was lost. So -- and then -- coming -- I -- I -- it's really not nice to talk about some of -- but one of the questions -- I remember they asked this poor woman who went -- her husband was already in the United States, she went with her son to Stuttgart. And they asked -- they finally gave her this mental test and they told he -- they -- the question was, "What does your husband have in his pants?" And the poor woman got all flustered. Here was this modest woman who -- she probably never heard a dir -- a dirty word or a dirty joke and then oh, they -- they ask her this. And of course she gets all flustered and she couldn't answer. So then they said, "Oh, but you must be awfully stupid. He has a wallet and keys and a handkerchief. Why can't you think of that?" Well, she -- the poor woman, her life depended on it, so she couldn't think of it. And those were the -- the things that they did and that's why I feel thas -- so strongly about this -- the person who ran this un -- drun -- they were horrible. So --

Q: What -- what do you remember about right around the late 30's -- er -- like -- like --

A: Yeah?

Q: -- ‘39 -- ‘40?

A: Well, when we were in this -- this building -- so my father -- my father --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: Yeah?

Q: -- ‘39 -- ‘40?

A: Well, when we were in this -- this building -- so my father -- my father -- this -- his -- his business was given to a Nazi, who was a dentist, a Dr. Holzman. And my fa -- i-it was an award because he wa -- a reward for being -- for -- for being what he was. And I can tell you wh -- a-about it, as much as I know. He didn’t know the first thing about my father’s business, which was manufacturing wallets, belts, pocketbooks. So, he kept my father on and he needed -- he was frequently out of town and he needed someone to run the business, so actually my -- my father was running the business for him, but not as the owner. When he wanted to confer with my father on something -- anything -- a design or a button on a -- on a wallet, he would call him into my father’s former office, open up the drawer of my father’s former desk, and there was a gun and the conversation was conducted over the gun, as if my father would do something to him, you know, but he had to protect himself and show his authority and have -- to have this gun there. What this man really was at -- when -- the rumors were -- and the rumors are pretty accurate during the war -- during those times, but the rumors were that when he -- when there was an -- some kind of rumor of an assassination, of a killing, he was out of town. He must

have been the assassin and that's why they rewarded him with this business and that is why my -- h-he was very -- very often out of town and my father had to run the business for him.

Q: And what -- what -- when did your father lose the business -- the -- when was that?

A: When did he lose it?

Q: Yeah, what year did -- was the [indecipherable]

A: Oh, I don't know that. I mean, it had to be -- were probably sometime in 1942 and I don't remember the -- the details. And I tell you, we were so beset from all sides that I-I don't -- I don't know any more, exactly when -- when all this happened. All I know is that towards the end, my f -- but when we were not -- before we were taken out of the apartment, my f-father -- before we were moved into the ghet -- into this ghetto building, my f -- he wanted my father to work at home and I had to bring the st -- the -- pick up the materials and deliver the ready made goods to him, in to -- in the office. I don't even know with whom I spoke. I was looking for the name of the street and that was a street that had been renamed with an Aryan name, so it's not even in existence any more and everything's been bombed. I couldn't even find the place any more. So it's -- it's been a -- you know, it was a terrible experience and it was -- and going back, I guess I -- in -- in a way it was good that I didn't see any of it any more. But then when my father was -- when we moved into the -- into this ghetto building, my father went to work and he was the only one who was -- of the family who was able to go out and work.

Q: What did -- it struck me about the -- do you -- the -- was -- oh, I thought your experiences generally was -- I ha -- I -- I have been under the impression that -- several things about your experiences were very unusual. First of -- first, that -- that you stayed with your mother. That you were together th-through that experience --

A: Mm, well --

Q: -- and I -- I had -- that -- I mean, of all the, you know --

A: Yeah, right.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Oh, no, there were some people that -- yeah, but most of the time, they didn't even let them into the camp. They didn't even survive enough, you know, to get into the camp. What happened again was that because we were the Czechoslovak -- and there were a couple of Romanian citizens who were sort of protected, for awhile and there were a few members of a -- who had -- people who had been from mixed marriages. And it was very easy when the Christian partner was tired of the Jew, to say oh, he said something against Nazi or he did something there and this and there wa -- there was some -- so there were a few Jewish people -- the Jewish partners of those marriages in the -- in this building with us. So, I think we was 37 all together.

Q: And the last -- you're the last [indecipherable]

A: Actually, the last -- I -- I hear now that some people survived, they were hidden. I don't -- I don't -- didn't know anyone who was hidden, but we were really the last Jews. So they put us on the train and we traveled for seven days. We traveled during the day

and we stopped at night, because they didn't want the trains to be bombed and the Royal Air Force was, at that time, only -- mostly bombing at night. Later on they -- when the radar was better or whatever and they -- they were strong there, and the Nazis were -- their guns were already knocked out, they were -- they were bombing during the day. So, at that time, we -- we were moving, that's why this -- these few hundred miles from Frankfort to Auschwitz took seven days to get us to. Well, what happened then, as I said before, they had -- the na -- the -- Hitler was losing, the Nazis were losing i-in -- militarily, so for his birthday, on the 19th of April -- the 20th of April was Hitler's birthday, on the 19th they made him a present that Germany would be Judenrein and they packed us on the train on the 19th and sent us off to Auschwitz. Well, on the way, we picked up Polish non -- non-Jewish slave laborers, who might have complained, probably that the food wasn't good, or that they were working too hard, or whatever and instead of a slave labor camp, they were now sent to Auschwitz. But when we arrived, they were separated from us and we were just the 37 of us and the men -- we -- I never saw my father again. So, the men were in one way -- so we were probably -- maybe 15 or so Jews, two children, my brother and a-another young boy. And I was not considered a young -- a -- a -- a child any more, because I could pass as a woman. I was 13, so I could pass, looking like a woman. I mean, considered how emaciated everybody was there, I probably looked like a big, strong person, you know. But -- so we were brought into the camp, my mother and I and a couple of the other women. My a -- and my brother too. And we were tattooed. Our clothes were taken off and our hair was shaved and the other

prisoners introduced us to this wonderful life in -- in Auschwitz. They were telling us what -- there's the gassing and there's the selections and everything -- it was like -- but there was so many, it wasn't that I could get scared, because there was so many new impressions coming in on me, that wer -- I was like -- I was absorbing it, but I couldn't -- i-it didn't sort of synthesize in my mind, but I knew it was happening. So that wh -- among one of the things that they said was that, you know, they wouldn't take you -- they wouldn't take you into the gas chambers now, because for a few people, it doesn't pay to run the gas chamber. So they'll figure you'll die or the next time there's a selection they'll take you. And that's actually what it was.

Q: So you mean that they -- th -- th-that part of Auschwitz was already kind of -- there were so few people that were remaining at that point, that the transport -- the whole operation of bringing the transport to the gas [indecipherable]

A: Well, it was -- it was actually Birkenau wh -- Auschwitz, but, you know, we stayed in Birkenau.

Q: Right.

A: Well, they brought people in. I don't know why they didn't do like in Majdanek -- in -- where did they have, Treblinka or Sobibór, where they killed people upon arrival, everybody. There will -- Auschwitz was a -- a camp. There was a -- the man's -- the men's camp and then -- this was actually Birkenau again and one side -- I -- I'm pointing because straight ahead were the crematorium and to the right were -- was the man's camp. To the left were the two women's camps. In back of the man's camp -- camp was a

g -- Gypsy lager and now the Gypsy get recognized, unfortunately they don't -- they aren't recognized as having suffered as much, but now at least, they speak out. For the longest time, no one remembered. They brought in whole families, put them in the -- into this Gypsy camp, Segonnalager and every few months or so, they emptied out the complete camp, gassed everybody and then brought in more. I don't know where they found all these people, but it was -- it was a horrible -- I -- I think -- the whole horrible to s -- to think that the whole family -- of course, it happened to our people, too, but there is was visible to me. And that whole families were just dest -- overnight destroyed. It was -- it was horrible. So this -- but in Auschwitz, people died. When I -- when we walked in, there was a nurse with us, from Romania and it was a beautiful, bright day and the Nazi officer there is standing with their boots polished and their pure, white gloves and their uniforms crisp and f -- ironed and we saw a woman being carried on a litter and you could see that she was dead, except that I had never seen a dead person and -- I was 13 years old. So, this nurse said to me, "Oh, she's just sick." She didn't want me to be so frightened. So people died at a tremendous rate in Auschwitz. And, when they didn't die and they were -- they died too slowly, they had the gas chambers, they had these selections and they brought in more people all the time. And the conditions were awful. The f -- we had horrible food. In the morning we had something that was like tea -- I mean, they didn't even have the color of tea, they called it tea. I think it was because it -- it took on the color because the barrels that they carried it in were rusty. So, that's what -- why it was tea. They gave us something that was like an inch of bread and like a slice

that was about an inch thick and it was -- well, the bread probably was healthy because it wasn't any refined flour. Then they gave us a slice -- oh, probably also about an inch and a half of either liverwurst or salami. And towards the end of my stay in Auschwitz, one time I -- this was in the sum -- in the summer of 1944, when they were killing -- bringing in Hungarian Jews and they were killing them day and night. And I looked out at the crematorium and I saw the smoke going up and I visualized that my piece of salami was human flesh and I couldn't eat it any more. I -- I -- whenever there was -- whenever I got the salami -- we didn't get that every day, we got that like two, three times a week or so. Whenever I got it, I tra -- tried to trade it for a piece of bread, because I just couldn't eat it. And then -- I don't know -- I -- if we had three meals or two meals, but usually when we came back from work and -- which was in -- in -- the first work we did was digging in a field and they told us to f -- to dig here with this decrepit shovel that was all bent and you couldn't get anything. And then wi -- after they filled this in, we -- and it was very, very muddy in Auschwitz, there was a thick clay and mud. It was horrible. So they told us to dig here and then they filled this in. And then when there was a hole that we had dug, we had to fill it in again. It was designed to make us lose weight and lose spirit and with the few hundred calories that they gave us, it was a -- you know, th -- every -- people died fr-from malnutrition alone, but there were other things, too. So --

Q: So were -- were you with your -- who -- you were -- what was your relationship like with your mother at that point --

A: Well, we --

Q: -- you must have relied on each other to a tremendous degree.

A: My mother -- I turned around, they shaved our hair off. My mother -- I -- and we had no clothes on and that was when we first arrived. And I called for her and she answered me and I turned around and she wasn't -- I couldn't recognize her, because -- I mean, she had no hair, she was in the nude. But my mother was a real strength, while we were in Auschwitz -- an-and everywhere -- my mother was a real strength to everyone. There were young women there, they knew they would never see their mother's again, so they sort of adopted my mother and my mother would tell them, "You know it's going to be better, we're going to get out." And one of the strange things that -- I -- I don't know if that can -- how that con -- how a psychologist would explain it, they spoke about food. I guess we were so starved that they spoke about food. They spoke about recipes and my mother actually provided recipes, how do you stuff a goose, how do you make certain chicken soup and they were going -- they were going -- I mean, with this -- with this crummy food that we had, the two or 300 calories a day, they were daydreaming of all this wonderful food and all the recipes and my mother encouraged it, because she saw that's what they needed. And she always encouraged everybody. Once, there was a woman who had give -- had enough poison to ki -- for her two children. When she came to Auschwitz, the first thing she wa-wanted to do was she ran to the electric wire, hoping to get -- electrocute herself, or on the way there, with the guards watching this and they would shoot at her and kill her. And my mother ran after her and like -- there was a moat about three feet deep before the electric wire and like a few feet -- and the guard was

already ready to shoot, because it was after say lapel in the evening, when you were not allowed to be outside. And my mother was after -- and she pulled her back in. Actually, the woman survived and came to see us once, in Frankfort. So this is -- these are the kinds of things my mother was capable of. While we were in camp -- I wi -- she was a real source of strength to everybody. Once we got out and we got into Frankfort, she was like -- the ho -- all of her collapsed and she was -- I always said that it is a -- it was as though someone had put a giant hand over her trachea and she could inhale enough air to exist, but not to live. And she -- she just -- she -- she looked at this destruction of Frankfort -- we came into Frankfort and th-the city was bombed. I think I could adjust because I was able to say, “Oh thank God there isn’t one stone sticking next to the other.” My mother said, when she came in -- she was -- she had a ter -- a terrible fear. Her first impression was that she was just frightened. Now, to me, I was 17, it seemed that my life was ahead. To her, her home was gone, her whole family -- her f -- her husband. So she -- as I said, she just existed, for the next 40 years. She existed, but she didn’t live. She couldn’t enjoy herself, she was very difficult to get along with, with everybody. And she was always dour, she was always depressed and she had a terrible -- I mean, it’s -- she was a real victim of the -- the Holocaust, again.

