

**Max Karl Liebmann**  
**RG-50.233\*0073**  
**Interview on March 28, 1992**  
**One Audio cassette & one digitized**

### **Abstract**

Max Liebmann was born on September 3, 1921 in Mannheim, Germany into a relatively comfortable household that was not particularly religious. He began playing the cello when he was eight years old and had hopes of going to a conservatory in Zurich or Jerusalem; but this became impossible. Max attended public school until 1937; at that time he saw no sense in continuing at school due to the harassment he experienced as a Jew. From the beginning of 1938 until Kristallnacht, he attended a private school. His mother had been trained as a concert pianist, and his father was in the textile business. In 1938, his father was forced to give up his business; he went to Greece to try to build a business there. Max and his mother moved in with his grandmother. From Greece his father illegally entered France and remained in Nice until the end of the war. Max's mother and father last met in Italy (on the father's way to France) in August 1939; his mother returned to Germany, certain that there would be no war.

At the outbreak of the war Max was called to perform harvesting work in East Germany. He was able to return to Mannheim in late autumn 1939; he became a volunteer for emigration offices in Berlin. He worked there until his deportation on October 22, 1940 to the non-occupied zone of France — Gurs. On the train to France Max was chosen as the translator for the Jewish transport leader. On arrival at the camp, he was separated from his mother. He remained at Gurs for 20 months during which time he worked in the office of the camp block. Because he played music — the cello — he was given a pass that allowed him to move about the camp more easily. Thus, he was able to see his mother and his new girlfriend daily.

When Max's block was closed, he moved into the hospital of the camp where he ran the office. He was removed from the camp at the end of June 1942 by the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants to a farm outside of Lyon run by the Boy Scouts of France. He was able to say '*goodbye*' to his mother. When it was learned that a raid on the farm was planned, they were dispersed and told to fend for themselves. With the help of Mireille Philip, he was given sanctuary on another farm for about three and a half weeks. He was then given false papers and began a trek with others, climbing up over the mountains into Switzerland. After about half an hour on their descent into Switzerland, they were arrested by the Swiss patrol and told that they would be escorted back to France. After the Swiss patrol left the group, Max and another man turned around and made their way back to Switzerland. This time they were told that they would not be returned to France, but would be interned in Switzerland. He remained in Switzerland for five and a half years until he was able to immigrate to the United States.

### **Transcript** **Cartridge Tape, Side A**

011; 00:03      **Today is March 28, 1992. I am Anthony Dilorio, and I'm at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Max Liebmann, In Bayside, New York. I'm here on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to interview them about their experiences and their recollections of the Holocaust.**

**Good evening.**

Good evening.

**Max, could you please begin by telling us when you were born and where you grew up.**

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I was born on September 3, 1921 in Mannheim in Germany. Mannheim is in the southwest of Germany. My parents, who also were born in Germany, were Alfred Liebmann and Jeanne, née Levi. My father was in business in Mannheim as a representative of textile firms. To be more specific, he represented a maker of cotton gray goods and a converter. Those were the two companies who ... whom he represented since the twenties, and with whom he was until he could no longer continue working in Germany. My mother was basically the ... the housewife. However, from the beginning or from the middle or end of the Depression until closing of the business, she did the books of ... of my father's company in Mannheim; and that is as far as what my mother did. My mother was trained originally as a concert pianist; however, she never used it professionally. Nevertheless, she played a lot of piano. And when I was able on the cello to play more advanced music — such as sonatas, etc. — she always accompanied me. And we also played, until our deportation, quite a bit of piano ... chamber music.

**You played at home, had a piano, and you were the cellist?**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max are talking over each other.]

We played at home; we had a ...; I was a cellist. In fact — I don't think I put this in the videotape — I had ... we had in 1939 a Gentile violinist, who was anti-Nazi, who came to our house until ... almost until the last minute when we were deported; and we played piano trios at home. My father was — aside from his business — very active in the Jewish Choral Society of Mannheim, called "Liederkrantz". He was on the board of directors; he was the secretary. And he was essentially responsible for getting, among other things, all the tickets properly organized and sold. And after 1934, I believe, when Jews were excluded from the cultural life in Germany, this choral society became what was known as "Juedischer (Jüdischer) Kulturbund," the cultural organization of the Jewish community in Mannheim. In addition to a mixed choir, an orchestra was founded — a chamber orchestra. And until about 1937 there were concerts of choral works; there were concerts of the orchestra; there was opera performed. We did an Offenbach operetta; we did *Orpheus and Eur ... Eur ... Eurydice* by Gluck; we did *Bastien and Bastienne* by Mozart; together with a ... a short opera — whose name escapes me right now — by Pergolesi. So there was a large cultural life in Mannheim, which unfortunately had to end when the situation became such that it no longer could be done.

061; 04:45

**Your father — he was a ... a photographer?**

No. My father was ... my father, as I said, was representative of ... of textiles. And in 19 ... the beginning of 1938 when he had to give up his business and return the ... and turn over his accounts to Gentiles, one of his companies asked him if he wouldn't want to try to build up an existence in Greece. So in March of 1938 my father went to Greece; which was quite an enterprise considering that legally he could not take out more than ten marks from Germany. And how can you live on ten marks? So he managed to smuggle out some five hundred or a thousand marks which he taped into a toilet bowl in the railroad car, until he was across the border in Switzerland when he retrieved the money. My father started to build an existence in Greece. However, due to interference from the German competition, he was expelled; he went to Italy. And from Italy, from Ventimiglia, he went illegally to France. After the usual stop in a prison for illegally entering France, he settled in Nice. At the beginning of the war he was interned like everybody who was of German background. He was eventually released and came back to Nice and lived in Nice until the ... ten days before the landing of the American troops on French soil when he was arrested when he was accidentally running into a German patrol. My mother saw my father the last time in August of 1939 when they met in Italy when he was on his way to France. And my mother was so convinced that no war would break out — despite all of the signs — that she

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returned to Germany; even though it would have been easy for me to leave Germany with a passport, which I had in my pocket, and join them in Italy. At least, then, the integrity of the family would have been preserved.

**So she left Mannheim to rendezvous with your father while he was going westward to France ...**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max are talking over each other.]

... France ... and came back just a few days before he went to France, and the ... the war broke out.

**So the ... the possibility of leaving was discussed, but her ... she was ... her ... she was confident enough that it wouldn't be too dangerous ...**

It would ... it would ... there would be no war.

**No war; and ... and this is in August of ...**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max are talking over each other.]

