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United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Anita Sockol
August 13, 1999
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Anita Sockol, conducted by Amy Reuben on August 13, 1999 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview 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.

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Anita Sockol
August 13, 1999

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Anita Sockol, conducted by Amy Reuben, on August 13, 1999, in Washington, D.C.. This is tape number one, side A. Would you begin by telling me your name, now and at birth, as well as where you were born, and when you were born?

Answer: My name now is Anita Sockol, and I was born in Berlin, September 17th, 1927. My name at birth, is that what you asked -- was Plachte, P-l-a-c-h-t-e, Anita Plachte.

Q: Can you tell me something about your family? Did you have any siblings, and can you tell me about your parents?

A: My parents -- no, I didn't have any siblings. My parents were Margaret and Ludwig Plachte. My mother's maiden name is Schindler. And is -- they were both born in Berlin, which I think they were quite proud of, which tells you something. And --

Q: What about their personalities can you -- can you tell me?

A: My father was sort of a -- a bachelor when he got married. He was a -- I don't -- He was a good man, a decent man, but not full of humor. And bu -- quite set in his ways. He got married when he was 40, and he was 42 when they had me. And my mother was 27 when she got married, and was anxious to get out of Kemnets. She told me many, many times, that she got married to him very quickly, you know, he asked her to marry him, and she wanted to marry to get to Berlin, that's what she wanted. So, but she was fun loving. She had a sense of humor, and I think my father sort of kept her down, or at least it wa -- it -- that's how it seemed to me. He was a, as we say today, a ca -- mut -- a bit of a control freak. Or maybe more than a bit.

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Q: Can you tell me something about the neighborhood where you were growing up in Berlin?

A: I can see the house in my mind's eye. It was, you know, I -- I would say like upper middle class, and it had a -- there was a park nearby, by Rushaplatz, or was it just a real -- a playground with a par -- I'm not quite sure. Not a big park, because Berlin has very big parks, that's not one -- one of them. But it was like a comfortable neighborhood, and I know that Albert Einstein lived nearby somewhere. My mother used to tell me that, not that I knew who he was at the time, but I knew he was somebody important. And I guess that was a different neighborhood, but where my -- when my parents got married, not that same building that -- that I grew up in, when they got married, before they had me, they lived in a noybow, as they called it, you know, a new building, and Marlena Dietrich lived in that building. These are things that were told to me, yeah.

Q: Can you describe the -- the home where you were growing up, in more detail?

A: Yes, it's -- i-it was a very nice, spacious apartment, with long hallways, you know, and i-it seemed to me like it was quite large, and I know there were -- there was a -- what do you call that? Like bells that you could ring, you know, and it would ring in the back, in the -- near the kitchen, like which room the maid was supposed to come and s -- I was very impressed with this, I think, cause I still remember it. But it was, you know, middle class, nothing ultra fancy. I don't even remember -- I guess it did have an elevator, the building. Yeah, it must have. I can see myself walking into the building, and yet it -- it's murky.

Q: Are there any sounds, or any smells that remind you of that home after -- after leaving there? Anything that's come up in the years after?

A: I don't know. I -- Sounds perhaps, but I -- I don't -- I don't know. I -- I remember feeling fear when they'd leave me alone at night, that I remember. Too early for a young child, at least for me it was. But I don't -- because you said sounds, that's what made me think of it, because I'd

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hear things that probably weren't even happening, but in my mind they were. Creaking sounds or something, and I was frightened to be alone, five or six, or something.

Q: Had your parents gone out for the evening, and left you with a guardian of some sort?

A: No, I -- I think I was alone, at least that's what I remember. It must have been later on, when you couldn't -- you know, weren't allowed to have a maid any more.

Q: And what do you know about the neighborhood? Who else lived in the immediate area? Was this a Jewish area of Berlin? A Jewish quarter of sorts?