Q: What -- am -- at what point did you see her make that tran -- but she wasn’t like that a- as long as she -- until after the war, right? I mean, she was --

A: Right, yeah. As soon as we came into Frankfort. As soon as we returned, which was -- we were liberated in May eighth, in 1945 and we were taken to a camp -- an open air ta --

camp, with tents, because it was in the spring. And it was run by the British army. They provided food and a measure of clothing and medical care. My mother was in the hospital for a few days, because her -- er -- the -- we were given -- the Red Cross -- the Swedish Red Cross had sent in food packages and we were given like first -- two people to a package and by the time it got to us, it was five people to a package, which was really a lifesaver, because there were sardines and chocolate and thing and butter. And our stomachs weren't used to this and my mother was very, very sick from eating this. I mean from -- maybe one sardine and one piece of chocolate, or whatever and she had to be taken to the hospital for about two days to get her stomach -- I don't know what the heck -- I think they gave her cereals or whatever to -- to str -- get this straightened out. So she -- when we -- when we got back to Frankfort, she was frightened. And I don't know how she felt -- why she felt that she was frightened, but because of everything was gone and -- and I think the strength she had was hoping maybe -- you know, we were hoping that maybe my father would be alive, but it -- it seemed hopeless when -- once we got into the city. We had arranged with everybody that we would go back to Frankfort, because then as a family, whoever would live would go. But he -- of course we knew that he wasn't alive. I was hoping -- I was hoping all the time.

Q: How old was she at that point? How old was your mother [indecipherable]

A: In -- 44. 19 four -- in 1945, she was 44.

Q: Could you ta -- let's talk a little bit about the -- about -- about liberation and -- and about what that experience was like for you when -- when -- when you were liberated.

A: Well, we were given those packages and we -- we were taken on a walk for eight days. From May first to May eighth, when it was over.

Q: Can we start just bef -- [indecipherable]

A: Before this? Right before this?

Q: Just -- just shortly before that.

A: What was the date that -- President Roosevelt died in April sometime and I th -- some of the soldiers that were guarding us thought that this would be a turn around, but most of them didn't think that the allies would give up. They knew they had lost the war. We were in Mahlhoff, which was a slave labor camp. We had worked -- we had made bullets and grenades in an underground factory, hidden in the woods, which looked like -- you know, it didn't look like there was any woods, but -- I mean, it didn't look like an -- there was a factory, it was like little hills and there was a door and you walked in and there was factories. And we -- but they stopped it, but the whole camp -- I mean, we had to walk quite a bit, but I understand that, the whole camp was honeycombed underneath with all these factories and we didn't know -- we were thinking, "Well, you know, the war is coming to an end, they wouldn't want us to survive, they're probably going to blow up the whole camp." But th -- I -- they didn't. They couldn't, because there were roads -- two roads outside. I mean, one main road where the -- the soldiers --- the army was retreating, going west and the Germans of Polish na -- the Germans of -- that lived in Poland, folksdorger, that had lived in Poland, were now afraid of what the Russians would do to them, because they had welcomed Hitler back and they had hidden their

spies. So wh -- when -- the German spies, so when the Germans were ready to invade Poland, it fell like a ripe apple, because all this underground work had been done by the spies. So now, when they knew the Russians were coming, they were very much afraid and they took that road back. So the roads were clogged, so they couldn't really have blown us up. Well, they stopped giving us food. This was -- must have been the -- the last two days of April. And we didn't go to work any more. They stopped giving us food and we -- there was a food riot. We went into -- can you stop for a minute?

Q: Uh-huh, sure.

A: All right, remen -- remind -- [break] -- very few comical things had happened in -- obviously in Auschwitz, but there's one story that I tell my grandchildren. They always tell me, "Tell me the potato story." This is what happened. The-They stopped giving us food and we raided the -- we raced into the kitchen and into the storage places and we took -- we were looking for food. My mother stayed in the barracks, but I went.

Q: Now how did -- I mean, if you've done this, it seems like it -- if you've done this, how come the guards didn't kill you, I mean shoot [indecipherable]

A: Well, you know, their minds were already on other things. I mean, they knew they had lost the war. They were probably all trying to figure out how to get back out of there. When the riot became too -- too much, when too many people crowded into this storage place, they were shooting into the air. They were trying to disperse us, but they didn't shoot into u -- into the crowd.

Q: But, I mean [indecipherable]

A: I think they did once, I -- if I -- now that I think of it and someone got hurt, but not, you know, not -- not badly. So we ran into this thing and it looked like the -- then -- the- these Nazi soldiers had just gotten up. They left their food in the middle of the table with th -- the -- half eaten and they ran away, because they -- they knew that there were soldiers -- the Russians probably were coming. So we raced -- and we -- we saw the food, but all at once, we were looking for bigger and better and we raced through this storage place and I found something that looked like noodles. So I wanted to take these noodles, we hadn't had noodles in years. I'm -- my God and what would I do? I -- I was wearing two pairs of underpants. One was the what -- what they gave us, a gray flannel and then, illegally, under it, I was wearing a pink silk that I had found someplace, it wasn't much of anything. And so I kept the pink silk on and I took off the gray flannel, pulled out the string that was holding it on top, tied the legs together and put -- put these noodles into the -- into these pants and walked away with it. And then, for -- we ate whatever we could find. And I must tell you something, again with this -- Gypsies. A whole group of Gypsies were brought to the camp and kept in a separate area. They had walked from I don't know where, but -- and on the way they found dead horses and they found whatever the -- food they could find and they brought it to camp with them. And do you know, when someone would walk over -- and my mother told me don't go there. But wh -- if someone walked over, they would share the food with everybody. The only thing they did was also that they -- they looked for th -- wood for to make it -- to barbecue the food, you know, roast it a little bit. So they took everything apart. In the end, we couldn't

even go to the toilets any more, because they had taken off the toilet seat -- you know these planks that served as -- to -- as seats, to -- and they -- they burned everything. They took the doors off the -- but, it was right, you know, that they did this. Well, anyway, we were given this -- these boxes of food and we were told that we were leaving. And I'm carrying these potatoes -- I-I'm sorry, the noodles with me. And then, on the way, we ran out of food and there was no one to supply us with anything. Every so often, in a field, we would find little potatoes. We didn't wash them, ba -- there's no -- no way of washing, w-we -- there was barely a fire. So we ate them ho -- half raw and full of sand and grit a-and we ate it like that. And then finally I said to my mother, "You know, I'm carrying these noodles and we got to cook them." Th -- She found a rusted tin can, we found some water from somewhere and we started -- in the fire, we started cooking it. And as we were cooking this, this grew and grew and grew. It didn't act like noodles, it grew and grew. And what I had cherished right along, while we were eating all these potatoes, I said, "Oh, I can't stand to look at these potatoes." What I had taken was dehydrated potatoes. So, my grandchildren now tell me, "But you say you would never eat another potato. And so how come you're eating potatoes now?" So this is one of the funny -- well, funny, comical stories that came out of the Holocaust. But anyway, we were walking -- now the end of the camp, it just -- we just stopped working and we -- and we hung around and then they told us that we had to leave. So they lined us up five at a ti -- now, sometime -- some of the guards went -- I recognized some that were from Auschwitz that had just somehow appeared there, because they were running away. And

others were -- the ones that we had regularly had, and we walked. I guess we were walking we -- to the west, but it was -- this was fairly north and there was a lake there. But I right along thought we were along the North Sea, but we were a little bit south of that.

Q: Where -- where we hoping -- wh -- did they -- were you -- were th -- had the soldiers left or did they order you to march?

A: They ordered us to march and they were still -- I mean, I was amazed. The war was over, they knew they had lost and they were still carrying out orders of -- of making us obey.

Q: Where were they hoping to take you? Or what did they -- where did they tell you they were taking you?

A: I si -- just away from --

Q: Away from the s --

A: -- from wherever it was, you kn -- west. I mean, I know we were walking west because no one wanted to be going to the Russians, they were really -- I mean, they knew what they had done in Stalingrad or Leningrad and in -- in -- in all the cities in between, so they were very fearful of this revenge. And we walked and then we walked the fields and one time -- I think the last night, we came to a city and we came into a -- what had bi -- was an abandoned sugar factor -- sugar refinery. And we were settling in for the night and we had found some food already, that we were able to steal from the Germans and I was walking around and I knew this -- I mean, it was -- you could se -- really see the guar

-- the guards were disappearing. And all at once there was this woman, Drexler. She was an SS woman, she had been in Auschwitz and she was sitting in what had been an office, little place and she was cleaning her gun. And she saw me walking there and she called me in. And I figured, “Oh, my God. You have come so far and now she’s cleaning her gun there and who knows what she has in mind.” And she had told me that -- and she said -- she said to me, “Oh, you know, pretty soon you’ll be free and then you’ll be doing what -- to us, what we did to you.” And here she’s -- she’s still in power and I said to her, “Oh, don’t worry, won’t be so bad, they wouldn’t do anything,” and all this kind of thing. I wanted to get my -- talk myself out of it and finally she let me go out. This was my -- my last experience with the Nazis -- you know, with real Nazis. That was at night and the next morning we were still -- they still made us get up and walk. And we walked and walked. Towards middle afternoon, we came to -- I -- I don’t remember, was it earlier? I don’t know. We came on a -- onto a highway and there were tanks there, without swastikas, with five pointed white stars on it. The language was not German. Now, I had studied English, so -- in -- in high school. Of course I wasn’t very good at it at that point, I hadn’t spoken it. So -- but, just to hear the English and of course we knew that was it. A-Across from where we came out of this clearing and met the highway, there were -- setting up, there were rows and rows of Nazis, of SS people. And you know, the SS had some kind of a tattoo under one arm. I think under the left arm, the way they were standing, to identify them. They had done this for their own protection, but now it worked against them. So they examined everybody under the arm and they knew who

was a Nazi and who was not and then I don't know what they did with them, we didn't know any more. But we, from that point on, were able to walk away.

Q: So -- and what happened then, so that you were [indecipherable]

A: Dah -- we stayed in -- we stayed in a building. Someone said go here -- go there and we stayed in a building overnight. The building -- and this was near the Elba, where the Russians and the Americans and the English and some of the French met. And every few hours there was a different army taking care of -- you know, passing through. We went into a building that had been a -- a factory for coffins. Was -- the man who owned it, lived in the front. He had a beautiful backyard, with orchard, it was just gorgeous. And there was this factory on the side. And we slept -- some people sl -- we slept on the floor. In the middle of the night -- the Russians had been celebrating --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

A: -- middle of the night -- the Russians had been celebrating and they were -- really had -- really celebrated and they were drunk as anything. So they tried to drive up -- they knew there were girls up there. So they tried to drive up the steps on their motorcycles and of course, they kept falling back. Then, someone had a horse and he tried to go up the steps on the horse and that didn't work. So he tied up the horse in the backyard and this horse trampled on this German's lawn. And that lawn had been so perfect, that I can imagine he must have been furious a -- he saw all this -- all this lawn dug up by this horse. But when we woke up in the morning, some of the young women -- it had never occurred to me, because I considered myself a child, I didn't think any soldier would want me -- some of the women had taken some of that black paint that they use for coffins and smeared in on their faces because they didn't want to be seen. Some had actually climbed into a co-coffins while all this noise was going on outside with the motorcycles and the horses and the stuff. Some of the -- so -- but, in the morning we sort of dispersed.