100; 8:10

This is August of 1939. My schooling ... I was in the ... I had a normal schooling. In 1928 I started public school. In Germany you go ... went to public school for four years, and then either you continued public school for another four years and became a tradesman, or you transferred after four years into high school; which I did. And I was in the Realgymnasium, which meant that I had to learn first, three years Latin. Then in addition to Latin, a year of ... we started with French; and in addition to French, a year later or two years later, we started with English. So I had, actually, in the first year of high school — which was the fifth year of school — I had Latin. So did I the same for the sixth year; in the seventh year I had French; in the eighth year I had Latin, French, and English.

**Were you a good student?**

I was a good student until it dawned on me that there is no sense to what I am doing.

**Aha; when did you ...?**

When I realized that I would never be able to go to the university in Germany; and when I stopped really studying at home. And in fact, at the end of 1937, I told my parents I would no longer continue school in ... in the Realgymnasium. Now, it seems to me — and this was something which I did not mention in the videotape — that all of the Jewish children who were in school in Germany from 1933 on had problems which our parents probably were not even aware of. There was harassment by teachers; there was harassment by students — which was part of our daily life. And it wasn't fun to go to school as a Ger ... as a Jewish kid in Germany. And it probably made us much older, experience-wise; and made us more streetwise than our parents ever realized. We were told very early on: *Don't do this in the street, don't do that in the street*. And it ... it helped to form our character in a specific way without us being aware of it. I know this now in retrospect; and at the end of '37 I decided there is no sense in my continuing to go to school. And so we made a compromise in 1938. From the beginning of 1938 to Kristallnacht, I went to a private commercial school where I had English; I had some French; I learned German steno — what for I still don't know because it was obvious that we wouldn't be able to do anything in Germany — but I learned German steno. And after the Kristallnacht we could no longer go to school. So for the beginning ... from beginning of 1939 on until the war broke out I was at

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home reading books — one or two books a day — not always the best literature, but I read. And I played music to the extent that this was still possible. Actually I played music from 1930 on when I started to ... '31. I started when I was eight years old — so that would be 1929; I started my cello lessons. And eventually I joined a children's orchestra; I was in the school orchestra until I could no longer be part of this. I played chamber music; I still play chamber music today. In ...

150; 12:31 **Your mother must have been proud of your musical career.**

Well, in ... there was a question in ... in 1938, if I could go either to Zurich to continue my studies at the conservatory in Zurich, which was denied because I couldn't get a visa. And then in 1939 there was a question if I could go to Israel to ... to ... to conservatory in Jerusalem. But my uncle and aunt who lived in ... in ... in Palestine since 1934 decided they did not have the means to support this; so nothing came of this. Thus, I never became a professional musician.

**Is that something you wanted to be?**

It was a possibility; I probably had enough talent to do it.

**It sounds that your parents would have preferred that you stay at school. You ... you suggested ...**

Yes; of course ...

**... that they ... that they would have wanted you to continue even after 1937 ...**

That was ... yes, yes; of course. But there was .... I could have gone to high school until Kristallnacht which is November 10, 1938, when we were legislated out of school. And I want to add that I was able to go to regular German school as long as I did, because my father was a front line veteran of World War I.

**So this exempted you from some of the ...**

This exempted me from some of the restrictions which were imposed on other Jewish students whose father were not veterans of World War I.

**Now earlier you ... you were describing the home life. You were talking about the piano. Your mother played the piano ...**

Well ...

**... at home; you played the cello ...**

Obviously, since my parents both were born in Mannheim and lived in Mannheim, there was a very large circle of friends; which, of course, during the 1930's eventually became smaller, when the emigration started in earnest. But my parents had a very large circle of friends. My father was very active. Besides being in the ... in this choral society on the board of directors, he also was a member of the elective — how can I call this? — of the elective body who ran the Jewish communi ... comm ... the Jewish community in Mannheim. There were two levels; there was the elective body out of which emanated the so-called Board which ran the day-to-day operations. I think my father was requested to

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join this board in 1934/1935; that was called Synagogenrat. But he declined because he felt he was not steeped enough and religious enough from the Jewish viewpoint to be part of this.

**How would you describe your religious life and the religious life of your family?**

We always knew we were Jews; I was bar mitzvah, which was a big affair — in 1934, when I was thirteen. But we were not religious in the sense that religion played a daily role in our life. The more religious part of my family was the ... my ... the aunt ... my aunt and her husband. The sister of my mother was married to a man who kept more of Judaism at home. The ... the ... they kept religious holidays. I was always with them on Seder, and I did spend a good .... They were childless; therefore, I spent a good deal of my weekends with my uncle and my aunt until their emigration in 1934 to Palestine.

**Which synagogue was your family affiliated with?**

199; 16:40

We ... my ... my family, as well as my aunt's family belonged to what was the liberal part of the congregation. In Mannheim there were two synagogues [NOTE: Haupt (Main) Synagogue and Klaus Synagogue]. One was called [? unintelligible] synagogue, which was from what we look at — as we look at it today — was a conservative service. In addition we had in Mannheim the so-called Klaus, which was a strictly orthodox service. Actually, the only difference between the two services was the absence of an organ in the orthodox portion of the congregation. The services were otherwise identical; and I would assume that the congregations were split about 40 per cent orthodox and 60 percent conservative. It was ... it was always assumed by outsiders that German Jews were not religious. I think that is a ... to a large extent a myth. I believe that at least 35 to 40 per cent of all families ... Jewish families in Mannheim, had kosher households. We did not. In September of 1939, at the outbreak of the war, we were called to ... to the Wehrmacht to be mustered out, because under German law, Jews could not serve in the army; even though I believe there was a paragraph in this regulation that you could be drafted for wartime service.

**You were ... this time you would be eighteen.**

At this time I was eighteen, and all of my peers, of course, were called up for service. And shortly thereafter, I was called to perform harvesting work in East Germany. Due to the mobilization of the ... the German ... the men, there was a shortage of ... of harvesting labor; so I was sent to a farm — not to a farm — to a village east of Frankfurt on the Oder in East Germany. And I believe I was there for about six weeks harvesting potatoes and sugar beets and red beets. And at that time, of course, it was a concern of my mother if I would be permitted to come back home to Mannheim after this was over, because, after all, Mannheim was close to the French border. And the attack in 1940 by the German forces on France, Holland, and Belgium hadn't started yet. Indeed, after the harvest was in, I was permitted to back ... go back to Germany; to Mannheim, and ....