A: I don't remember, but somehow I don't think so. I don't think it was -- no, they were well integrated. I'm sure there were Jews living around, but it was -- a-as far as I ca -- I remember, when I'd visit a friend, it was pretty far away, it was -- because this -- the school that I went to was a Jewish school. But, I don't think so, it's -- it's like saying, you know, where I live now in Manhattan, do I live in a Jewish neighborhood? No, I don't. A lot of Jews live there, but it's not a Jewish neighborhood. I think that's how it was in Berlin, because I didn't really think that anything was going to happen. Thank you very much.

Q: Can you tell me where your school was located, and also in relation to where you were, growing up?

A: No, I -- I can't tell you. I-It was called -- I -- I can tell you what it was called, Prinsagetten Temple, which was a synagogue, and they had a school. But where it was in relation to my house, I can't remember. How did I get there every day? I can't remember. I -- Doesn't -- nothing comes to mind.

Q: Do you have many memories of being in your home? Being with your parents, eating meals, observing any holidays? I realize that you were young, at the time, but do you have any memories like that?

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A: I remember -- I remember meals in our dining room, I can see the dining room in my -- in my mind, but holidays, I think we were -- we were not very religious. My mother was, she always went to -- always went to synagogue on the high holidays, and she always fasted on Yom Kippur, that was very important to her, and she -- somehow she carried that through to, you know, very late in life, in New York. And I don't remember her making holiday meals. We must have been invited, or something. I know we were invited here. It wasn't like, you know, she invited people over. She was not that much of a housewife, or cook, you know, to -- to cook for many people was not her thing. And my father didn't care, you know, as far as holidays were concerned.

Q: Did the three of you go to synagogue as a family?

A: Someti -- I remember them being there, being at that synagogue, for -- but it must have been for me, cause it was Purim or something, and probably something that parents should attend, so it was more for parents attending than for the holidays, and yet that isn't quite true. She had a Bible, and sh -- I think I have it at home still -- that she used, but I'm -- I'm a little confused whether that was in the United States, or there.

Q: Did you have other relatives in Berlin, and were they living close by?

A: I had my father's brother, and his wife. That's my Uncle Martin and Tanta Trudy. I never called her aunt, cause I never saw her again, Tanta Trude, and my cousin, Ilsa. They had one daughter, and I was very fond of her, very close to her, or wanted to be, because I was an only child, and I was not very happy about that, so I wanted to think of her as a sister, was happy when once in awhile we'd get some dresses that were the same dress, you know, in -- in our respective sizes. But they lived -- I know they lived a subway ride away, and I -- I think I once went there. It was sort of as if we lived in Manhattan, and they lived in Brooklyn kind of thing.

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That's what I s -- remember, and they were more modest -- had a more modest income, and I don't know what he did for a living, but -- but we didn't -- I -- I didn't see her as often as I would have liked. She went to a different school, and she was a little older than I was, and -- but I -- I wanted to se -- to -- to -- wanted more of a connection. Why we didn't, I -- I'm not quite sure. I was really a lonely child.

Q: What other friendships do you remember from Berlin?

A: I remember Hi-Hilda Lerbenthal, Lowenthal. She was at one -- somebody in my class, who I was good friends with, and she had a large family, so that must have been fairly -- she had a younger brother and two older brothers, and it was like a happy household, and I loved going there, because it was a lot going on, and you know, played with her brothers, and attention was paid, and meals of mi-milk and cookies, or whatever. And then I had a friend named Levia Aronfeld, who I've seen in New York, I've run into her, and she had -- I -- I recognized her, which was really quite something. And another person, Marion Faulk. There were quite a few. Eva Simon. I re -- just remember these names, and I did have birthday parties, yes, that I remember, had birthday parties, my mother made me birthday parties, and she had these lovely little cups and saucers, each one was different from another. I have just a couple of them left, I have them in my den, cause they -- eventually they chipped and broke, and this and that, but I li -- I loved them, and it's serving -- served us cocoa in those cups, you know, each one, they were very pretty, china, you know, each one was totally different from the other. We called them Zameltussen. And maybe something will come to mind about holidays, but -- I remember a Christmas tree that she sa -- bre -- she got for when we had a maid, because she wanted it, you know, and she did it for her, we had a Christmas tree. Of course, no Christ-like ornaments on it, but it had something on it, jelly rings, or something, I don't know.