Q: Wh-What were your feel -- what were your feelings like that, in those just couple of days? Were you --

A: Oh, it was --

Q: -- elated, or --

A: -- you know, at -- for one minute, I -- I was walking along the sugar factory and I'm thinking, now I'm on the outside, on the ball there and I'm standing there and I'm saying,

"Oh, my God, I can do what I want, I can go where I want to go." I couldn't, of course, but it was a whole, "Oh my gosh, this is -- this is life again." And it was -- it was a wonderful thing. I mean, a -- four -- like a millisecond. It just -- in a little part of a second, I was thinking, "Oh, my God, someone has to tell me what to do, because I'm totally lost here." This is a whole new experience and, you know, and in -- in Auschwitz you couldn't do anything without anyone telling you. I mean, if you -- you had to stand straight and they told you to do it and you had to do it. And -- but that didn't last very long. I mean, I -- I knew then, of course I -- we couldn't -- we didn't celebrate. There were people vi -- immediately, in the evening, there was a castle with a big -- or an inn or something and all the Polish, non-Jewish people went up there, dancing and drinking and singing. And we -- we couldn't celebrate, we could only still think of all the people we had lost and all the people that were gone and the fires and the burning and the cyanide and all this. And there -- there was no way and we knew we wouldn't find anyone. Maybe these other people were hoping when they go back to their houses, there would be someone there. There would be something that isn't just -- but for us, everything was destroyed, so there was -- really, it was very -- it wasn't depressing, but it was -- it was very somber. We couldn't think of -- of anything else [inaudible]

Q: Wh-What kind of -- do you remember the kind of discussions that -- that -- that -- that you were having with the -- the people -- with your comrades, about --

A: Not really, I --

Q: -- about the shortage [indecipherable]

A: -- yeah, right, well you see, these were people we didn't know. There were groups of French women and we really didn't have anything to do with the Polish and Ukrainian women. So, it was my mother and I and something very -- another sort of strange thing happened. She walked in the street and a Russian officer asked her what she wanted. And she speak -- spoke a few words of Russian. And she said she's hungry. So there was a chicken crossing the street, he grabbed the chicken, threw his head -- threw the chicken's head against the wall, killed it. Gave it to my moth -- handed it to my mother and say, "Here, you have your supper." She came back to this coffin factory, plucked the chicken and she made chicken sou -- chicken soup or roast chicken, I forgot what it was, but she cooked the chicken for us. But there weren't all that many people that we shared with or anything. And you know, it -- we didn't make -- we didn't speak any more about the future, we were just concerned about what was happening right then and there to -- to find some kind of normalcy. But my mother -- see, I had dr -- hoped that we would still find my father. My mother -- we were -- while we were in Auschwitz in 1943 -- Christmas of 1943, they had given -- Germany celebrates two ni -- days of Christmas, but the first -- they only celebrated -- they gave us one day off. So most people slept, but my brother had been separated from us already. So we wanted to see if we could find -- see him, just to know that he was alive, but -- and so we went outside and whomever we spoke -- and we tried to attract attention with -- in the man's camp, which was separated by a road and he -- we couldn't get them. But it -- the night before, a woman who had been smuggled into camp -- had -- no, not -- not smugg -- she was taken into the camp,

but she didn't -- they didn't tell anyone that she ha -- that she was pregnant and she had given birth that night to a boy. There were a couple of Christian women, Catholic women, Polish, in the crowd and they felt, oh, on Christmas eve, a Jewish boy was born, under those terrible conditions, a miracle was going to happen. And they thought the miracle -- they brought in -- they had found a little twig about this tall, of -- of greens and they made -- called it a Christmas tree. Did I talk about this at the time, you know?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: All right. So, anyway, my mother dr -- her -- dreamt that he -- my -- that my father appeared to her and said to her, "Now, it's time to say Kaddish." So my mother was convinced that my fa -- well, of course, given all the c-circumstan -- conditions, she knew that my father wasn't alive. I didn't believe this. I knew th -- I thought that he would appear somewhere. And I was hoping maybe -- maybe I'd find him in an insane asylum. Maybe he was just very sick and we'd have to nurse him back. I mean, I was trying to imagine everything that I could, that -- just to find him. And of course, didn't. Then, when we were in Frankfort after awhile, my uncle in Israel -- in Israel they got a lot of lists of survivors and they tried to find families. My uncle found someone and -- who was still in Europe, with my father's name. So my uncle got all excited and thought this was my father. And he wrote to us. So this had to be while we were back in Frankfort, though. I mean this was going on a long -- and while -- and I -- I -- I expected my father to -- when -- after I read this, I expect my father to walk in any minute.

Q: What was his name?

A: Ithzac Krautvit. What it turned out to be was that this had been a cousin of my father's. He had changed his name to Ithzac Krautvit, I don't know, maybe the Krautvit name was better known -- what was -- I don't know what. But he -- whatever it was, his first name had been Ithzac, like my father's and he -- he had the last name and you know what? We -- we had the -- a visa to come to the United States and I was hoping -- I was hold -- didn't let my mother g-go, with some of the -- we went on the last boat that we could possibly go while our visa was still valid, because I didn't let her go, I thought my father would show up. So --

Q: About how long were you in Frankfort [indecipherable]

A: Well, we were -- in the fall of 1945, when we couldn't stay in that tent camp any more, they asked us where we could go. And we -- cause we had been in Frankfort, they sent us back to -- others were taken to a more permanent, like wooden barrack camps. You know, the -- many of the DP camps in Germany. We were sent to Frankfort. That was in the fall of 1944 -- five.

Q: Excuse me, just so -- so -- how long -- and how long had you been in the tent camps? How long --

A: From the time we were liberated, from April -- May, I'm sorry. Probably May eighth, May 10th, somewhere like that. Until the fall sometime, I don't kn -- you know.

Q: So it's probably like fourth -- four or five months?

A: Four or five months, yeah.

Q: And where was that? That was in --

A: That was in a -- it was administered by the British army, so it had to be somewhere in northern Germany.

Q: So then you -- then you went to Frankfort in the fall?

A: We went to Frankfort, yes. It took a long time, too, because we went by trucks and then we went by broken down trains and -- and you know, nothing was really working yet. And we arrived at the bombed out train station and we didn't' know where to go, because you know, they just dropped us there, that was it. And we looked out and the buildings all around were destroyed. So then someone to-told us that a -- an a -- an American soldier -- and it might have been this Mr. Klein, who's married to Gerda Klein, because he was looking -- this man was looking for relatives in -- from Frankfort. And he had looked throughout Europe, wherever he was -- he was a soldier and he had been in ba -- in Italy. And again, someone told him there was a young boy from Frankfort and he was -- thought, well maybe this boy could tell him something. Well, the boy didn't know, but he told him his history and his name. And when this man now came in Frankfort to the train station, he was again trying to find news about people o-of his family, abou -- people who might have known or might know something, what happened to them. And we started talking to him and then he said, "You know, while I was at Italy, I spoke to a little boy and -- I mean, a young boy, he s -- he sounds like it would be your son," to my mother. And it turned out that he was right and he gave us addresses to write to. Of course, everything was destroyed and the mail took weeks and weeks and weeks. And my brother had been liberated by the isr -- the Palestinian contingent of the British army --

you know, there were volunteers. They were anxious to get him to Israel, because they knew there would be a war. He was still a minor, so he -- the British would let him in. They knew he would be -- there would be a war and they had another man to fight. So, while he was -- he was in Barian, Italy when he wrote to us, but while the mail was going up and back, he was already going to Palestine. And we went to Frankfort, so at least we knew that he was alive.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we went to Frankfort sometime in the fall. It was a very gloomy, dark day when we arrived, was terrible.

Q: So you -- so you arrived in Frankfort and -- and --

A: Mm. The first place where we stayed -- I don't know where -- how we found it or who told us about it. There was a Jewish hospital and parts of it had been bombed and parts of it had r-remained, but if you went out too far, you could fall off into the -- into the rubble. So, we were given a room and in bis -- with a hospital bed and that was -- that was it. But, there was some water once in awhile and I don't know what we did for hot -- for heat or whatever, because the -- the a -- the air was coming in throughout, you know? But I guess we were so used to suffering that a little more or less cold or whatever, didn't matter much. Eventually -- because we had been from Frankfort, we were given an apartment where a Nazi was thrown out. A Nazi family, they had been members of the party. So we stayed in that apartment until we left in the be -- March of -- of -- well, February, March of 1946 -- 1947. No, we stayed in that apartment for the whole time.

Q: So -- so, you were there for -- do you want to stop for a second?

A: Yeah, I want to stop for a minute, yeah. Do you want anything else?

Q: No, I'm [break] -- Frankfort for over a year?

A: Yeah. I went back to high school.

Q: Really? During that year?

A: Oh, but it was -- it was terrible, because I had six years of schooling, four years of -- the system is different, four years of grammar school and eight years of high school is here, but there was eight years of -- wait a minute -- you have four ye -- no, it was the reverse from what the United States has. The United States had four years of high school and eight years of gra -- of pepperto -- we -- we had four years of high s -- of grammar school and eight years of high school. So, when I went back to -- first of all, my mind was not adjusted. When I went back to the -- to the time there were my a -- for my age group, they were way ahead of me. And I was not good in math at that point. You know, math is difficult. English I had no problem, languages I had no problem with. Latin, anything. But the math and the sciences -- and then, it was very difficult because the schools ha -- we-were not really set up prop -- there -- things had been bombed, you couldn't get books, you couldn't get paper. There -- the la -- there were no laboratories, everything was destroyed. So, it really wasn't -- it really wasn't school.

Q: Who were the other students that were --

A: They were Ge-Germans. I think I must have been one -- the only one who was -- who was there, but at the time, I made a mistake. Someone told me that in Heidelberg, they

were giving classes to Jewish survivors and I should have -- and I said, “Oh, my gosh, I’m too young. I mean, who would take me into Heidelberg University -- Sucham University.” But that was the one where the other people went and they were getting a -- a college education at that point.

Q: S-So -- I mean, it’s -- it’s -- just strikes me at this point as a strange thing, that -- that -- that you’d just gotten through this -- out of this whole experience and then you are kind of thrust back into this setting of s --

A: And to try to get myself to be normal.

Q: -- well s-- well school and also surrounded by these kids who -- I mean [indecipherable]

A: Who are Nazis? Oh, I had nothing -- I had nothing to do. I -- I ni -- had no friends, I didn’t have friends.

Q: [indecipherable] what did they thing of you [indecipherable] you?

A: I -- I have no idea and I didn’t care. I mean, I never spoke to anyone. I -- I made no friends with anyone. I mean, these were the kids, though, who few years before that, we-were throwing stones or wh-whatever at us, or -- you know, beating us up, so I had no desire to fi -- to associate.

Q: Were you -- were you angry with them, or --

A: No, I -- I guess not. I -- I don’t know, I was -- you know, I wasn’t even angry any -- any more. When we came to Frankfort, everything was bombed and I knew there had to be bodies underneath. And yet, I was praying that I shouldn’t see when they dig up --

when they straighten this out, that there would be a body in there, because I don't know how I would react. I would probably feel pity, but I felt that -- look what they did to us and why should I then feel pity when I see the enemy's body? And yet, I had become human again and I didn't want to see this. So, living in -- in Germany, was not -- it wasn't easy in the beginning. So --

Q: Yeah, it seems a strange -- to s -- to return to that -- after that, is --

A: Well, y-you see, this is where my mother suffered and I did -- I did too, but not to the same extent. Of course, I'm still affected by -- by life in Auschwitz. We -- where we lived in Fairlawn before, there was a -- had a big backyard on the side, somebody had an orchard there and we -- when I stood by the fence, that he had a fence put up -- a fence, ordinary fence, fairly tall. And when I stood there and talked to him through the f -- wires, I was thinking, "Oh my gosh, I'm back in Auschwitz." When I cleaned my oven and I heard the grating -- you know, in my home, it reminded me of when they were clearing out the ashes in -- in the ovens in Auschwitz and you could hear that. So, it doesn't just -- you don't just forget it, it's always -- it's always there.

Q: Always?

A: Yes.

Q: You're always [indecipherable]

A: It's always there. I went -- I'll tell you something very strange on my -- my oldest son Allen's a rabbi and he's in Winnipeg. But we went to a wedding a few m -- weeks ago -- to several weddings wa -- in Toronto, one after another. And -- but especially the last one

was a very -- an Orthodox wedding. My cousin -- cousin's daughter has become very Orthodox. And I was telling my daughter-in-law, do you know, I -- in the middle of all these celebrations and it's so wonderful, see Jewish life continuing an-and ju -- my cousin's parents were survivors and it's wonderful, but I'm standing there and all I can picture -- and this is a picture that I've studied from medieval times even, and they herded Jews into the synagogue and then set them afire. And here are people dancing and laughing, enjoying themselves. And all I can picture is, "Oh, someone is out there throwing gasoline or whatever and trying to burn down the synagogue." And whenever there's a simcha like this, this is my reaction. But Allen spoke to a psychologist, did --

Q: Allen?

A: My son -- oldest son, Allen, the rabbi, spoke to a psychologist, he didn't say it was his mother, he just said a congregant. And she said, "Well, this can be easily cured." It doesn't -- it's not my most important problem, so I didn't, you know, but it's there, that's -- it's always there.

Q: Yeah. It's funny, I -- I have a friend that's -- it's -- it's -- well, it's a very sad story, [indecipherable] she's -- she's about my age and her husband was -- they were married and -- about a year and her husband was killed in an accident and --

A: Oh.

Q: It's a very sad story. But -- so I wa -- I was talking to her the other day and you know, now it's been what? Like six months or so -- but you can -- sin-since he died. But talking

to her, you can talk about this and that and the things that are going on, but it -- inevitably, the conversation tone will come around to --

A: Yeah, right. Mm-hm.

Q: -- and you can tell that -- even though she -- it was at work, I saw her at her -- at work, at which -- a-and I was in her office a while, we were talking. Well, you could tell she all -- even though she would talk about other things and --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- do her things, you could tell that -- that -- there was always going on -- she was always thinking about that somewhere.

A: Yeah.

Q: You know, she was always thinking about her husband. She never -- you know, even if she'd be doing something else, it was like always something --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So, let's talk a little bit about what -- so you left in 1947?

A: Yeah, in -- in -- it was -- it took seven days to come ba -- so I think it was the end of February and by m -- we -- we arrived in ma -- on March -- I don't know what, third or something like that, 1947.

Q: What -- what made you decide that -- I mean, I presume that you returned to Frankfort assuming that you would pick -- that you would [indecipherable]

A: Only to find my -- no, no.