**This was in the late autumn ...**

241; 19:58

It was in ... in the late autumn of 1939, and my mother was able to arrange then, that starting on January the 2<sup>nd</sup>, I would be working for the emigration arm in ... in Mannheim. In fact, the emigration services — which you could call the equivalent of the HIAS here in the United States — were run by the official Jewish representation ... again [?] ... vis-à-vis the German government. It was called Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland; and the emigration offices were controlled out of Berlin.

Therefore, at the end of 1939, I had to go overnight by train to Berlin; which was no pleasure, because  
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there had been minor raids already — nightly at ... at Germany, from England and from France. I went to Berlin overnight. I presented myself at the emigration offices in Berlin to be interviewed by the head of the office, which I believe was ... his name was Loewenstein. I understand he was later killed in a bombing raid by the English. I was accepted as a volunteer employee. I was sent back the same; and I went back the next night ...

**... to Mann ...**

... to Mannheim. And I started on January 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> to work as a sec ... secretary in this office. And I was there until our deportation every day working as a secretary, even though I was considered a volunteer; which meant I had a ... a pocket money of 50 marks a month.

**Did you live with your mother?**

I lived at home with my mother.

**Supported her, I imagine. She'd been living alone so this must have been good that you came back.**

Of course, it was very good that I came back.

**'Cause how was she supporting herself?**

Well, we had ... well — because of the fact that my father had left Germany — we gave up our apartment in 19 ... March or April of 1938 and moved in with my ... into the apartment of my grandmother, who owns a house. Therefore, we did ... did not have to pay rent; which reduced living expenses. And, so we managed to survive somehow. Until ... and I worked, as I said, in ... in this office until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1940 when we were deported.

**How did that come about?**

Well, on October 21<sup>st</sup> around 10 o'clock, the telephone rang in the office. And the Gestapo was on the phone because the head of the emigration office in Mannheim also was a contact between the Jewish community and the Gestapo. He went to the office of the Gestapo almost weekly, and he was told to come down immediately. And when he came down — and that was really a courtesy of the Mannheim Gestapo — he was told that we would be arrested and deported the next morning. But we would be sh ... shipped over the demarcation line into ... into the so-called non-occupied zone of France. Well, he came back around 11 o'clock; he ... he notified the head of the Jewish congregation in Mannheim. And we closed the office around 12 o'clock. We went all home. There was no way of really notifying anybody because private homes in ... in ... in Germany — Jewish private homes — could no longer possess telephones. So when I came home, I first had to fight with my mother who ... wa ... thought I was kidding her. She could not believe that what I say ... what I was saying ... said we would be moved out of Mannheim — deported, so to speak, the next morning — could be true.

302; 24:29 **Were you given a reason when they announced this? Was there a reason given for this deportation?**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max talking over each other.]

No reason — the Gauleiter ordered it ... and you know ... the head of the ... the Nazi head of the state. And that was good enough.

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**The timing — was there any, as far as you could tell? Was there any reason for that particular time?**

I believe the ... there was a ... one prior action before we were deported; and that was in Stettin (Szczecin). The Jews of Stettin were moved, were deported east, I believe, in August of 1940. And so the Nazi head of Baden wanted to be the first one who really wanted to empty out his entire state. And then the Gauleiter, the Nazi head of the neighboring Pfalz (Palatinate), was the next one who joined. So this was a combined action of these two men to get rid of their Jews.

**Local zeal.**

Local zeal. When I proceeded then to pull out and look at suitcases what we could take along, because I knew we were ... we were told by the Gestapo that we can only take what we can carry plus a hundred marks a person. So when my mother realized that I was serious, and I was going through all of the sample cases of my father, because they would lend themselves better to be packed and handled, she realized that I was serious. And she finally started to cooperate, and we ... we indeed were fully packed by nightfall — at which time my mother got a confirmation of ... of what I had told her; because our former handyman in our apartment sneaked in the house when it was dark to alert us to the fact that he had heard that we would be deported the next morning.

**This was a Gentile?**

It was a Gentile — who was a very decent guy — and who ... who, while we were living in our own apartment, came every day — in winter particularly — to get the coal from the cellar up to our apartment for what we needed overnight and for the next day. So he came either once or twice a day — for which he got paid of course — to bring our coal up. The next morning indeed, around 8:30 or 9 o'clock, our bell rang, and there were two Gestapo men. I don't know if they were Gestapo or crimin ... criminal police; but in any case, they came. They told us that in the name of the Führer we were arrested; we have an hour to pack. We didn't tell them that we were packed already. And they would be back in an hour — which really turned out to be two or three hours. And then we were told what we knew — that we could take 100 marks a person and whatever we can carry; and we should be ready. And when they came, they led us to the ... I believe it was first the Mannheim Castle where we were assembled; which was only a ... a few blocks from where we lived. And from there, another few blocks to the main railway station from where there were regular fourth-class ... four ... fourth-class passenger cars waiting in a train. And we were loaded up on this train.

363; 28:51 **One train ... or there were others?**

There were a total of, I think, nine trains altogether which went from Mannheim and various other points in Baden and the Pfalz [NOTE: and the Saar — added later by Mr. Liebmann.]

**How many were you in Mannheim?**

Well, in Mannheim at the time, I believe, we were about three and a half thousand Jews. The total deportation number, which is officially assumed as being correct, is 6,504 persons. The people who were not deported were mostly mixed marriages, and a few isolated cases where people managed to escape deportation because somebody in the family was too sick to be transported. By and large, they did not consider illness a reason not to be deported.

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**To your knowledge, did anyone refuse to comply with the order?**

Well, there were a number of people who committed ... com ... a number of people committed suicide.

**Anyone that you knew?**

Nobody I knew, but I think my wife knew so ... some people who did.

**In Karlsruhe?**

No — in Mannheim.

**Mannheim.**

Ya; there were five or six or seven suicides in Mannheim.

**Did anyone try to violate the orders — for example, the 100 mark?**

There were a number of people who had enough guts to defy this. And even though the SS, when they came on the train, threatened us with dire reprisals if they would find people with more than a hundred marks, a number of people managed to get out more than a hundred marks; and of course, they were the smart ones because they had that much more money in the end.

**Were you one of the sneaky ones?**

No, no.

**You aren't one of the sneaky ones?**

No; look — German Jews basically were very ... German. We didn't do things we weren't supposed to do. So we did not — even though there was more money in the house. And while my mother was, of course, preserving money — since there was no more income since the end of 1937 — we had more money in the house than just a few hundred marks. And by and large we all came from a middle-class background. My father ... in fact I was very much surprised when after the war, when the restitution of business with the German government started, when I saw earning figures of my father. It was much higher than I had ever known.

**So you were ... you were leading a rather comfortable ...**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max are talking over each other.]