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Q: Was the maid living with you full time at your home?

A: Yes, yes, she was, because there was a room off the kitchen, a small room, and that was Emma's room, that was the first one that I remember.

Q: While you were living in Berlin, were there more than -- was there more than one maid that you recall?

A: Yes, there was another one after that, named Lotte, and she was also there for quite a few years. I think she was there until it was prohibited to have maids. Then they said they could have Jewish maids, but I think that never came off, that I can remember.

Q: And what do you remember about your interaction with the maids that you knew in Berlin?

A: They were my friends, I mean I -- I sa -- I use the word maids, you know, I -- I shouldn't really, it's -- they were like my -- what's the word -- like my companions, not really a -- they were like my babysitters, you know, my nursemaids is a better -- even though they did do the cleaning, I think, dishes, I don't remember having any other -- anyone else in help. But my mother was very nervous when I was born, I know that, she's told me that, and she gave me away, sh -- and I always thought, f-for years, until I -- til my late years, you know, that my friends who are psycho -- psychologists and -- and social workers said, "You know, that wasn't really such a terrific thing." She thought she did a wonderful thing, she didn't have enough milk, and she gave me away to a clinic. Clinic is not what a clinic is here. Clinic is like a private thing where they -- Dr. Lungstein, she told me, out in -- it was a good distance, and she said she went there several times a week to see me, and they had a -- what do you call them, wet -- wet nurses, because she thought that I wasn't going to -- going to make it, or something. I -- I don't know if any of this really was necessary or true, but that's what she did, and that's what she told me. But it's sort of interesting, you know, as a mother and grandmother when I look back on this, and

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what did that really mean, to give away a newborn, and I said, “How long was that?” And she -- It was like a half a year, which is sort of mind-boggling.

Q: Do you remember as a child being close to both your mother and father, or more so to one?

A: I remember being closer to my mother, yes, definitely to my mother.

Q: What kind of work did your father do?

A: He was a manufacturer of dresses and blouses, that was a -- I guess a common combination in -- in the garment area, in Berlin in those days, dresses and blouses, yes.

Q: And did your mom stay at home with you?

A: Yes, she stayed at home. She -- She didn’t work, no.

Q: And, do you have any specific memories of -- of any -- any interactions with the maids that you knew well during those times, or -- I know that you seem to have fond memories of them, but anything in -- specific that you recall?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Can you actually tell me what you remember, as far as the layout of your home, when you entered? I think you were mentioning this.

A: Yeah. Well, i-it -- it -- it -- to m -- to me, it seemed as if -- to me it seems now, like it was quite a large apartment. When you came in t -- i-it was a long -- there was a corridor to the first room, was my room, which was a -- as you -- as you came into the apartment, and then there was a living room, and a hamsimmer, as my mother called it, with a schockladenshun, which she had a key to, it means it was -- that’s where she kept the chocolates, and they were like a treat when you got some. And then the dining room, and then a long hallway, which led to the room that the housekeeper had, and then the kitchen. And I think that was it, but it seemed very large. Maybe they were very spacious rooms. It was sort of an elegant apartment, the way I remember it.

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Q: Did you have friends in the neighborhood? It sounds like you mostly have friends at school. Any friends in the neighborhood that you recall?

A: Not that I recall -- I don't recall going, you know, upstairs or downstairs, or next building or something, to play with anyone. I'm sure I must have, I -- I don't know, I must have blocked it or something, but I don't remember doing it.

Q: Do you remember having non-Jewish friends in Berlin, or even knowing if a friend is not Jewish at the time?