Q: No?

A: We had not -- no, we did not want to live there. We only wanted -- we had arranged with my father, whoever would live would go back to Frankfort so that we would be a family again and leave as a family. But there was no way I was going to live there.

Q: So when you were -- so you li -- you were there for a -- a year or so and aft -- at that point, when you left, it must have been -- in a sense because you have given up hope of his returning?

A: My mother, yes, I'm -- I mean, I knew that at that point, my father wasn't ab -- but for my mother it was a very tr -- great trauma. For me, it was -- ta -- sure, I still keep do -- talking about my father and -- and -- and feeling about him and -- and -- and great pity because that he was 47 years old when the Nazis got hi -- and of course a child wants both parents to be there, but I guess I was young, I was able to adjust [indecipherable] looking forward to somethi -- other things, but for my mother, it was -- it was terrible, really terrible.

Q: Well, then it must have been kind of -- I mean, was it -- was it to th -- was it the kind of thing where -- where the two of you are hardly -- that she just kind of said, we -- you know, enough, we waited enough, now come down, it's time move on and --

A: No, she di -- she never felt that way, no, no.

Q: But still, she came to some decision that there was no point to staying or she was tired of it --

A: That there was no -- no -- yes, I mean, it was facing the Naz -- ee -- ee -- the Nazi popu -- of course, my husband was in the American army and he said when they came --

when they occupied Germany, there was not one Nazi to be found. I mean, this is the -- the story you hear from all the soldiers. But we knew that they all were and there was no way that we could live in the -- in those surroundings. I mean, as soon as the situation was stabilized, we were able to -- we were thinking -- you know, we knew we -- we wouldn't stay there.

Q: How did -- what were -- what were relations like between you and your mother and the people s -- who are around, who you knew had been -- the people [indecipherable]

A: We didn't associate -- we didn't associate -- we save a lot of -- there was a DP camp in Salzheim, which is outside of Frankfort and we associated with those people. We associated with the Jews who managed to live in a city, rather than stay in a camp, so -- and --

Q: But you must have passed -- you know, passed you on the street, or you're in a --

A: Well, we had no --

Q: -- [indecipherable] or --

A: -- yeah, well we had not known or we had absolutely nothing to do with them.

Q: Did they -- did peopl -- did you glare at them or they glare at you, or --

A: No, no, no, just --

Q: Just like --

A: -- yeah, yeah, yeah --

Q: -- just pretended there was --

A: -- yeah. What had happened was that one synagogue was not -- had not been destroyed in 1938 -- it was a Reform synagogue -- because there were houses around and they figured if they burn it, their houses would be affected, so they used it during the war as a storage and stalls and whatever. And when -- there were American sold -- Jewish soldiers in Frank -- stationed in Frankfort and came Rosh Hashanah -- the first Rosh Hashanah, in 1945. They cleaned out the synagogue and they had -- we had services together. Now here was all this Jewish people and this is a whole different thing. And they brought in wine and cakes and stuff, so it was a nice situation. Those were the -- they were groups -- there were some places, and I didn't go that often. There were other Jews living in town and there were -- like a cl -- there was a club that you could go to, they showed movies, they showed plays. One time, the habeema came to -- to Salzheim, actually, and they invited all the Jews from -- who lived in Frankfort, also to come to their performance. It's -- it's the -- you're familiar with it? It's the -- no, it's an Israeli theater group. What they did -- and this is one of the funny things that happen, again. They came to Salzheim and they trained actors f -- took them out from the DP camp and trained them to be actors. They were giving the story -- the -- the debook. Have you ha -- do you know the story -- are you familiar with it? The debook is -- it's a very solemn play and this girl is obsessed with the debook and most of it -- most her obsession takes place backstage and they talk abou -- in -- in this particular production, anyway. And they talked about her being a y-you know, that -- that what's happening to her. But the -- the -- the hoosen, the one that was -- had died and had given up his soul and was now in an -- in

the other hoosen's body, he's onstage and then finally they bring out this -- the bride and it was such a solemn thing. A bride is coming and white dress and you look up and she was about nine months pregnant. And everybody broke up. It was really -- they shouldn't have let this go through, because such as -- it -- it really ruined the effect. So, this was one of the th -- but they couldn't help it, because during this time, while they were rehearsing, all this was happening. So -- but this sticks out in my mind, b-but I probably would have forgotten that we went to see the debook, except for this incident. And so, in Salzheim and in the cities, they were -- there were enough Jews and sometimes Jewish soldiers, who con -- helped us continue with Jewish life.

Q: And so, tell me about what -- what happened when you -- how -- how did -- how were you helped and who helped you get to America?

A: Well, anyway, where my aunt, who lived in -- my father's sister lived in United States and she -- she had a fr-friend --

Q: Did she come before the war?

A: Oh yes, she ca -- she came, actually -- no, she came after the fi -- right after the first World War.

Q: Mm.

A: She was o -- much older than my father. And she had -- well, we had relatives in Bayonne and she had -- th-the friends -- they -- they were friends and one of their sons was stationed in pa -- in Frankfort. And one afternoon in our apartment, bell rang downstairs and I looked down and two soldiers came up and they actually were wearing

MP bands. And I was kind of a little bit afraid. Beca -- but I couldn't figure out what we had done. And they turned out to be -- one was the f -- the friend of my aunt's and then he brought another friend with him. And act -- they -- we became sort of pals. They helped me with my homework and they -- we went to a movie occasionally. And sort of palled around. It was nice. W -- Really, very, very nice. So this is the kind of thing we were able to establish with American Jews and there were -- there were enough Jews -- some of them originally from Frankfort and some of them from other cities in Germany and a lot of them from Poland. But the ones from Poland mo -- stayed mostly in the DP camps. But think the -- as I said, they did give concerts and they did give other things and it was nice.

Q: So, y -- y -- at that point, why did you decide to come to the United States particularly? Because you had relatives here, or --

A: Well, n-not really. My -- I don't know why my father never wanted to go to Israel, but my Uncle Abba left for Israel, he -- he said, "Look, I can take Ruth along or something," and my father wouldn't -- of course he wouldn't separate -- but he wouldn't even think of -- it was probably easier to go -- I don't know why he didn't -- he wanted to go to the -- if he had to go, he was going to go to the United States. After the war, I wanted to go to Israel. I mean, was Palestine, of course. I keep saying Israel, but it was Palestine at the time. If I had been alone, I would have definitely gone to Israel because I felt there is something, I had to be with Jews, because of this terrible experience and I felt that we didn't have -- if there had been a homeland, then all this could have been avoided. And I

still do this, I was telling my son Allen that I'm a great admirer of the 12th century Rabbi Meyer Fuffenberg, who wanted to go to Israel and I keep think -- and he was a great administrator and I keep thinking, "You know, this is wonderful. If he had only made it." He was betrayed by someone in a -- in a -- while he was waiting for a ship to come into Italy. And I keep -- kept telling Allen, "You know, I should write a story of what happened -- that he actually made it there and he set up a Jewish state and everything was wonderful." Of course the crusaders were there at the time, so it couldn't work, but anyway -- so I felt right along that I should go to Is -- but my mother didn't want to go. I don't know why. She had -- I could never ask her -- I could never figure it out. And so we came to the United States.

Q: Mm. And what -- what -- what was it like when you came here? What was -- do you remember actually arriving and your vision of New York, and --

A: Yeah, well, yes, I -- I must have been pretty stupid, because everybody was talking -- we went up on deck of the ship and looked at the Statue of Liberty and I didn't even know what it meant. So -- but we got into the harbor and we were met by some women. We did not go into Ellis Island, we went into New York harbor, I think. And we were met there by some women. They assigned us to a hotel in -- I guess it was the Hyas or the Joint Distribution Committee. They assigned us to a hotel and we stayed there.

Q: What do you -- do -- what do you remember of your first impressions of -- of Manhattan?

A: Of New York? Manhatt -- it had snowed and in Frankfort when it had snowed, people would never wear galoshes. They would rather get their feet soaking wet than wear galoshes.

Q: Why?

A: It was just -- it was not cosmopolitan enough, to wear galoshes. And here were all these women with fur coats and wearing galoshes and we thought, “Oh my gosh, look how unsophisticated they are. Look how crude.” And well --

Q: What did you think of the -- the city [indecipherable]

A: We were taken -- we were taken on a bus, ta -- and taken to the hotel and I remember there was a building for sale and it said 1,000,000 dollars and I was telling my mother that we s -- I think we should buy it. It was -- well, we, between the two of us, I think we -- we really had a lot more money than a lot of other people for -- because there was a lot of black market going on and was quite legitimate now. When you tell someone else black market, y-you -- they look at you like you’re a prison -- like a -- a criminal. But there, it was the only way to exist, so it was open. And we had about 300 dollars between the two of us and I was telling her, “See, this is the building we should buy, 1,000,000 dollars.” So that much a -- we -- I remember we were put into a hotel and we were given scrip to buy food in a kosher deli and stuff, and --

Q: Do you remember where the hotel was, or what it was?

A: Yeah, at a h -- it was on Broadway and 103rd Street, only I don't know the name any more. I -- I could probably -- I'll probably remember after you leave, but that was where it was. And --

Q: Ha -- yeah?

A: My mother -- we saw an ad in the alfbarn, they were looking for a cook. Now, my mother had never worked, but she was really like the hostess with the mostest. I mean, it was nothing for her to -- to make -- I -- I -- one time I remember wi -- on sukkas, they -- we had a balcony and my father set up a sukka there. This was in 1932 and I just remember a little bit and just so -- of course it was too -- too little, but -- but it ran right into our dining room, so the people were sitting there and they went up to the sukka for a minute, so they -- they had the Mitzvah of being with a -- in a sukka --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: -- and, so it was nothing for her to -- to make a meal a -- for 45 people in our -- for dinner that night. And it was nothing for her, so she -- this is what -- she answered the ad and actually, I talked her into it, bec -- and she said she wanted to stay in the city, because there were people -- and you could get ideas of what to do. And I said, "Well, this is -- this looks like a job, take it." And she did. At the same time, I went to high school. But there was -- I -- I couldn't -- my mother told me not to continue. Cause she said, "Well, there's no point to it. What if I have to leave the job? I'm not so happy with it and you'll -- but, and so go to work." And I wa-wanted to say, "Well, how am I going

to leave? If I have a job, how am I going to leave?" But I didn't, you know? I was very int -- not intimid -- yeah, right, I ge -- I think intimidated. Nice girls just didn't question their parents any -- decisions. And I never -- or maybe it was just me, but I never questioned when she said do this or do that, I never questioned it until sometime later. So I was put into training in the hospital laboratory and I worked there for about four years. A labor -- laboratory technician.

Q: Right.

A: Our boss actually was starting to -- a training program for technicians that would be like registered nurses for nursing, but registered technicians for this. And I was -- I was in this -- the program was cut out again, I guess it didn't pay, or whatever and I left, you know. But, in the meantime I had been married and --

Q: What -- Yeah, wha -- what were you -- what -- what were you interested in doing? What did you -- did you have like hopes for what you wanted to [indecipherable]

A: I wanted to go on to college and my mother didn't let me. And you know, it -- it hurts me to this day that she stopped me. But what I think happened was that, they had friends who had been in the same business as my father, but they had -- they were very, very wealthy. And when we came here, my mother met them again and they said, "Oh, let Ruth go to a factory and work. Why should she do anything else?" Now, they didn't do that with their daughter. So my mother felt that, oh she had -- I guess -- I don't know what she felt, but I imagine that she felt that she had done enough for me and she didn't -- didn't want me to go to college.

Q: That seems an odd thing, in a way. I mean, do you know --

A: Yes, I -- yes, it was.

Q: Do you think that was because of her -- the way she was at that point, or the way --

A: It was her -- it was -- yes, I tell you, because if she had said to me, we don't have enough mo -- you know, I would have tried to find -- get some scholarships. But if she had said to me, we don't have enough money, I would have said, "Well, let me go to work." Or, I wanted to say -- and it was on the tip of my tongue and I remember that to this day, I wanted to say to her, "Well, if you support me now, once I have my education, I will support you." But I pictured her saying, "Well, what guarantees do I have?" And so I didn't even bring it up. And my mother was at that point very, very difficult to -- to deal with and it was -- i-it became a very difficult situation between us and between the family. Was very -- very, very --

Q: How -- how so? What was -- what was difficult?

A: I don't know why it was.

Q: I mean, what was it -- what was it -- what characterized [indecipherable]

A: I felt -- I've always feel that it was because of her experience.

Q: And what -- was she [indecipherable]

A: And that she was insecure and she didn't want -- and she wanted to save the money and she wanted me to go to work rather than go to college, so that -- not to waster her money.

Q: What and -- what -- what was sh -- was she -- did she have a temper? Did she -- what was she like that made her difficult?