We were ...

**bourgeois ...**

existence ...

**household ...**

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... household, ya. We had a maid. Until I was six years old, I had a nanny; and which I fired, so to speak. I told my parents categorically that when I go start school — and I was only five then, five and a half — when I would start school, there would be no more nanny. I'm too old to have a nanny; and indeed the nanny was discontinued when I went to first class in 19 ... in ... on Easter of 1928.

**So your father was a rather successful at ... breadwinner... breadwinner...**

[NOTE: Interviewer and Max are talking over each other.]

417; 32:23

My father had a rather successful business. And while he was absent a great deal, he always managed to be ... he always was home over the weekends. He always arranged his schedule so that when there were board meetings at his beloved Liederkrantz, he was home for that period. There were very few sessions he missed; and basically we lived a very comfortable life. There was a maid in the house; we had even a maid until the beginning of the war. After the ... after the ... at one time there was a law passed where you could no longer have maids under 45 in Jewish households with males.

**The Nuremberg Laws.**

Yeah, that was part of the Nuremberg Laws. And we really were very lucky we had, all throughout my growing up in Mannheim ... we had very few maids. Our maids usually left only because they got married and started to have their own families. We were very lucky to latch onto a woman in her middle or late fifties when this law was passed; and she stayed with us practically to the end.

**How about your non-Jewish friends? Did ... was ... how would you describe relations between you and your family on the one hand and non-Jews there in the period from Kristallnacht to deportation?**

Number one, my parents had very few non-Jewish friends. There were business connections. My father knew a lot of people, of course, and so did my mother because they both grew up in Mannheim. But our social circle was Jewish.

**Jewish.**

It was not ...

**Yours as well?**

Mine as well. I knew, of course, in school a lot of Gentile boys — all my classmates. I was ... in ... when I ... in high school there were only four Jews in a class of thirty. And later on when the class split, there were four Jews in a class of twenty-one. And that eventually reduced itself as Jews and ... two of the boys emigrated. There was no contact other than in school. However, coming back to ... in early thirties when I started; I started high school in 1932 when I was in fifth grade — which meant I was ten years old. Soon after when ... when Hitler started — in January of 1933 — of course the ... the frictions came. The boys slowly, but surely, started to become uniformed and had to join the ... the Jungvolk — the youth groups. And later on, the ... they switched over to the upper grade of the youth, and there were all the ... there was some harassment. In fact I remember that we went ... in high school it was customary to go for one weekend — the whole class — on an excursion. In our school it was customary to go to a youth hostel in the Odenwald which was not too far away from Mannheim, which was a low range of mountains. And when it started there again, you know, that they harassed me, I picked on a

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boy which I figured I could handle, and I really beat him into a pulp and without consequences. The class surrounded us, and we ... we fought it out; and when I finally was the winner, the harassment stopped; not only for me, but for everybody else who was Jewish in my class. And from then on, the existence was very normal. We were part of the ... of the class, and nobody ever started to harass us again. In fact, through most of my high school life during gymnastics — we had gymnastics twice a week — when it came to playing soccer — and so it happened that my class had outstanding soccer team who managed to beat much older classes — I always was the referee. Was perfectly normal ... that I was called out immediately. I'm the referee — I wasn't a good soccer player; I wasn't interested in soccer, but a referee.

501; 37:34

**Now, how about your neighbors, as you were, prior to the deportation?**

There was no real contact. I mean, my mother went shopping, and we knew the tradesmen. And we were all ... there was always enough food even after there was a restriction on the purchasing hours. I believe it started after ... after Kristallnacht. There were ... all of a sudden there appeared signs in every store in Mannheim that Jews could only purchase from one to two. And after rationing, we always had enough food because with ... the people ... the tradespeople knew us; and we were given. My mother always managed to get somewhat more than she was entitled to by the rationing cards. But, as I said, we had no non-Jewish friends.

**Friends, acquaintances ...?**

Acquaintances — yes. And as I said, I played music with a non-Jewish violinist.

**Right.**

But basically we had no ...

**He was an exception ...**

He was an exception rather than the rule.

**What seemed, in your view, the ... the ... the reception that these people gave when you were being paraded out? I mean, what is your sense of what the other Germans were thinking?**

Well, it was well known that there was, in the highest government circle, concern that the population would not go along too well with Jewish persecutions. And I believe that the first time that they felt certain enough that there would be no serious adverse reaction was at the Kristallnacht. But otherwise I believe everything was done so that the majority of the population was not made too aware that there were things going on against Jews — except for the boycott in April of 1933 [interjection by his wife: "Kristallnacht!"] and Kristallnacht. And then, of course, as the signs in the windows where ... of the stores whereby you could only shop at certain times. And we were not permitted ... [interjection by his wife: "the coffee shops, the restaurants"] we were not permitted to go to movies and the restaurants, coffee shops. There were signs up: "Jews are not desired here."

**The morning that you were marched to the station — was that a weekend or a weekday?**

It was a weekday.

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**Weekday.**

And there was no reaction from the population.

**People were on the street; I mean you must have made a pretty big spectacle.**

No; because we were led to the ... to the assembly points individually. In other words, there would have been a group of ... in my case, I believe, there were my mother and I, and there were two people who lived with us from far ... distant relatives who came to us from a ... a town in the Palatinate Landau. So, there were four people, who with their baggages, walked with two other guys. We were not like in ... we had no handcuffs.

**You weren't that conspicuous.**

We were very inconspicuous.

**Then, at the meeting point — how many were you? A thousand?**

I don't ... I must tell you, I do not remember. If we were individually led, I believe I said, we were led to the Mannheim Castle, which was not too far away from the ... from the railway station. Now if we were led directly to the railway station, I don't recall. But we were not ... it was not conspicuous. There were no ... the people did not react either.

578; 41:39

**Were there guards for the most part?**

Yeah — but the guards wearing not uniforms; it was all done in civilian clothes. So we were loaded on the trains, and the SS came to tell us that we should not dare to take more than 100 marks — because we would be searched. And then eventually the SS ... an SS officer came back again and was looking for a transport ... Jewish transport lead ... leader. And it so happened that a man was picked who was in my compartment on my train; it was whom we knew. So when the time came in France, when the French in Lyon wanted to talk to somebody because they didn't know who we were and what was going on, they weren't told in advance. I came down with the man as a translator because he knew me; I played music with him. And it turned out that the French were totally ignorant of what was going on. And we explained to a French colonel of the Gendarmerie that we were German Jews, not Alsations as they had assumed; and they were really dummkopf [?] ... dumbfounded. They had no preparation; they were not aware that what ... who was coming, how many were coming; they were just ... we were just dumped. Eventually, the train ... or the trains ... we were ... I happened to be in the first train.