A: Hm, it's a good question. I don't -- I don't really know the answer. I guess maybe I was -- maybe I was subliminally aware of it, or even if you didn't speak about it, because right from the beginning, I went to a -- I was sent to a Jewish school, and I knew why.

Q: You were told why you were being sent there?

A: Yeah, yeah, yes.

Q: What did your -- What did your parents tell you?

A: They wanted me to escape the anti-Semitism. They were afraid for the an-anti-Semitism, so that was -- I'm trying to think, 1933 or something, six years old. I don't know when you begin school, yeah.

Q: Do you remember already having an awareness of anti-Semitism, besides what your parents were telling you about sending you to this school?

A: I was aware of it. Now, I don't know if it was before, or after entering school, or it was simultaneous, but I do remember, I remember parades, and marches, and -- and you know, those banners, and flags, and -- and Hitler going -- I f -- remember seeing Hitler going through the streets with a -- you know, and that's -- I -- I -- maybe I've heard it on -- on the radio, cause I probably didn't wi -- makes sense that I didn't read the paper, but we did have a radio, and you'd

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hear that screeching voice that we all know. Yes, I had strange feel -- I -- you certainly did feel it, but at the same time, we went to the movies, and I remember -- what was that place -- and it was a -- where there was a big movie theater, in the center. It must have been near -- what was that [indecipherable] main street there. Kudam.

Q: Kuf -- Kuffus.

A: Yeah, Kuffus and dam, yeah, that's what the Berliners call it, Kudam, Krufust and dam, and there was a movie that I was -- aside from Shirley Temple, I was fascinated by the Dionne quintuplets, and I can still see like a big advertisement, you know, above -- the marquis above the mo-movie theater, like a painting or -- or a photograph, or whatever, huge, about those five quintuplets, and Gene Herschels, was an actor or something, who played the doctor -- or was he the doctor -- I -- I --who -- who delivered them. Anyway, the whole thing fascinated me. You're bringing out very strange things in me, Amy.

Q: Did you have any experience of somebody in Berlin being anti-Semitic toward you, personally? Any recollection of anything like that?

A: I was always -- I was -- it -- it was like a -- like a feeling, like a -- I ca -- I can't e -- with -- I -- I don't remember, I don't remember. I -- I -- I don't remember anybody calling me names, or I might have blocked it -- or hitting me, or sa -- or anything like that, but it was a feeling of caution, and always being told not to make waves, be careful, don't do this, don't do that, and -- and that kind of thing, it was more that. But I guess I felt comfortable as far as anti-Semitism was concerned, in the school. Not that I was happy in the school.

Q: Tell me more about your experiences at school. Why weren't you happy?

A: I was just not happy in the school. I -- I did not -- I was not a good student, I felt very isolated, I felt lonely, I felt like an unhappy child, and -- I -- also I did not like Hebrew -- Hebrew

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lessons. I wasn't good in it, I didn't like it, I didn't want to take it. I -- I was -- I did -- I didn't enjoy school, I didn't feel popular, you know how youngsters have to feel popular. All that came much later in America.

Q: Did you talk to your mom or your dad about these feelings, do you remember? Express anything to them?

A: I don't know. I -- They were not that -- those kind of parents as they are today, or maybe then as well, but that's, I guess, where their age came in. They were very -- not psychologically oriented. I don't think if -- if I did, that it didn't get me anywhere. They were the kind of parents that my mother used to tell me, you know, as -- as, I have a headache -- children don't get headaches, and that was the end of that, and that her mother said to her, translating it into English, if she had a -- a sore throat, her mother would give her a scarf, put it around your neck and go to school, kind of thing. And -- What else did her mother say? She'd always tell me that [indecipherable] in a -- pestering her the way kids do, I'm thirsty, I'm hungry, I'm hungry. She says, "Well then, lick a little salt, and you'll be thirsty, too." You know, it's sort of in fun, but not -- not paying all that much attention to children's emotions.