A: Oh, she would just sulk. Oh, and sometimes she would scream, and sometimes she would -- but, she would sulk. But I think -- and at the time I didn't realize it, but I -- I think -- I -- I know it was all because of her experience, because the woman who went into Auschwitz was not the same one that was in -- back in Frankfort afterwards. So, it was the easiest solution. She didn't want me to marry. Then, sh-she didn't want -- she didn't like my husband, she didn't want me to get married and it made me more stubborn and I decided to get married and then a few weeks before the wedding, she said to me, "If you don't get married, I'll let you go to college." And I said no. I didn't want that any more.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And -- I did go to college much later and I do have a Master's in literature and a Bachelor's degree in -- in history. The only thing is, I had it, but I didn't -- couldn't use it for a profession. I'm trying to get a job teaching now. I hope I can get something, but that's it. But I never -- I didn't take anyth -- because I was working very hard at a -- in the business with my husband and I felt I didn't want to do anything that would -- well, would -- train for some other work. I've worked so much, I've had enough. But I wish I had taken something a little more substantial. I've had -- even gone for teacher's certification and then -- you know, so I would have something now, just to have it.

Q: So I -- I -- so -- and how old were you about that time? When you were married, how old were you when you were --

A: 20.

Q: 20. So very young.

A: Yeah, it was too young. Of course it was too young.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, granted that women were -- people were married -- women were married young and the soldiers -- the -- the -- the returning soldiers were na -- older. But women were married younger, but for me I -- I -- I had absolutely no experience in life and you know, for this and it wasn't the right thing to do, I know that.

Q: Mm-hm. What do you mean, yo -- yo -- y-you felt -- y-y -- wh-what do you mean there when yo -- when you say you didn't have any experience [indecipherable]

A: Well, I mean, I di -- I didn't even know how to deal with people properly. I was in -- the things that I picked up from Auschwitz was certainly not manners --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- or anything and I -- I was -- I -- I felt like I was a wild person and I had -- I ha -- I had lost years and there was no culture or anything that had shaped me.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: So --

Q: If you -- I mean, if you don't mind me asking, I'm kind of curious about -- did you have -- did you -- did you know boys before that or at what point did you kind of [indecipherable]

A: No, actually not -- actually not. There were young men who wanted to date me in Frankfort and occasionally I went to a movie or something. But I really -- you see, I didn't want to be tied down with any boyfriends.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I wanted to go to college. I wanted to do things like that. So I didn't want to be going steady or -- or being involved with anything. Be -- and then my mother just -- she undid it, all th-those dreams and that -- and that was it.

Q: When you were -- I mean, and you were in the -- you were in the camps during the time when -- you know, most people when they're --

A: Right, yeah.

Q: -- you know, [indecipherable] age, they're starting to think about boys or girls or --

A: Yeah.

Q: Did that -- was that going on with you at all, or was that just like --

A: No, no. You don't -- you don't -- you don't -- because it was just a matter of surviving --

Q: Sure.

A: -- from one day to another, so I mean, who thinks of boys? I mean, no, no.

Q: Yeah.

A: Besides, they gave us this stuff in the -- in the soup, that they give to the soldiers and I'm trying to think of the name and for days now it's evaded me.

Q: What? Like saltpeter, you mean?

A: Yeah, saltpeter, right. And, in -- in Auschwitz, I mean, I never saw one wo -- I think it had to affect people in other ways. I never saw one woman menstruating and I don't know if it was because of a lack of fat in the diet or it's because it was that saltpeter stuff, drolemite.

Q: Or just the trauma of the --

A: Or whatever.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I don't know of anyone who -- who -- even they were fantasizing about food, but they were not -- not as I know of, that they were fantasizing about men.

Q: Yeah. So -- so you were married very young and then you started with a life with your husband?

A: Mm.

Q: Can you tell me about that and about that -- that time in your life when you were -- aft -- just after you -- when you were married?

A: Oh. It was nice, it was good. We -- we had an apartment. My husband was an accountant, but he didn't -- his brother had -- was a CPA and he didn't want to sit in an office, like a si -- th-the CPA did. So, before the war, he had answered an ad and no one wanted to really hire him, because they fig-figured he would leave for the a -- he was

ready for to go to the army. So he answered an ad for someone for temporary work as a furrier. And he did that. When he came back, he was finishing school and under the GI bill, he was getting paid for that. So he became the -- an accountant, but when he needed it, he worked part time for a furrier. And he felt that this was better, more interesting work than sitting behind a desk. And now, when I speak to my children, they tell me they would never want to sit behind a desk. Two of my sons, anyway. And so my husband worked for a furrier, finished school and after he graduated, we got married and he didn't like his boss, ni -- we were married maybe two years and we started a business.

Q: And a -- so this was in -- around 1950 or so?

A: Well, yes. Let's see now. Allen was born 1952 and we were married 1948 -- I mean the end of 19 four -- fif -- so, actually 1949, practically. And so we were married with -- probably two, three years when he --

Q: Ha-Had your -- did your experiences before that have an im-impact on that relationship in the -- as your early -- in your early married life? Was it -- were you able to just kind of leave your experiences behind or did you find for --

A: No, I was really -- well, of course, I mean --

Q: How did that affect your -- your

A: I don't -- I -- I -- probably I'm not a judge of that. I think by -- my husband would have been able to answer that much better.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't know, but one of the things that I've done and I'm -- oh, I'm still doing it and it's very bad, is that I -- I -- I'm -- can be led. I -- I don't stand up for myself and I think -- and my husband sensed that and he was doing that. But, he wou -- didn't do it to -- to the bad, so it wasn't -- you know, it wasn't a bad -- it was a good marriage, I would say.

Q: And so you started a business?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then our son Allen was born in 1952, so I think the business might have started in 1951, and it was successful from the beginning.

Q: And it was a --

A: Yeah, my husband had gone to a school -- under the -- after he graduated, he went to school -- to designing school and he took several courses in designing and for work. And it was very successful from the beginning.

Q: So he was a -- it was a -- it was a furrier, it was --

A: Yeah. And I learned it too, because then I was pregnant, I went in to help, you know, just to hang around and I did that and I -- I f --

Q: Mm-hm. Where was the business?

A: Well, we rented a tiny little place in Patterson. Uptown, not in the downtown area. Then we moved to f -- into a rented store in Fairlawn. And two of our sons -- my oldest son is a rabbi. Two of our sons went -- finished college and they decided they didn't want -- this is really -- it hurts me so much to speak about this. They decided they did not want

to go to grad school. And we were begging them. They were two and a half years apart and my mother talked them into, “Oh, your parents have a wonderful business, why don’t you go --” and we didn’t want them no how. We didn’t want this for them. It’s seasonal, it’s cyclical, we didn’t want it. And they did.

Q: They both went -- did it?

A: They both went into the business with us.

Q: Did they take it or --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- they took over the business?

A: Yeah. And we built a building and my -- we were in the building for about a year and a half and my husband died suddenly. I mean, we knew he was sick, but it wasn’t -- we didn’t expect that, because he really didn’t have any real symptoms.

Q: When was that?

A: That -- when was that?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: 1986. So it’s now 12 years. And the business was very good for a few years and then the fur business was hit by all kinds of things. And three years ago our sons went out of business, but in -- Norman, my youngest had a tragedy with a nearly born child and very de -- late pregnanc -- stillborn child, almost. I mean, he was like eight months or something pregnant. And it sent them into a tailspin and they sold everything and they went to Israel. The building, I had a lot of problems with, I couldn’t sell it or the -- well, I

could have sold it for half of what -- because the -- the real estate people and -- and all the people that are around, they remind me of the villains in the movies, you know, with the wax mustaches and how they're going to cheat the -- the orphans and the widows and that's how I felt about it. I was given terrible orders and the -- offers, and the building's been empty for three years and my one -- my middle son went into Wall Street, in the stock market, he's doing fairly well, but he's -- the -- the other day the s -- market was down and everybody called him, "How come you didn't tell me to sell?" You know, I mean as if he had known and as if he could control it. But -- so this is what -- so he's -- he's -- he likes it, but if he could go into another business, he would probably consider it or at least part-time. I tried to sell the -- rent the building to a Russian bakery, Jewish -- Jewish people and we signed a contract and all and they defaulted. They walked out. So when I said this to my son Norman, he said, "You know, Mom, why don't I come back and do a bakery?" But not -- he's not going to be a baker baker, you know, but be a bus -- have a business and open several branches and that's where we are right now. He's in Israel, he's try -- we have the financing, he's trying to set up a bakeshop. And it's a beautiful, beautiful building and there's really, probably a need for it and he had good ideas, which -- quality control and things like that. So I'm keeping my fingers crossed it'll work. It's not what I had wanted for them. Na -- The -- it's really the reverse of my situation. I wanted to go to college, my mother didn't let me. We were pushing them to continue with grad school. Mark had been so wonderful with Russian jury and I thought he would go into international law. Norman tried all kinds of things, he -- they all went to

good schools, Brandeis and Washington University in Saint Louis. And NYU and it -- it's sh -- it's -- really hurts me that they didn't -- and that they -- at this point in their life, they still are thinking of -- of having to -- of changing jobs and -- and whatever.

Q: When did -- when did you go back to school?

A: When did -- I think when my son Allen was in the last year of high school. I felt -- well, it was because I saw an ad for a junior college. And they didn't require any high school papers. But of course, once I started that school, I graduated with almost perfect scores. Grade point averages or so -- almost close to four, like 396 in -- in one and 398 or whatever it was -- something like that. And I -- I loved it. I really loved it and I was very grateful that I was able to do it.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And you went to undergraduate school right away, or --

A: Well, you know, it's sort of a while, because I was working, so I couldn't gr-graduate in -- I couldn't get my Bachelor's degree in four years, da -- probably five or six. And then I -- I couldn't get my Master's in, you know, two years like everybody else, probably was three or four and -- because I had to work and then I always tried to make it up in the summer courses and they're terrible, but I guess maybe you know about that too. And, but I did and that was it. And then, of course, when I went to grad school, my mother was sick and it made it very -- very difficult. I was torn in all directions and -- and I still managed to get a -- a very good grade point average. I started writing and some of my stories had been published. I haven't done anything lately because I -- I -- my mind was on oth -- so many other things. And right now, putting dow -- have the first four

pages of my biography written. And everybody's after me to do -- my sons are after me to do it. I lecture a lot on the Holocaust and this was a -- really a saving th -- grace for me. I was never be able -- I was never able to speak about it. I didn't speak to my mother about it. I couldn't mention my father to her, it was just too painful and I didn't want to awoke anything in her that wo -- that would hurt her.

Q: So you never discussed it [indecipherable]

A: So I ne -- I've -- no. I mean, if she mentioned something -- she spoke about the Holocaust to my children, I did not. My brother and my mother were able to watch the Eichmann trial and I -- they were sometimes in my house and watched it and I closed the door to the den, because I didn't want to hear it. But then I went to a meeting that wa -- we had a very good Y in Bergen County. Actually, it was in Waim, which is Pasay Count -- doesn't matter, but it was [indecipherable] Fairlawn. And I somehow got myself onto that committee. They needed a -- a chairman and somehow -- somehow I was chosen. Now, when you are chairman of a committee like this and we had way over a thousand people come to all the -- every year. When -- I don't know what it's like now. When you're chairman of this, you -- I mean, you have to listen and you have to write about it and that is how I -- it helped me to write, to face it, to -- to -- to speak about it and I th -- it -- it's done a lot for me, just talking about it, because before that I couldn't.

Q: Mm. And I understand you went back to -- to -- to Frankfort? It was --

A: Yeah.

Q: A -- Ha -- When was that?

A: Well, let's see, Allen was -- so that had to be like probably 22 or so years ago and at that point --

Q: And you hadn't been back before?

A: I hadn't been back. My husband had been to the fairs -- are you too cold because the window in back is open?

Q: Yeah, maybe I'll [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, you know, we're busy and [indecipherable]

Q: I'll just crank it towards the [inaudible]

A: Oh, can you do it yourself?

Q: Sure.

A: Okay. There's another one, you want me to do that?

Q: No, I can do it. Just reach over.