**First of the nine.**

... of the nine; and eventually we were ... we were given some food to eat by the French Red Cross. The man who was speaking and I, who ... who were speaking with the Gendarmerie, were fed by the Gendarmerie — which was the first time I made the acquaintance of pâté. I don't know what the rest of the train was given. I had pâté and bread; and then we were put back on the train.

**Were you allowed to get off the train?**

Yeah.

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**Yeah.**

The two of us were off the train. We were the only ones off the train.

**The only two.**

And eventually the train went on. And I think we were on the train between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October to the 24<sup>th</sup> ... or 25<sup>th</sup> of October when we arri ... when we finally ended up in a small station called Oloron-Sainte-Marie, which was about 15 or so kilometers from the camp. And there were trucks — open trucks — waiting; and we were trucked from the railway station to the camp entrance. When we came to the camp entrance, it was raining cats and dogs. It was night; and we were led somewhere and fed into barracks about 30 or ... we were 50, 60 — each barrack was filled. Men and women were separated. Our luggage was dumped in front of the camp in the rain, and we were permitted the next morning to come and get it.

**At this point you were separated from your mother?**

I was separated from my mother. I was in one of the men's blocks, and my mother was one of the women's blocks. At that point there were about, I believe, two or three thousand inhabitants in the camp. And then when we came, we were ... the camp, all of a sudden overnight ... was about 10,000 or 12,000 people. My wife can look up the numbers, and I can put it in exactly— it's documented.

599; 45:46

**Did you ever imagine at this point that either you or your mother would ever return to Mannheim?**

**Cartridge Tape, Side A ends; Digitized Tape continues.**

No; we ... we ... look, we ... we did ... we had ... at ... at that point we had ... we were taking it day by day.

**Did ... what did you expect to find?**

What we found was a barrack, or barracks, in each block. They were all alike; they were built out of wood with some material which was probably, tarred [?], which was put on the outside of the barracks. There were no windows [interjection by his wife: "with topping"] ... with topping ... there were no windows in the barracks. There was a wooden slot in lieu of a window; in order to have some light, you had to open the slot. And then, of course, you had ...

**Cartridge Tape, Side B**

001; 46:47

... no protection from the elements. Eventually we were managing to put ... we find ... to find something which was an approximation of ... [long gap in cartridge tape] plastic which let in the light [NOTE: this last part was added later by Mr. Liebmann; not on either tape]

013; 47:06

**Who were your guards?**

Our guards when we arrived were French Gendarmerie — uniformed French Gendarmerie. When we came into the barracks, all we were given was some straw and one military issue vessel for the food; with a spoon, fork, knife [interjection by his wife: "Not the first days; the first days we had nothing."].

The first days we lived from our own provisions. Then eventually we were given the vessel and some  
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utensils — one vessel. And eventually, you know, a kitchen service was established with whatever little food the French were providing us. It was a distinction of Gurs that food was always in short supply. And what is more, and we found this out only in retrospect, there was a good deal of corruption. And not all the money which were ... was supposed to be used for our ... our food was really spent because a lot went into some pockets. Which meant that our food was never more than about five, six hundred calories a day.

**In the French pockets?**

French pockets ... sure.

**And where was the money coming from, supposedly?**

From ... from [interjection by his wife: "French government"] the French government.

**The French government.**

French government; French government.

**You mentioned that there were French guards at the camp. Who guarded the train during the voyage across?**

Well, until ... until we went into the unoccupied zone of France, it was the SS. After that there was really nobody on the train. But where were we supposed to go? There might have ... there was French personnel on the train, but I don't think we were really guarded. There were only very few escapes. So to come back — the barracks were bare; there was a stove in the barrack. We never had a sufficient amount of heating material; so it was cold. Water was rationed because water in this ... in this area was in short supply, and there wasn't enough for the camp to go around. We came with about six and a half thousand people. At the end of this week, according to statistics available, there were 10,000 people in this camp. Therefore, there were about three and a half thousand people before we came. We were given straw. Eventually, the Spanish internees, which had a much more lenient regime — they could move further around the camp, they could get out of camp; they ... they knew the ropes, which we didn't know. There were the Spanish ... there were Spanish internees from the Republicans who escaped from Franco's Spain when the ... the Civil War ended. They — for money — made beds out of wood and disarmed — what do you call this — barbed wire; so that we got somewhat off the floor. We could buy this for a ... for a few French francs. And in ... by the way, I ment ... I forgot to mention that in Mulhouse [NOTE: a city in eastern France], on our Mülhausen ... our hundred marks, which we were permitted to take, was exchanged against 2,000 French francs. And that was the money we knew we had to live with until God knows when.

057; 51:13

**Two thousand francs.**

Two thousand French francs. And that was, of course — it was a problem; because if no money would be coming from anywhere, you could starve to death with the food you got in ... in Gurs.

**What ... aside from the food that you mentioned ... what did you and your mother bring with you?**

That we ... we had ... we were told to pack some food; so we had some cons ... [NOTE: may have started to say preserves, a whole fruit jam], preserves which we had at home ... like ... I don't know

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what we brought — I have no recollection; bread, whatever we had in the house on sausage and things like this, or cheese.

**Aside from the food, what ... what else did you ...?**

We packed as many warm clothes as we knew how to pack; and as many shoes as we could carry; and underwear — clothing, and ... and blankets.

**Which you needed.**

Which we needed very badly. I took along for myself — I had from my ... my harvesting service — I had a sleeping bag which was made out of feather, was daunen — was down — and this kept me warm more or less throughout my camp stay until I got into ... escaped into Switzerland.

**How long were you at Gurs?**

I was in Gurs for 20 months. Eventually I ... the French are strange people ... eventually to start out with, the milit ... the paramilitary Gendarmerie was removed; and French civilian guards, who were just as badly off as we were, replaced them. I managed to eventually work in ... in the office of the block. I started to play music. Since the French are strange people and encouraged cultural activities in a concentration camp, we played chamber music. We had a small orchestra. There were cabaret performers from Paris who gave performances; there was a whole cultural life. There were people who spoke who were PhD's; there were journalists who comment ... who had commentaries with an illegitimate radio on the daily situation.

**Schools for children?**

There were schools for children. I managed eventu ... [? unintelligible]

**In French?**

No; I believe it was in German.

**German.**

German. I managed to get what was called a laissez-passer, a pass, which made me much more mobile than the rest of the population in the ... in the camp because I could circulate — at ... at ... at will; which I was given because I played music.