Q: Do you have recollection of the first time that you learned about Hitler?

A: No, not really. Her -- I -- I remember something about -- again, it must be the radio, or my parents talking, or people talking, about these elections, and that it's -- it'll blow over, or they were upset about the election, and I don't even know what year that was, '32 was it, that he came into power? But like most people said, and like you he -- see in movies now, you know, on that subject, like it'll blow over, and that crazy guy, and it's -- and that's just exactly how it was, that's how I remember it, that this was like an aberration.

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Q: But you do actually, at some point, have more memories of hearing him on the radio, or seeing him in these parades.

A: Mm.

Q: What other -- What other memory is related to Hitler, and maybe some of the either SS troopers, or people in the street that you saw?

A: Well, I -- I remember going out to -- my father was very fond of going out to gunavagdet, was one of those big parks, park and woods combination, cause Berlin is very large, and we'd do that very often, every Sunday. Not that -- I didn't like it, but that's what we did. And then had to have a café in there, and you could sit down and have cake, and something to drink. And at a table very nearby, was Herman Goering, with his wife and kids. I think he had two. And when my father saw that -- and I knew that that was like a very bad thing, I -- I f -- without having explained too much to me, I don't know wh-what I knew, or what he was going to be doing, but he paid the check, and we left there very quickly, I do remember that. And I remember another incident that -- with my Uncle Heinrich, my mother's brother, th -- who had the nerve, or maybe it was foolishness, to -- when they came around with a collection box, when the parade was going by, the Nazi parade, that he too -- he had a button in his pocket, and he put a button into this box instead of money, which was a very dangerous thing to do. He told that -- you know, seemed like adventuresome, as long as he got away with it.

Q: Did people, either your parents, or other family members, start talking much about Hitler and Nazis in your presence?

A: I think they tried to shield me. Th-They did try to shield me from all this. It may not have been, you know, the most demonstrative, and affectionate -- although my mother was affectionate -- parents, but I think they were -- they did want to shield me from this, and things

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are murky because they didn't really explain things, didn't really talk to me about these things, even as I got older, because after all, I was -- by the time we were leaving, it -- I was 10. And they also spoke -- and this was laughable, they spoke in English, in fr -- it's laughable because I -- when I learned English, I realized how little English they knew, but they talked in some kind of language which I think was English, that I shouldn't understand. That was one of their, you know, ways of -- that's a -- that's politics, money, children don't have to know these things, you know. And I di -- It wasn't somebody that I -- I don't think I found it easy to confide in my parents. I -- Actually, I never really did, not to the day they died.

Q: Did they speak Yiddish at home as well?

A: No, no Yiddish, no, cause they were both born in Berlin, and they -- no Yiddish.

Q: Do you have any idea how they had learned English, whatever English they'd learned by that point?

A: Well, I know that th -- a-actually they sent me for -- it wasn't very long, nor successful, but they send me for some English lessons, in Berlin, while I was still there, and maybe they had taken some lessons, but I know they had these books, which I have to this day, I took it from my mother's house, she took it with her when we left, and it's called towsenwater English, and it's got like little pamphlets in a holder, and it's like, you know, when you go to another country, those simple phrases, and maybe they -- but I can't imagine that they just bought them, and were self taught, they probably took some lessons, I don't know why.

Q: Would you say that your parents, either one or both, were very politically interested, or involved?

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A: I don't think so. Certainly not my mother. And I don't think my father was either. I think my father was interested, you know, as far as the newspaper and radio is concerned, but not politically involved, but interested in what was going on, had to be. [inaudible]

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is tape number one, side B, of an interview with Anita Sockol. I was wondering if you would tell me more about your vacations with your family, also perhaps your visits to camp, as a young child.