A: My son Allen had decided to become a rabbi. He went to the University of Rochester as a pre-med student, changed his mind and wanted to become a rabbi. So, he had -- he took a year abroad study at the Hebrew University. And then, after he graduated, he needed to -- the theological seminary -- Jewish theological seminary in New York wanted him to take another year. The language, you know. So he stayed in Nevishektar, which was part -- and he took courses at the Hebrew University too, but grad courses. The same -- my other two sons did the same thing, as undergraduates. So Norman, my youngest son, was the same -- there the same year that Allen was in graduate school. And we -- my husband wanted me to go and see the fur shows in Frankfort. So they were usually in the

spring and we went first to Israel. We left Mark at home -- our middle son, and we went to Israel and -- to be with our two sons and then we took them back to Frankfort, because they had vacation and Mark met us in Frankfort. We all stayed in -- we took two rooms, we all s -- they stayed in -- it was wonderful for them, the three of them. They had been in different colleges and there they were all together for a week. And then after we -- for Pesach, we went home, but Mark went with his brothers to Israel. And this -- the three of them stayed in Israel, was very -- was nice for them. But when we were -- came to Frankfort -- when we left Israel to go to Frankfort, El Al was on strike and we had to beg a Luftansa pilot to get us onto the -- onto the plane, which I loved. Th -- You know, really hated to -- to beg a German. And next to me was a woman -- a Bahai nun. And you know that beautiful temple that the Bahai have in tel -- in Haifa? Well -- and I didn't ever realize what it was. Actually, they are an offspring of the Muslim faith, but they are -- they were persecuted by the Nazis, just like the Jews. And she was telling me her experiences -- of her friends that were killed. And we were flying into Frankfort and I was telling someone the other day, if there had been blood on the tarmac when we landed, I would have said, "Sure, I expect that." So, we went in and we went to the first shows -- be -- which was sort of an easy transition then. But of course I was not -- we didn't go for that at the time. So we went to only the Jewish places. We went to that house where the little girl was -- lived, who had been sterilized. We went to the house where I lived. We went to the cemeteries where my grandparents were buried and some aunts -- baby aunts and things like that. Went to the synagogues, went to the kosher

restaurants. And it was -- we didn't go to the German places. We didn't go to the gerdahouse, we didn't go to the German muse -- th-the city museum, even though I found out later on, they have a great Judaica collection. I was there last -- this past summer -- I mean, just a few months ago and I wanted to go in, but they were redoing it and you -- I couldn't get in. And I wanted to see the Ju-Judaica collection. I didn't want to see Gerda's picture hanging there, you know, and things like that.

Q: Wh-What is your experience when you go back there? What is --

A: Well, what I wanted to do w-when my husband -- my husband retired and he -- in June and then in August he died, end of August. But, we didn't know that -- of course, idea how sick he was. And what I wanted to do was work on a doctorate get myself involved with a -- a cu -- university here, go over and work on a doctorate on research on the last stages of the community, because I knew all this. But then my husband died. So it --

Q: The last stage of the community meaning?

A: In -- in 1943, you know -- ah, well, this is what I had planned. Maybe something -- once I would have started the research, I would have gone into a whole different direction.

Q: Yeah.

A: I could have gone into Middle Ages or the -- or the -- or medieval ghetto, which was --

Q: So that was your idea?

A: Yeah. So anyway, we -- I -- now I saw the mu -- the Judaica -- I didn't see the Judaica collection, but I was hoping to. So we -- in many ways -- but I -- but I wouldn't be able to -- I couldn't have done this on my own. If my husband were alive and w-we would have lived there together, I would have been able to study and read -- do research. As I -- as it is, when I'm there for -- for a week or so, it's more than enough. I -- I can't wait to get home. I went -- I -- I met my cousin there and I -- once, and I stayed for a week. We went -- I go to my -- my best friend Irma's house, where she -- her last home. I don't have a grave to vis-visit and to me it's like going to -- to her -- through her grave. And even now when I was there, I stand in front of the house -- the house has been -- is much more fixed up. It was an apartment building or -- or whatever. I don't know, maybe it's more like a tenement house, it was like a six family house. And it's like standing in -- in front of a tombstone. And I feel that if -- she were to come out, carrying a -- a tray of cookies, I -- I always picture that. With her hair slightly gray and she would call me in and say come in, we got to discuss the grandchildren. But, of course, it doesn't, but I picture this all the time. So, I stand in front of her house and -- and that's it. But -- and I go to see the building where our school was. I go to the ce -- I go to the cemeteries, but this time I went to Prague and Pilsen. I was in Frankfort only a short time. And everything is so sad. Everything is so terrible and my -- I was in Pilsen because my uncle was shot there. I think I told you the beginning of the -- of -- of the interview. And he was -- and it was so depressing, I had -- when I arrived, I thought I would find all kinds of signs that he had been there, so I told the girl in the hotel that I would stay for two days, maybe three days.

And after one day I had enough and I left. The only problem I had then, when I was leaving, while I was waiting for the taxi, I -- there was something that was telling me that I hadn't looked enough, that there's something there that I hadn't found and so far I have resisted accepting invitations at other ye -- the German government invites people from -- to their native city back and they go through the age category, you know, the certain age groups. That's how my cousin ended up in Frankfort and I went to see her at the same time. She's from Israel. She lives in Israel. So, I have resisted this, but I think next time I would accept and -- but I would want to go back to Pilsen because I -- even if there's nothing there, I want to satisfy myself that there -- that I have done everything.

Q: What -- what -- what would -- what would you -- wh-wh-what might be possible to find there? Wh-What -- what do you think might still be there [indecipherable]

A: Only -- but I -- I did not find the -- the -- the -- they have the burial records from the end of the si -- of the time there, when everybody was deported in 1942 -- two and then there's no one there buried any more until recently. And there are no Jews there now, very few -- very [indecipherable]. So they have a book with the records of the burials and I was hoping to find my uncle's name so I could go to the grave. That was my main ambition.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

A: Oh, oh.

Q: Tell me about -- tell me about the -- I know that you had been at the -- the gathering in Jerusalem in 1981 of [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about what that experience was like?

A: Well, actually I was writing for some newspapers, so I pushed my nose into every -- everything there, and said, well, my articles were published in different papers. I have to backtrack then, because there was one experience that I -- I am glad I had in -- in -- in a way. When we arrived in Auschwitz, the girls from Selonika had been taken there. Now, I had studied, in fi -- in the Filantropine about the Sephardic community and their history, sort of. And there they were. And, of course, th -- the -- they were ill fe -- I mean, they were terribly mi -- ill fed and filthy, I mean, just like all the others in Auschwitz and the -- the -- the additional problem was that they spoke -- they didn't speak much -- they didn't understand Yiddish. Th-Their language was Ladeeno. If -- when they spoke Greek and French. They were very, very well educated. The alleance was -- the French schools were teaching them until they were base -- they were multi-lingual and they were talented. Almost everyone -- was -- had a -- was singing and dancing while they still had their strength, when we first met them. And I made friends with two girls and -- can you turn that off for a minute?

Q: Sure. [break] It's not a -- you know, if you use it --

A: Well, her name was -- let's say Mona.

Q: But that's not her real name?

A: That was not her real name [indecipherable] and I don't want to mention her last name because family was prominent in -- in Greece.

Q: Okay.

A: So she -- we made friends. She had -- was -- there was a younger sister. Sister was about a year, year and a half younger. And they thought that their mother had remained in Selonika. As it turned out, later on when I met the cousin, he told me that she was deported a day after the girls. But, of course, the girls couldn't know that. And Mona had this beautiful, beautiful singing voice and she told me that she wou -- wanted to be an opera singer. One of the things that the Greek girls sang a lot was Ava Maria. As a matter of fact, a few years ago, I was in Israel and -- and Yaffal and I heard Ava Maria played, so I went in to follow the sound. There was a young man from Greece pla -- and he's a painter. But he was playing -- I don't know why they happen to love Ava Maria, which is so typically, you know, a Christian and a Catholic -- well, at any rate, while she had her strength, she alwa -- we b-begged her to sing for us and she did. And then Auschwitz, of course took it's toll, her sister died. And it was like, oh, all the starch was taken out of her. The -- the -- but while she was -- while -- while we -- when we first got there, we only spoke in English. That was the way that we were able to communicate. She spoke English and -- but in -- the Nazis didn't permit anyone to speak English, because they knew they were bringing in p-people from France and they had to speak French or

whatever other language. But they didn't have any prisoners from English speaking places, so, of course it was -- they -- if they had caught us, they would have really beaten us up or who knows what. So we -- being young kids, that's what we enjoyed doing, while we were still -- still had some strength. So she -- her -- her -- but her sister died and she lost all courage. All -- everything, I mean, was gone from her. And, of course, everybody got weaker at the time, so that had something to do with it. And then this SS man, Talber, heard -- I think I must have talked about this, he heard that she was -- that she had such a wonderful voice and he wanted her to be his housekeeper. Now, the Nazis didn't encourage sex between the Germans and others. It was -- would dilute the race and it would take it -- whatever. So I don't know what was on his mind once she would have been in his home. But she refused. And -- remember, you have to realize what a sacrifice she made. I mean, clean sheets, decent food and water and soap. She refused all of this and he made sure that she would not live. So he copied down her number and he made sure that with the next selection, she would go. And she did. And then -- I always thought of her, because she was this wonderful person and we -- she was a fun person while she was still alright. And when I went to -- a few times we had some Christian friends and I went to weddings and I -- they sing Ava Maria at a wedding and I'm sitting there crying and everybod -- they're saying, "Look at this Jewish woman, crying over Ava Maria." But it wasn't because of that, it was because I was thinking of my friend, Mona. And I went to Israel for the gathering and very few people from Selonika came. And I found out later on that they really being slighted by Yad Vashem and by -- it seems that the

people who come from eastern Europe, central Europe, think that they're the only ones who suffered. And that the people from Greece, ah, couple of Greeks, we didn't get a -- they didn't get along in Auschwitz when they were there. They were fighting, they were different cultures, different -- they didn't speak the languages and they didn't get along too well. So they certainly didn't get along in -- so then, still not getting along now. And Yad Vashem is not doing very much for them. I think recently they have -- some of their publications have written about the Greek people, but not much. So, there were very few, as I said, people from Greece. And -- but when -- in the last night, when Me-Menachim Begin spoke and we -- at the wall, someone behind me said that he was from Selonika and I turned around -- I mean, there were thousands and thousands of people there, or whatever. I think it must have been thousands. And I turned around and I said I had a good friend from Selonika. And he said, "Well, too bad you don't know the name." I said, "But I do know the name." I mentioned it to him. And he said, "There's a large family living -- by that name, living in Selonika." But he didn't have any address and he said write to wherever and see if a Jewish community someplace will find it for you. So when I came back, this was first thing on my mind. I called the federation and they were in touch with, you know, ev -- there was so much excitement in the air over that event at the time. They were in touch immediately with the -- a group in Athens. There was no listing for the group in Selonika, but the Athens group finally got me the cousin's name. And we corresponded. And we met -- when he came, we met about a year or two afterwards. My mother was already very sick and she couldn't come. She would have

loved to come. I wanted them to come to our house in Fairlawn, they didn't want to come all the way out. I didn't want to -- they were staying in Long Island someplace, very far up, so we met at the Jewish Theological Seminary. And we met and he -- he kept writing me -- kept sending me letters and he sent me the book of a mem -- a memora book of -- in French, of what happened in -- in -- of -- of the Jews in Selonika. And the very -- but, you know, after awhile, there was nothing to write any more and wi -- and you know, we sort of drifted apart. I don't know what became of them ultimately, but it was a wonderful experience meeting up with him. And he is married to a cousin and -- this was now another cousin, but the woman -- her eyes were so much like my friends that I -- it was uncanny and I was -- it was very exciting meeting them.

Q: What -- you told me that there was a -- that the -- the meeting -- the gathering a -- in -- of the survivors in -- that that was -- in Israel, was exciting. That was --

A: Oh, yes, it was really --

Q: Can you tell me -- did you want to stop and get a drink? Do you need some --

A: Yeah, I -- yo-you hear it right? Do you want anything? [break] I think that happened in -- at that gathering. You look at my wall here. These are products of Ethiopian Jews. And it's very funny, they take Biblical themes, but they're all African and all their m -- the embroidery is made -- i-is -- they have the dark faces. It is very interesting to me, but when we were at -- when we arrived in -- in Jerusalem, I think of -- in -- in tel -- actually it was in Tel Aviv the first night. A group of Ethiopian Jews were singing for us. And I became fascinated. Of course, I've heard the story of the king and -- King David and

Bathsheba and -- or the Queen of Sheba, actually. And they are -- they claim to be the offspring, so I became fascinated by the story. And I became very interesting -- interested in -- in their work and in their fate, so when the -- there's a new -- New York association for Ethiopian Jews, I started buying these and now they've become collector's items, because when everybody -- while they were in Ethiopia, they -- fo-for five dollars a month, they were -- would embroider and the five dollars a month they could buy and feed themselves. Now, most of them have left, so they don't do this any more. And in Israel, five dollars a month doesn't exactly get you somewhere. So they have given up doing this kind of work, but what happened then was, I came back, I kept buying these things and all this is Ethiopian. I have Rosh Hashanah cards and they're very -- they're very charming.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I love this one with Jonah and the -- and the whale.

Q: Yeah.