**You had a cello?**

I had a cello ... yeah. The Y ...

**Did you take ... were you able to take your own?**

Oh no, no, no, no; the YMCA in France provided instruments. There were social workers permitted in camp; and thus, the social workers started to ... efforts were quite successful in removing younger ... the younger generation from camp. Eventually, sometime early in '41 already or the middle of '41, the camp was partially reduced in ... in population by telling us that families with children are going to be

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moved to a different camp — which was Rivesaltes, which was ... had supposedly better barracks. Otherwise, the regime ... the regime was the same. But to a lot of people left, but whoever was staying, the younger generation was ... was slowly being removed. And what is worth mentioning, of course, is that the Swiss Red Cross was given a barrack and a ... a ... a nurse, Elsbeth Kasser. She's still alive [NOTE: she has died since the interview]; is quite famous — started to supplement with Swiss food the rations which we got and which really was the main meal for many of us under 21. But we had to go to the barracks and eat it there because she wanted to make sure that we ate the food and not take it to our ...

110; 56:03

**Not the French ...**

No; no ... that we would eat it. It was meant for us, and that we wouldn't take food with us to give our families.

**Oh; OK**

It was meant for the young ones.

**OK; I thought maybe they were afraid of corruption.**

They were also quite afraid of corruption; they didn't want this food to end up in the ... in the black market. We were given pieces of cheese; we were given Farina to eat; we were given Ovaltine. It was, as far as I am concerned, it was my ... my main meal — the main meal of my day.

**Did your mother get any of this?**

No, they ... they didn't permit it.

**Were you able to meet with her at any time and talk to her?**

Well, my mother was — while I was in the office in my block — my mother was in the office of her block. And since I eventually was able to move very freely in ... in camp, I was able to see my mother daily. I was also able to see my recently acquired girlfriend daily.

**Aha! Aha! You had a girlfriend ...**

Yes.

**... at the camp.**

And we also went together every day to ... to the Swiss barrack to eat together.

**You and your girlfriend.**

My and my girlfriend; which later became my wife.

**Yes.**

And ...

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### **How was your mother coping?**

My mother was coping fairly well because somehow or other, people in the offices ate somewhat better than the rest of the population. The food came from ... was delivered first to the ... was picked up first. And they got somewhat more substance than the rest. Rightly or wrongly, we are not going to argue. But it was a fact that those who worked in offices ate slightly better. It was still not enough. The bread rations were the same. Eventually, my girlfriend left; but she will tell her own story. And because of corruption, the French decided to close my block and distribute the people. Since I was approached by a French inspector who was responsible for our block; and probably also was responsible for closing our block because he saw what was going on by the ... with the people who were running the block, who were responsible for the block; and who were corrupt. I was able to eventually be moved into the hospital of the camp, where I was running the office. That was a privilege I was given because I had closed the block I was responsible for; giving back to the French all of the inventory which was there — the pots and pans which everybody had, which were issued new from the new block; etc., etc. So because I did a good job, eventually I ended up in the hospital — which was a very favorite place because I had a room which I shared with one other man in the hospital. We had heat every night in our room; we had beds — we had hospital beds. I had heat all day in the office. So I was somewhat privileged for a few months until the OSE [NOTE: Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants] took me out of camp — in end of June I would say ... beginning of July. Probably was the end of June of 1942, and it was fortunate because whoever was in camp on August 1, 1942 would be deported. [NOTE: Actually, it was 7/20/42 — added later by Mr. Liebmann]

### **Were you able to say goodbye to your mother?**

158; 1:00:13 Well, I said goodbye to my mother when I left camp to go to ... to this farm to which I was brought by the social worker of the OSE [?]. I wasn't in this farm — which was, by the way, run by the Jewish Boy Scout of France — more than about five or six weeks. About six weeks, because then there was a raid planned on the farm to arrest the foreign Jews which were there; and which meant that everybody had to be dispersed. The problem was that this was an Orthodox farm. There were ... the ... the director of the farm was a Alsatian Orthodox Jew who ran this farm with the assistance of two German rabbis who came from Gurs — Orthodox. And when it came time to disperse us, there were four people who were not Orthodox — a fellow who came with me from Gurs who was somewhat younger than I; and two somewhat older fellows, maybe a year or two older than I was, of Polish background. And we were told we would have to help ourselves; there was ... they couldn't do anything for us.

### **What was the name of this Jewish Boy Scout organization; a French name?**

[NOTE: unintelligible; Max prompted by his wife.]

The farm ... the farm was in a village called Taluyers, which was outside of Lyon ... was very close to Lyon. And since my wife, or my girlfriend at the time, had permission to visit her mother at the beginning of August, I saw her on the way. She visited me on the way to camp. She was already in Le Chambon, and when she came back, she told me the horror stories that the deportations had started in ... in Gurs; and that she was able to say goodbye to her mother; and that's her story. And we arranged at that point that if I would get into trouble, since Le Chambon wasn't far away, and she felt very certain that these people would help when I get in trouble, I will try to make my way to Le Chambon — to join up with her. Little did I know that a few weeks later I was in Le Chambon. And I arrived there after we were denied help, when help was needed — in the middle of the night. Where would I know ... where would I find my wife in the middle of the night? So we camped next to a tennis

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place in a little wood ... a tennis field in a little wood. And chance would have it that in the morning at 5:30, a group of young teenage girls would walk by. And amongst them was my wife, my girlfriend, who refused to turn around when I whistled after her — and had to be physically turned around by one of her girlfriends.

**[NOTE: question directed to wife.] Uh huh; 'cause you didn't recognize him, or you didn't ... you're not accustomed to being whistled at?**

She didn't want to be whistled at, and she didn't realize it was I.

**Aha!**

So when I explained the circumstances why I was here, she took me to Mireille Philip — who was the wife of what was later to become the finance minister of de Gaulle in his first government; who was already then with de Gaulle in England. And she made sure that after one night in the village, in a villa with people who were very willing to give me a room for the night and fed me, I was placed on a farm about an hour and a half to two hour away by foot — where I stayed about three and a half weeks. And these farmers shared their food with me. They put me into their hayloft. And after three and a half weeks, I was already certain that I was forgotten because no ... I ... I had heard nothing and seen nothing; until there was all of a sudden a little message from my wife who, in those days, also was hiding on a farm because the raids had ... where had started in France to arrest Jews. And I got a little note from her that she was well; she was ... she was on a farm — I shouldn't worry. Shortly thereafter, I was picked up, brought back to Le Chambon ... where I found my girlfriend.