A: Those were nice memories. I remember going to a resort called Shpindlermueller, which is in Czechoslovakia, with my parents, and I -- and I liked that very much, and I think I had kids to play with there, and beautiful scenery, and they also sent me to some camp, I don't reme -- maybe it was in -- in the Hartz, A -- H-a-r-t-z, or z, I'm not even su -- it's some kind of mountain range, I'm not sure where it was, but it was a children's camp. And I remember one time, this was a fond memory of my father and myself, which was that one winter afternoon or something, I came into my parent's bedroom, and they had a surprise for me, and what was the surprise? That my fa-father was taking me to -- with th -- just he and I were going away in the winter, to a -- he was going to go skiing or something, and he was leaving me at a camp. They had winter camps, because in Germany, vacations are different than here. We didn't have a summer vacation from, you know, all of June, July and August. They were shorter, but the winter vacations were longer, so you had a winter camp. I don't know how much I enjoyed that camp, while learning how to ski, not so much, but I was thrilled to go away with him, and I remember an incident, we were very cold, we got off a train or something, on the way to this camp, and we were on a -- like a toboggan with some guy, you know, going through the snow, and it was -- it

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was great, and I was freezing, and he got some brandy or something, and he gave me a little sip of this to warm me up, and it was just like -- it was thrilling, that's how I remem -- remember it. And then, I guess, eventually he came and picked me up, and maybe it was a week or something, it's -- I -- I don't know how long. A week, 10 days, in this children's camp, in the snow, in the winter. But it was -- I just felt very privileged to be alone with my father.

Q: Do you have an idea of how old you were at that point?

A: I would say about eight, I imagine. Didn't seem to have anything to do with Nazis, or with something that you could do, and all these things were -- were possible, you know, a -- it's -- I -- I -- I imagine I'm -- would have been that age, I don't think they would have sent me away much younger than that, though it couldn't have been too much older, because by 10 -- by 10 years old, we were leaving.

Q: Did you know of any of the economic hard times in the early 30's, taking place in Berlin and Germany?

A: Yes. You mean the -- just the economic hard time -- my father -- they were -- in the 20's if -- from what I remember my father saying, of course, I didn't really know it was -- but he used to talk about them all the time. He'd always tell -- he said, you don't know, he said, what in -- oh, maybe he told it to us -- told it to me here, when I was a youngster, that you have no idea what real inflation is like. He said, "We had baskets full of money," and I would picture this. And he really meant it literally, like a large basket full of money, that was like toilet paper, it was like devalued maybe, you know, monthly, or whatever. And it took like a -- a shopping bag full to buy a loaf of bread, he says, "That's what real inflation was like," that the money was worth -- and he s -- and when I say that some sandwich or something was a little skimpy, he said -- he would always say, "You don't know what it was like. When I was a boy, we would get a slice of

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bread, with butter on it, and there would be a like a smoked piece of salami, or something, and one thin slice, and we'd move it around for the flavor, from one end to the other." Those were the little things, I remember he'd tell me these things. But this was like in general, I'd -- I did not experience any poverty, and that was really, I guess, before. But of course, that -- that period of time really led to Hitler, we all know that.

Q: So it seems that while your father was still working, your family's financial situation was stable?

A: Seems that way to me. It seems to me that in that respect, that my father definitely was -- not only seems, but you know, I'm -- I'm here to tell the story. We'll always be grateful to him that he was very farsighted. As I've said before, he was sort of secretive about money and this and that, but it seems to me that he must have been kind of sophisticated about money and -- and maybe had some money in -- in Holland, or maybe in America, or -- I don't know ho-how that was done, it was never told to me, even later on, when I used to ask, but in some way, that we could manage to be self sufficient, and get out without another person really vouching for us. It's -- You know, it was no such thing as welfare, nor would we have dreamt of such a thing, but -- to get into the country, but we were very, very, very lucky, because as I read and see things at Ellis Island, reading history and how a few, you know, percentage-wise, how few Jews really were able to get out and come here, and be accepted in the United States the way we were, and I read that it was -- I don't want to minimize the number, I forget, was it total 200,000 or something? It was a very small number. Or maybe less, I don't know what that fi -- correct figure was, but I feel very, very, very fortunate and that [indecipherable] in to this history in words that I can't even express. As I get older, I think about it more and more.