A: And this is Moses. This is King David. This is Mirriam. And this is the one -- the erotic one. Adam and Eve in the -- in the Garden of Eden. This was the first one, it's a Shabbas clock. And I became involved because we had -- my father's name is mentio -- is listed -- my sister-in-law, there was a memorial building of some sort. I haven't seen it, because I don't go to Florida. In Florida, she thought I -- I needed something nice. She -- that -- I had some -- done something nice for her, so she mentioned my father's name -- had his name listed in the memorial in Florida. Is -- It's in Yad Vashem and it's in the

different museums and everywhere. And our synagogue, when I lived in Fairlawn, again made up a plaque, with the names of the Jews who sa -- didn't survive. So -- relatives. And I was sitting with a friend in the synagogue and I said, "I really don't want this again." It's a-another wall and another stone and another memorial. How many should there be? And she said, "You know, but I know you'll have to do it and you'll do it anyway, because you've been a member of the synagogue for so many years." And I did, she was right. So, when I went up to the table, I said, "I'm not sure if I should call it Isaac or Ithzak." And someone in back of me said, "Well then, call him Irving." And I said, "Well, how -- wha -- how does Irving get to my father?" And I don't even remember what I put down, if it was Isaac or Ithzak. And I said, "Now that's it. They can approach me all they want, I have to do something living -- for the living." And the only way I can honor my father is by real, living things. So I -- for a year -- two years, I adopted a -- an Ethiopian girl. She was a -- she was a maid. But I enabled her to go to dental school. She didn't become a dentist, but she became a dental hygienist and it's much better than scrubbing floors, I guess. And I'm still involved with Ethiopians. The only thing was then, someone approached me and I became -- and I went on to became a -- a member of the Board of Overseers for the Rabbinic school for the Jewish Theological Seminary. Took all my energy and money, so I gave up a little bit on Ethiopians. Personally, I think that it's probably equally important to support the Ethiopians, even when there's already in Israel. So that's why I have all these Ethiopian things hanging there.

Q: I was curious about when you came to the United States, how did the other Jews who were here -- how did the American Jews react to you?

A: Oh well, I had relatives and they didn't believe what we -- our experiences, so after a few attempts to explain it, we didn't tell them any more. And what they wanted was -- what they thought we should be was like servants to them. I mean, tha-that's -- was the thing, you know, I mean we were definitely inferior.

Q: Because?

A: I don't know, because Europe had a bad reputation over there -- everybody thought Europe is still the shtatel from -- and we came out of the shtatel from the 19 -- 1800's or something like that. And that's why we should -- that was my experience, though there must have been other experiences that were much better. Mine was not -- and even -- even my mother-in-law felt this way. And my -- there was someone -- we were look -- when we were looking for a house, there was someo -- a house in Elmwood Park that was an old house, very crummy. And we were looking for houses, this was not what we were looking for. But this old -- my mother-in-law's friend sent us over and just out of courtesy we went and we came back and we said, "We don't want it." So, it was, Ruth doesn't want it. It wasn't just that Harry doesn't want it, but Ruth doesn't want it. And when we -- when I said this, the woman said, "Oh, in Europe it was better?" In other words, I was very ungrateful that I didn't grab, you know, this old house there. And this is always -- I mean, in Europe, because most people don't have the experience of the Jews living in Germany, which was what they th-think of is Annatefka. And, you know,

they -- they -- “Fiddler on the Roof” type of village where -- with the chickens running and the ducks in the street and all -- and the mud in the road and they think that’s what it had to be. And one of the other things that I always heard was that all Jews in Germany were -- they were not Jewish any more. And this was always cu -- this was -- it -- it hurt me because I just told you how -- that the cities -- everybody was kosher, everybody kept Shabbas. That was in my town, it might have been different in -- in other towns. But this -- these -- these criticisms came from people who doing everything on Shabbas, who never -- who didn’t care if they eat -- ate kosher or not, didn’t teach their children anything Jewish, but they were able to criticize Jews from Germany. So i-it was -- it was very difficult. It wasn’t -- it wa -- it was not too great an experience. I mean, yes, there were p-people who were very kind and there was -- when I worked in the hospital there was one doctor, very well known dermatologist who wanted to take off my number and I didn’t want to. I mean, he was going to do it for nothing and I didn’t wa --

Q: Wh-Why didn’t you want to?

A: It was a real part of me and I had nothing to be ashamed of. I didn’t -- I didn’t commit a crime to get this done and I just didn’t want to have it. Now, because sometimes I -- I put some makeup over it to -- to tone it down, because you -- if I -- in the summer, if I go to the supermarket -- and everybody knows now, everybody has watched the movies and they just -- th-they start pointing me out and I don’t -- you know, I don’t want to talk to everybody about this. And at first, years ago, no one knew what it was. They thought it

was telephone number or something and then it wasn't [indecipherable]. So now I -- I try -- sometimes cover it, sometimes I don't, it doesn't matter.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But my aunt in -- my mother has a younger sister and she's quite old and quite ill now, but when I was there the last time, she said, "How come you didn't have your number taken off?" Seems to -- in Toronto, the stylish thing is to do this and I don't know if I would want to. It -- it hasn't bothered me.

Q: Do you -- do you find that -- I mean, you mentioned that it's -- it was difficult for you to watch television programs or --

A: Yeah, mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: -- [indecipherable]. Is that still the case? Is it still --

A: Yes. I think it's th-the movie "Shoah", that goes on every so often and the people -- in the beginning they're sitting in the garden and I'm -- I tell myself, "Oh, you got to watch this." And I sit there for a few minutes, I see them having fun at the picnic and I want to scream, "Get up, get -- run away, because you know what's -- I know what's going to happen to you."

Q: Yeah.

A: And I turn it off, I don't watch it. I mean, the visual is very, very difficult for -- books I can read.

Q: Mm-hm, [indecipherable] so you read books. Have you been to the -- like the museum, the Holocaust Museum in Washington, or --

A: Yeah, of course, I -- because I had given them the belt -- I -- I don't know if you know all that. I had given them a belt that when I came to Auschwitz -- when, after we were shaved and -- and everything, they handed me a skirt that was way too big and someone gave me a blue felt belt with flowers on it and I used it t-to hold the bel -- the skirt up and the belt -- I -- I kept losing weight, of course, wh-when we were there. And my mother kept saying, "Oh, poor Ruth, look at this, oh." Then I kept telling here, "You know, it's not that I'm losing weight. It's the belt that's stretching. That's why it's -- it looks loose." So, I rolled -- it was made of felt and I was able to roll it up and it went with me wherever I went. I took it with me when we ca-came to the United States. And then I -- w-we -- I was moving at the same time that the ha -- museum was looking for things. I -- and I felt, well, if someone is going to go through my estate and find this belt, they're going to say, "This woman was crazy. Look at what they -- she kept there, this dirty blue thing, with a thread hanging where the button was and a cr -- and a rusty safety pin and the button hole is torn. What the heck did she keep this thing for?" So I'm explaining it, I sent it to the museum. So, because of that -- I guess because of that and I ha-had promised them I would give them m-my story, I went to -- I was invited to the opening and my daughter-in-law and two of her children are in their four -- they have four children, but two of her children went to -- the other two were too small, we went to the opening. And my grandchildren are very, very affected, much too much. Especially those -- they're -- they're -- my son Allen -- my son the rabbi's children, they are very involved with the Holocaust and I -- I sometimes tell them, "Y-You have to do other things. You have to

channel your mind into different directions, not just Holocaust." But they always come back to this. And --

Q: Yeah, what is your feeling about that? Do you -- I mean, what would you -- how would you like th-that -- the -- how would you like that that generation --

A: Well, of course --

Q: [indecipherable] relate the experiences that you had [indecipherable]

A: -- of course they want to -- they should relate to it, but that isn't their -- their only thing, they -- I -- I mean, they're getting out of it now. The girls are growing to the point where they see -- know boys and you know, they realize th-there's boys and stuff. But -- it really -- I mean, I was hollering at my son, because I -- I didn't want them to just think of this -- this morose subject all the time. But I -- I -- it's -- it's good -- all my grandchildren -- I mean, my youngest son's daughter, Sheera is -- lived in Israel, so I guess -- and she was -- went to Solomon Sheckter schools right along. So she is very aware of the Holocaust, but even my two children who go to public schools, here in West Orange, my two grandchildren are now aware of it and of course it -- they need to be aware of it. My son is very angry because he feels he doesn't have an extended family. They have one cousin in -- in Toronto, but there were many cousins and -- and aunts that I -- that were killed. So, my son always says, "I should sue the Germans because they killed all my relatives and I have no one." So -- but no, I'm -- I'm grateful that they want to know it. I'm -- I think it -- even my point in -- in lecturing is that -- to prevent this kind of thing. Not just pr -- to prevent it for -- for Jews. Of course it's primarily -- the

Holocaust was against the Jews and my main interest is that it -- nothing should happen to Jews, but it's very easy to glide into a situation, be seduced by some crazy person like Hitler again, for another people. And they too should know what can happen.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They should -- too should watch out and not be -- not get caught l-like we were.

Q: Did -- did -- did you find -- do you find that that's -- has -- has it changed the way you respond, do you think, to other political events? I mean, I don't know if you are an active -- I mean like -- even things like, you know, the Vietnam War years or, you know, the Civil Rights movement or those kind of things.

A: Well, it is -- I was not again -- I didn't go demonstrating against the Civil War -- a-against the Civil War, yeah, against the Vietnam War. I think -- I -- when we left Germany, we were sure that Russia was going to attack the world. We didn't realize how devastated Russia was, but to us it seemed like they were threatening the whole world. So wherever there was Communism, we were sure that we wanted t-to -- that I wanted it not to exist, because I didn't, whe -- it was Stalinism, it wasn't the 19th century Socialism. So, this kind of terrible behavior. I -- I -- I mean the things that went on against people of all kinds, in Russia, we -- we wanted Communism to -- so, when -- I was not against stopping -- I mean, not for stopping the Civil War -- the -- oh, I'm keeps going -- the Vietnam War. I read something about Civil War last night, I guess it's still on my mind. And so that was -- but the Civil Rights movement is another -- was another thing. I didn't go -- I was too busy, with -- children were small. I was working, but of course, that we

supported. I s -- had once sent money to the movement, Martin Luther King's movement, shortly before he was killed. And -- I -- I mean, [indecipherable] for this, I mean. I -- when we were in Frankfort yet, before we -- in -- in 1946 and I had the -- those two pals, the two soldiers that came to see us and they told me that black people were not exp -- you know, they were not treated the same as others. And I couldn't understand it, I asked them, I said -- to me they seemed exotic, because the first people -- black people I saw were American soldiers and I thought that was -- oh, this is so wonderful, to have these nice, black people. And they told me this and I couldn't understand that. Why would anyone not treat another human being the same way as they wanted to be treated, but apparently that's what it was. So I was very upset over that, I was very affected. But I wasn't in -- aware of anyone, who was being mistreated, though we had once a patient in the hospital and I think he became a well known -- what do they, the black -- oh, they had a --

Q: Panthers?

A: What did you say?

Q: Not the -- not the panthers?

A: Black Panther, yes. He became a well known Black Panther and I don't -- forgot his name. But he was telling me and -- and I -- that there would be a revolution because the blacks were being mistreated. And I said, "Why would you want to do this? Why can't you make a peaceable revolution?" And he said it wouldn't work. So I really didn't have

much to do with him anyway. I -- I didn't agree with that either. But I -- I really thought it had -- there had to be a -- a -- a way of making people equal, you know.

Q: Did you -- I mean, when you -- certainly, you must have talked with your husband about your experiences?

A: Oh, yes. Mm-hm.

Q: Did -- was that something that -- I mean, did you tell him all the -- that right a -- right away or when you met or -- or -- or --

A: Mmmm.

Q: -- or gradually did you --

A: Probably as something came up and as it evolves we be -- we -- we discussed it. We had -- we didn't have many secrets and we had a -- a lot of real communication.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And how did -- what was -- so, he kind of gradually learned that [indecipherable]

A: Well, you know, he -- yeah, ri -- right, but he was in -- he was born in Patterson, but he was a soldier and was in Europe and he seen -- he had seen th-the things. Yes, everything, as o -- yes. As a matter of fact, he is considered a liberator. He was in -- around Ordruff and the soldiers who were there within two days of the opening of the camp, I think, are considered liberators. He was in Ordruff, they were fighting outside and General Eisenhower went in and he sa -- that's the quotation on the Holocaust Museum, that he had heard about it, but he couldn't believe it until he saw it. And it was in that camp. And my husband had a -- an army buddy who was a real southerner and

whose family had come from Scotland like 300 years ago. And between the two of them, they had gone in and had seen all this. When we went to Georgia to visit this man, on the way driving through, everybody else went to sleep and he and I were sitting and we were talking and you should have seen this -- this real southern man, with real heavy ac -- southern accent and he was sitting there and he was describing these -- the things that he saw and he was crying about it. And I couldn't believe that it could have affected people in such a way. People who were really -- had nothing. I mean, my -- my husband, he of course is Jewish and he knew there could be relatives of his there, but he -- this man had nothing to do -- other than being a human being and he was affected like this.