217; 1:05:05 **You were picked up by friends?**

By ... by... by people from ... from the village. Madame Philip made sure that I was photographed; I was given false papers. And days later, with false papers and three other fellows, we were directed to a village one stop from Saint-Gervais in the French Alps. It went there by train. We fared well, nobody challenged us; nobody stopped us. And I was also standing very often next to a gendarme, 'cause I ... I felt that was a good way of not getting checked on papers. You don't stand next to a gendarme when you have a bad conscience.

**Right.**

And from this place near Saint-Gervais, we were taken the next morning on a 36 or 30, 40 hour hike — high into the mountains. The leader of the four of us was a young 10, 11 year old boy who knew these mountains by heart. He had along a young French pastor, a Protestant minister who was supposed to learn the way to guide others. So that ... that way we were overnight. We started early in the morning; we walked all day; we climbed, we climbed, we climbed. When nightfall came, we found a rock overhang under which we stayed because it was raining that night. The next morning we went on, still climbing, until the boy stopped and told us now we have to go down, and eventually we'll reach Switzerland. Which we did, only to be arrested on about half an hour after we were walking somewhere high, still high, in the mountains on a road with tunnels. And the ... the Swiss patrol arrested us, stopped us, brought us to a mountain hut which ... which had a restoration service. There was a restaurant there; we could sleep there overnight. And we found that we were maybe number 36, 37, 38, 39 of a group of people who all had coming in this region — were found and stopped and held by the Swiss authorities. We were given food, even though Switzerland has rationing, without rationing stamps, for our money — I had a little French ... Swiss money on me. And after breakfast the

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next morning we were told by the commanding officer of this contingent of Swiss soldiers that now we would be sent back to Switzerland [NOTE: interjection of his wife: "to France"] ... to France. We would not ... we could not stay in Switzerland. And on the way back to what they called no man's land, all of a sudden I was picked on by a Swiss sergeant who started to scream and yell at me; and was trying to tell me what I'm not supposed to do. That went on for about 15 or 20 minutes. Why he picked me I still don't know. I don't even know who the man is, but it dawned on me when he was finished screaming and yelling, telling me what I'm not supposed to do — that he had given me an exact chart of what I should do. All I had to do is ignore the "*no*", "*don't*", and do; and then substitute "*do*", and he had given me a ...

270; 1:09:09 **So, ignore all the negatives, the "*not's*" ...**

Ya, while I had to figure that out for myself of course and without the "*not's*" he had told me exactly what to do to get back into Switzerland. The tragedy was that after the Swiss stopped us, told us to keep on going down ... down, and left us, the tragedy was when I stopped, the 30 or 40 people who were with me, nobody had understood what was ... had transpired there. And I finally, after an hour — with the exception of one man who followed my reasoning; nothing to lose but to gain — the other 38 went back to ... to France, while he and I turned around and tried our way back into Switzerland. I had managed to look at a map the night before, and I knew approximately where I was. So we started crossing a very tiny water, which was ice water which came from a glacier which went down into France. We crossed this. With one step we were across, and I had ... I discovered further up ... woods and what looked like a walk. So we climbed there, and indeed when we came up to the woods, we had found a path.

**Which he mentioned in his ... was he ... did ...**

No, he didn't mention ...

**He didn't mention it?**

No, no. And we followed that path and eventually we ended up in a village which was called Finhaut in Switzerland. We had been explained in France, in Chambon, that if we need help we should look first for a French minister's. If there are no French pastors, go to the Catholic Church ... Protestant ministers. If we couldn't find Protestant ministers, go to the Catholic Church. Though in a village like this in Switzerland, high up in the Valais, there are no Protestants; there are only Catholics. So I went to the church, and I asked for Monsieur le Curé; but unfortunately, the village priest wasn't there for the day. He had gone down to ... into the ... to a ... to the ... to the administrative point of the Catholic Church. So we went on, and it became dark. We had been on the road all day, and I decided I'm not going to sleep another night ... if I can help it. So we went past a few houses — small village — stretched out and high up in the mountains; must ... must have been over ... still over 2,000 meters. And I knocked on the door of a house which I liked. And after some to do, because the man explained to me he's a new ... a newly-wed; he has [? unintelligible] ... it's his brother-in-law's house. We were invited in; we were given food; we were given a ... a room; and we were given directions how to get on into the ... down into the valley.

And we walked another day, and by mid-afternoon we were in a village next to Martigny where I went to the Catholic priest because I had no more money. Actually it was around noon, and we were down. I went to the Catholic Church; the priest gave us some food to eat. He gave me five francs, which permitted me to buy a ticket to Lausanne. The fellow I was with had enough money for him, Swiss

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money — was older than I was. And so we ended up in the station in Lausanne, and we were about 20 minutes in Lausanne in the station, not knowing what to do.

325; 1:13:14 You know, eventually you ... you sometimes you hit a snag; it was my ... my ball game. The other guy just followed me; whatever I said, he did. And so it dawned on me — you're a Jew; let's look for the Jewish congregation. I looked in the telephone book, eventually. Nobody had bothered us in the station, even though we were ... must have been ... quite conspicuous. And then I looked in the ... the telephone book, and there it was — Cong ... Congregation Israeli; and it was Rue de la Gare, which is Railroad Street. So it was within two or three minutes; and we went there. And the first thing these people told us, *'You're not going to be returned. We have to turn you over to the Swiss authorities, but you will be interned; but you won't be returned to France.'*

And that is what happened. We were, for about three months, in two quarantine camps. And from there we were turned over into civilian control. And I was assigned to a labor camp in Sierre, which is in the French part of Switzerland, in the Rhone valley. I got there on December 23 to a totally empty camp. What it was — they had leave of absence for the holidays, for Christmas. And the camp director asked me if I had relatives where I could go ... or friends where I could go; and I said, *'Yes, I have relatives about, approximately where I came from.'* So I turned around. He gave me a ticket; he gave me a pass; and I went to my cousin whom I hadn't seen in ... I don't know how many years. And I spent Christmas with my cousin. And so after Christmas I came back to camp, and I started life in a Swiss labor camp. We shoveled snow because it had snowed over Christmas; and that wasn't for me. I didn't like that. So within a week I managed to get into the office.