Q: I'm -- I'm -- I'm surprised to hear you say that. I mean, it's a -- it's having experience, kind of the -- the whole level of -- of horror and that -- that you would miss -- that you would have -- that you wouldn't assume that anyone who [indecipherable]

A: That anyone else would feel this way? Well, you know, these were soldiers, they had seen people killed and -- and everything. So -- but when he saw the -- these emaciated bodies and the stink and -- and the -- the terrible conditions that -- and the -- some of the people that barely survived and when he saw all this, he was -- he -- so, years later, he was still crying over this.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. I -- I mean, sometimes it's -- I -- I wonder about people who go through those kind of very inten-intense formative experiences that almost seems that -- that the people they marry, you know, either they went through the experience with them,

or they were also witnesses to that experience. But it's almost like you have to -- the only person who would be a suitable partner for you, in a sense, is someone who at least had --

A: I don't doubt --

Q: -- had seen it or had --

A: Well --

Q: You know what I'm saying?

A: Yeah, m-my -- my husband did, bec --

Q: Right.

A: -- with that experience in camp, but I really don't know if I could have -- you know, I have a friend -- [indecipherable] he's a -- we went to school together and he was sent to Theresienstadt. And he is so affected by -- he lost all his friends. His -- his mother wasn't Jewish, that's why they didn't take him on a transport and -- and gas him. I think I mentioned -- did I mention him before? And he -- but he is so affected by this now, I sometimes look at him and I th-think, I couldn't have married someone like this, because we would just --

Q: No.

A: -- been at each other with -- with the same experience and I think my husband was sort of a lightning rod or a buffer between that and i-it was --

Q: Mm. Do you know of other -- are -- are most of your friends survivors or not?

A: My friends right now? I'm very friendly with my neighbor next door, but that's only because I'm next door, no -- and she's just Jewish --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

A: -- no -- and she's just Jewish, she was born in the States. My v-very best friends came to the United States from Germany in -- before the war. They were small children. No, one was he -- the man was in Shanghai, they ran away, but he came here right after. So those are my friends and not -- no, and then I have some friends who are born in the United States. As a matter of fact, I don't have any real friend -- well, I had a good friend who died. She was in all the camps. But other than that, I don't -- I don't go out of my way, but I mean, if I have something in common with someone, I can -- could stay friendly, but I don't --

Q: Do you -- when you -- I mean, do you run into other people? Are there a lot of people, you know --

A: Oh, yes.

Q: -- here, who you run into, w-went to the camps, and --

A: There's a council woman in the area, what is her name? Weiss or some -- I don't -- no, Toby Katz. And she has similar experiences. She -- her one sister survived. And I was sitting at the pool with her the other day and we were -- like for two hours, sh -- e-exchanging experiences. So, I don't avoid anyone and of course, when I was on the s -- memorial committee, everybody on the committee was a s -- were survivors and -- but you know, the people are getting old, they move away and worse. And I don't have real personal friends, though, of -- among th-the survivors.

Q: Yeah.

A: I -- I -- there were -- my friend Harvey was in Theresienstadt. So was my friend Gisella, who lives now in Boston. Be -- Gisella was in Theresienstadt only because her father was blinded in the first World War, so they -- they gave them a sort of better treatment. Well, that's what they call it. And they brought them to Theresienstadt rather than gas them right away. So I'm friendly with her, too, but only because we went to school together.

Q: I -- I'm -- it's funny, I -- I did a -- I did a-another interview with a -- a man who had been through camps and he -- he was -- he was very -- he was still -- you could tell, kind of -- he was ver --

A: He was very --

Q: -- it was more likely -- di -- how you describe your mother. It was like you could tell that he had spent his life kind of really debilitated.

A: Oh. Mm. How old is he?

Q: He -- he was about your age, I think.

A: Oh, really?

Q: Yeah. Jus -- I think just about the same age. Maybe a little -- maybe a little younger, a year or two younger.

A: Mm.

Q: You know, so he had kind of like grown up that -- wh -- he'll -- what he'll -- when he came out of the -- out of the camps and he was like, you know -- now [indecipherable] he

was a little older, excuse me. He had go -- he had gone into the camps when he was like, you know, 16 or so.

A: Oh, that's just a few years.

Q: Just a few years.

A: Well, you know, people --

Q: Well, and yeah -- and -- and -- and he -- and yet, I mean, I know you tell me that, you know, s -- things remind you and it's hard to, you know [indecipherable]

A: Yeah.

Q: -- experience. But at the same time, it doesn't see -- you know, like this was -- this was somebody you could tell, you could talk to him and he was like -- you could s -- you could see that he was -- had spent his whole life living under the weight of this experience, in a way that was -- that, you know, he was -- he managed to live a life, but he -- you know.

A: Mm.

Q: He'd never been happy, he had never, you know -- things never really gone well, somehow and --

A: Well, I -- I don't -- I think because I've spoken about it so much, that -- and I've -- I'm writing about it, that I think -- it's always with me, but it's -- it makes it easy for me to express myself on it now. But I -- I realize that there -- there is a life other than -- away from the Holocaust, but as I said, I -- I go to a synagogue and -- and I picture them burning down the synagogue or things like that. So -- it -- it's with you. It's -- it's inside

you all the time. But you know what, one of the things that I noticed about myself is that when I was a child, growing up in Nazi Germany, I -- when, if a Naz -- if a kid, a -- a German, probably, from the -- what do they call it? Hitler yugen, if he would throw a stone or trip me on the street, I would be very stoic and pretend that it didn't happen. Or that he -- I pretend it -- he couldn't hurt me. So I think this has become sort of a -- a -- my whole life, I have done this. I pretend it doesn't exist. I -- the hurt doesn't exist. I mean, joy does exist, but I pretend that the hurt -- I internalize it and I don't talk about it, or -- or show it. So, if that answers it, I don't know. I mean, what am I supposed to do? Am I just -- I -- I mean, I don't know.

Q: Well, I mean, I -- I mean I would think idea -- I mean, I -- you know -- I -- I don't know how this is supposed to, but I mean, you know, hopefully people's lives, if they go through experiences that are that difficult, then are able to -- hopefully they're able to have a -- a life beyond that and you know --

A: Yeah, well.

Q: But a -- but your mother apparently did not?

A: No, my mother did not. Na -- I -- I -- I feel, because I was much younger when I came out --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- that I had a whole s -- different set of outlook and experiences than she did and j -- but of course, I was building a life and she -- and she felt that hers was ended.

Q: Mm-hm. Is -- I think I've -- I -- I think we've -- I -- we've talked about most of --

A: We talked about everything?

Q: -- the things I wanted to cover. I -- I -- I just want to look at my notes. What is your relationship like with your -- with your brother now?

A: Oh. It -- it -- it's very good, really.

Q: Mm-hm.

Q: My mo -- but he lives an hour and 15 minutes away from here by car, or something like that. So -- and he works -- he's very Orthodox, so he's off on Shabbas. And I can't go there on Shabbas. And then he works Sunday and if -- when I want to go out there, I -- even Sundays, he's not available. But we're very friendly and we -- we're -- well, it's very -- very cordial, very nice. I'm very proud, my niece, his daughter, has a full scholarship for Columbia. Scholastic scholarship. She's a real brain and she's really go -- and both of his children are very, very intelligent. And it's -- it's very nice, I'm very proud of them. And, you know, w-we get along very well when we're together and having fun and we can discuss family, too, and -- and difficult things, and --

Q: D-Do you talk about -- do -- about your childhood together, with one another?

A: Yes, with him it's -- I find it easy to talk. I was -- my mother, I couldn't, but with him I find it easy to talk about it.

Q: Di -- Wi -- Your mother -- it was typical of your mother because of how she felt and how -- [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, and for some reason, I think it started out with my not wanting to hurt her -- t-to bring everything up. So, I pushed everything away from it and I -- maybe she thought I

was peculiar, that I never spoke about it. I -- I never mentioned my father. I mean, barely mentioned my father. Do you know that Allen gradu -- my son Allen graduated from the seminary and we made a party at the Jewish center in Fairlawn, where we lived. Made a -- the rabbi made a sort of party. I instigated it. But the rabbi came up to my mother and said, “You must be very proud of your gra” -- you know, what -- what else can you say? “You must be very proud of your grandson.” So my mother pulled herself up and she said, “Ous countan funia risha.” It comes to him from his inheritance. So I said to her, “Why did you say this to him?” And she said, “Well, you know your father’s family.” And I don’t know anything about my fa-father’s family. And she’s gone now and now I’m first going to look into this genealogical situ -- thing -- and I know about my father’s family only very, very little. What happened was that -- I told you my -- my grandfather got a miz -- a megillah that was written by the Sofas for a gift for him. My father showed it to me and he explained that the name -- they were writers, schribers in the ghetto, when -- and they -- in Hebrew, it’s Sofa, so the family named itself Sofa after that and they’re -- that’s the family. But that’s as much as I know. If I had been able to speak to my mother, maybe she would have been able to fill me in on some of these things. But I just couldn’t get -- there was like this wall. And I couldn’t -- I didn’t want -- I -- I -- my main motivation was that I didn’t want her to hur -- be hurt and I didn’t want her to start crying and I think that’s why I s -- never brought it up.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I n -- I need this -- I -- you know. What I missed with my father most was when I went to college. I wen -- I'm a -- I'm always talking about my father an-and I miss him terribly. And I miss not having ha -- had him. But what I really missed, I was thinking of in college, because when I took all these philosophers, I couldn't tell Plato and Socrates and -- and Aristotle apart. That was my father's field. He would have loved and I would have loved to have studied this and to have him discuss this.

Q: What do you mean that was his field? That was his --

A: Well, no, he di -- he st --

Q: So that was something that he knew?

A: Yeah. It was a -- like -- you know, that was his thing.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: But he -- he could talk about everything, because he was a real expert on music and real expert on writing and he just knew everything.

Q: So tell me about the projec -- just a little bit about your project now, the -- that you're writing.

A: Oh.

Q: Can you [indecipherable] that at all?

A: Yeah sure. First of all, I took some courses. I was hoping to get a doctorate in Jewish history and I took some courses at the Jewish Theological Seminary. But what I -- what happened then, I was involved with the building and all kinds of other things and I have stopped taking the courses. I'm hoping to somehow pick this up, maybe one of these

years, if I live, to get a Ph.D. in Jewish history, because I love that aspect. But I am writing, finally, everybody -- my sons are after me, write your biography and I am writing it. I think it's not your own reaction, it's not emotional enough. I --

Q: I -- I [indecipherable] it's not emotional enough, it's just different from other people that I've --

A: Oh, but I am writing and I -- I'm starting out with my -- with the letter that I had about my uncle. And then I'm tracing back what -- the experiences and I want to eventually work up, but in the meantime, I'm also bringing in the history of the Jews in Germany -- in Frankfort, actually. And it -- I don't know if that's the right approach, but that's what I'm doing. And I'm hoping to get it to -- I -- I should really s -- buckle down and really start writing on it, instead of a few lines at a time.

Q: So th-then you -- you're going to involve with the history of j -- the Jews in Frankfort, right before the -- right before the war?

A: No, I -- I've really actually gone back to -- to the 1100's. But -- to the ghetto. But, you know, I -- only a few sentences, I mean, I really know the -- the history of the ghetto and the writing -- all the things that -- but I'm -- I don't -- I'm not writing that. I want to write about -- I just wondered -- what I'm really showing is that there was a lot of anti-Semitism from the beginning. Goldhagen's ideas. But also -- and Jewish historians have neglected to do this for a long time, is that everybody made a bridge from one destruction -- from one burning, from the -- you know, they -- there were the laws against Jews and then there was the Inquisition and then there was a -- before that was the Black Death and

-- and then the Inquisition and -- and then and -- and other things in between and you had the Nazis. And no one really, seriously, for a long time -- and the Hebrew teachers did this -- mentioned all the wonderful th -- things that Jews did on their own. The scholarship and the Jewish organizations. I mean the -- this is not something from now, this is something from -- from out of need, that happened in medieval times, even before. And so I want to bring this -- I want to sh -- bring some of that in, but only in a few sentences, because, as I said, I'm not writing a history of -- of J-Jews, I'm writing a -- my -- my biography.

Q: Okay. Well, I think we've covered everything that I had wanted to cover.

A: Ah. Gee, I have a headache.

Q: That's a lot of talking, but I --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- I appreciate it.

A: Exercise my muscles --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- in my face, that's it.

Q: Well now you can -- now you can rest for a while.

A: Now, what will you do with this?

Q: Well, actually, first thing we do is I realize I need to, at the end this we're supposed to read this thing again. I just got to read this. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ruth Meyerowitz. H-How do you pronounce that?

A: Meyerowitz.

Q: Meyerowitz.

A: Mm. I o -- I only think that non-Jews can -- don't pronounce it right.

Q: I s -- mayb-maybe Americans.

A: You know why? I can't get these -- these Teleprompt things [indecipherable] what do they call these --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Conclusion of Interview