And I was interned in Switzerland, in various camps and internment homes. What that meant ... it ... what people didn't ... what people here don't realize is that in Switzerland people who illegally came to Switzerland were interned. And while it was, of course, considerably better than what was happening to us in France, we were interned. The Swiss were not nice about it; we were harassed. Every so often we were asked when are we going to leave. And they knew ... the Swiss knew perfectly well we couldn't leave. There was nowhere to go during the war. So I was in Switzerland, in various offices of camps and homes, for five and a half years until we were able to emigrate. I married my wife in Switzerland and in ... she was able to join me in voluntary internment. Our daughter was born while we were interned. And eventually, in March of 1948, we were able to come to the United States.

**As you went across France towards Switzerland, did you know whether your father was still in France?**

Yes. I knew my father was in Nice. I corresponded with him until his deportation. I corresponded with my mother until she was deported. She knew ... my ... my mother knew when she was deported that I was safe.

**She knew you were safe.**

And my father knew that we were engaged. In fact, in one of his last letters he wrote us if we should get married — so that my wife would not get into ill repute.

[NOTE: Wife gives a little laugh.]

**Now what was your father doing from what you could tell from his letters?**

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He was ... he was trying to exist from day to day.

**How was he ... how was he managing?**

391; 1:17:41 He wasn't ... because he managed ... my father managed .... What I neglected to say before, was that on September 1, 1939 my grandmother, who was a French citizen, had to leave Germany overnight because of the war. I ... we were able to get ... to rent a cab ... I got special ... I was able to get a special allocation of gasoline, because gasoline was all of a sudden rationed, of course, in Germany. She was able to go to the French-Swiss border in Lörrach by cab. She wanted to join her sister in Switzerland. However, she was not permitted to enter Switzerland because the Swiss overnight had issued a visa requirement, and she had no visa. So she was able to get into Alsace. She was in a old age home. She was taken into an old age home in Nancy. Eventually, when Germany overran France, she managed to go to Bordeaux. She was in an old age facility in Bordeaux. While she was in this facility in Bordeaux, she managed to get a permission to cross over to the non ... Bordeaux was occupied by Germans.

And she managed to get travel permits. She came from Bordeaux to Gurs, and she visited with my mother and me for one week — meaning, she was in a village outside of the camp. Walked every day in the broiling summer heat of ... was it August ... I believe ...

**1940**

... 1941 [NOTE: discussion with wife whether it was 1940 or 1941], '41. Do I have that right? ... then it was in July or August. She walked every day from the village to the camp entrance, and my mother and I would have permission to talk to her for a whole week. Eventually my grandmother moved from ... managed to get from Bordeaux to Nice. And since my father was in Nice, and my grandmother was in Nice, they set up a household. My grandmother died in ... I can tell you exactly ... on ... on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1943; died of natural causes after an operation at the age of 73. And my father, I would assume, said while she was there she had means. She got ... got also from ... some money from the French government as a French citizen — an old age pension or whatever. So my father somehow managed to survive. He was aware that we ... that ...

444; 1:21:04 **Was this Grandmother ... Liebmann?**

[Interviewer, Max, and Max's wife are talking over each other.]

No, no. This was Grandmother Levi. Grandmother Liebmann died when I was a six or seven year old boy.

**OK, OK.**

My father ... I was in correspondence with my father until he was deported. He was aware that there was a girl. He corresponded with this girl, and he suggested very strongly we get married as soon as possible. And this was ... I mean we knew that he was in a very difficult circumstances. And we had hoped he would survive since he had managed so far. But it was an accident that he ran into a ... a German patrol when they were arresting people in a house where he was visiting. So they took him along; he wasn't on the list.

**So he was arrested by the ... the SS.**

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By the SS or the Gestapo; and he was deported in ... I think it was November of 1944.

### **One of the last ...**

Ya. We got married in April of 1945 after we both managed to get birth certificates from Germany. That also was a whole story because while my wife had relatives in Switzerland from whom she walked away because they made her life so miserable, they were not aware that we really wanted to get married right away. And after we finally had our birth certificates, since my wife was being treated by the Swiss under German law, and she was not yet 21, she needed a parent ... a parental permission to get married. So the Swiss appointed a guardian, a legal guardian, who gave permission.

### **Someone who you barely knew.**

Didn't know at all — he was a ... a young struggling lawyer. [NOTE: wife interjects something unintelligible.] He had a law office, but he was a young ... fairly young man then. And I want you to know that in ... in the 80's he still was in the same place, in the same law office. And we visited him.

### **Same furniture.**

Same furniture; he made us stay — he remembered us. So after we married, my wife was ... got permission ... I got ... was able to get permission for her to join me. We had to pay first ... she was not permitted; she first was ... joined ... joined me. Then the ... the order came down — she has to have a room in ... in where I was interned. She couldn't live in the home; eventually we were able to get this rescinded. She also had to eat out. Eventually this was rescinded, but we had to pay for her. So throughout while I was interned, I had to pay for my wife at ... at the same rate as the Swiss personnel had to pay for room and board.

502; 1:24:30      So eventually we were able to emigrate ... in March of ... end of February of 1948. We left Switzerland, and we arrived in the United States in March of 1948.

### **You became New Yorkers.**

[Interjection by his wife: "and look what you forgot"]

What? Oh ya, of course — in ... on March 4, 1946 a daughter was born in ... in Switzerland, in Vevey.

### **The first of ...**

The first and only.

### **First and last.**

Ya. The first and last simply because after we came here, we first had to start trying to make a living. And within two years after we came here, we both were sick with TB, and first had to go to a sanatorium for 18 months for myself; and I think two years for my wife. While my daughter had to be take ... put into a foster home; and after this, we had to start all over again to build a family and a life. So really our American life started in earnest after I came out of the sanatorium. I went to school; I was able finally to learn a profession; I learned accounting. I went to a ... a private business school where — in eight months, nine months — I was able to do four years of college ... accounting ... college.

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accounting, which gave me enough of making a living. And from then on, you know, we ... we lived a American life.

**Happily ever after. [NOTE: wife laughs] The laugh reveals that.**

Ya. And I ... I have been ... generally of 1987 ... January 31<sup>st</sup> 1987 I retired.

544; 1:26:45 **Only in a matter of speaking, since I know you ...**

Well, yes, I retired. First I retired because the company I worked for decided to close its New York operation, and I ... I did the liquidation; and then I went into retirement. I was past 65, and for ... for a few years I did nothing but play music. And then I [interjection by his wife: "Drive his wife crazy"] ...

**Drive his wife crazy. [Wife laughs]**

And then ... then Ben Meed found me, and I started to work at ... in my gathering [?] ... of Jewish Holocaust Survivors as a full time volunteer starting in November of 19 ... November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1990.

**Where I first met you.**

Ya.

**On that happy note ...**

Ya; where when you start ...

**I thank you.**

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