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Q: Were you aware, as a growing child, of the changes once the Nazis came to power? So there's 1933, of course, as a pivotal point in time, when Hitler comes to power, and then, just to go forward for a moment, I know that you remained with your family in Berlin, until 1938. So, during that five year period, approximately, what would you say you noticed, if anything, as changing, either for your own freedoms, your parents freedoms, for other Jews. What other changes -- you know, did you notice?

A: Well, I guess I noticed I -- as I said that, it was almost you know, that when you see in a movie, nowadays with that green smoke, you know, when they tried to make something like the creeping crud, you know, it's something that you just felt, not to make waves, to -- don't draw attention to yourself. You see the Nazis walking around. The -- Then there was the issue about -- that I knew that my favorite, Lotte, had to leave, and no more maids. But as I said, my parents were secretive, trying to keep that from me, I th -- and my mother became very, very nervous and depressed, and I think she had what we would really call, in layman's terms, a nervous breakdown, before -- she did not want to leave Berlin. She really didn't want to leave, and then she -- there was a period there when my father left -- he left for Holland, because that was -- I guess it was beginning of '38. I don't know how long he was gone, when he had to leave his business. I don't think he sold it, he split up with his partner, he had a partner. Plachte and Solomon was the name of the firm, and could no longer do business, and he left for Holland. And my mother sent me to some -- I was on the outskirts of Berlin, at some friends of her's home, with other girls in some room, and I -- I lived there for awhile. Oh, and right before that, I had my appendix taken out, and to this day, I don't know if it was really necessary, or if I -- it was one of those hysterical things, that I drew attention to myself, that I said I needed it, I -- that I had pain. I -- I don't know. But I did have it taken out, and I had to -- in those days you stayed

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in the hospital for a week, you know, with the sandbags on the -- on the incision. And then I went to those -- this house, somebody else's apartment, it was sort of out in the suburbs of Berlin, while my mother, I guess, did something or other with the apartment, but I had to be away, and -- and then eventually, she and I left to go to join my father, hopefully, but --

Q: Did you hear anything about things like the boycott in 1933, maybe later, since you were so young in 1933. Did you hear anything about the boycott against Jewish businesses in 1933, while you were in Germany?

A: In 1933, I was only six years old. I'm just thinking back. I -- Not per se, and of course they didn't -- in -- in Berlin, I -- I have the impression, maybe incorrectly, but I think that things in a quote unquote, sophisticated urban center like Berlin, that things came more slowly to Berlin, as far as, you know, real trouble and prejudice, it -- it came more slowly than in the little towns in -- in Bavaria, and other little places, where people emigrated much sooner, those that did, and felt it more. I think so. So, I -- I'm not sure, but at the same time, my -- I would hear my father talking with my -- it -- it -- it's -- it's a ch -- a child -- from a child's impression of -- that he was working on something, trying -- you know, leaving. This was not done overnight, I'm sure. One da -- you know, I -- I -- we left just like that, but I'm sure this was planned in some way, and secretively. And the children in the school, in the classes, they would just sort of disappear. One would -- You know, this -- it wasn't something that was talked about. They were just, those that could, left, and I think it was understood in the school, you know, one day would be one, one way would be another, and then you found out they went to Argentina, or this one went to Shanghai or wherever, Australia. Or maybe I found that out afterwards, I don't -- I'm not sure myself.

Q: Did you ever encounter any Hitler youth?

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A: Yes, I do remember them, and I wanted -- funny little things that come to your mind, I wanted long hair. I wanted my hair in braids, just like all those ger -- little German girls, and my mother wouldn't let me, because the Hitler youth girls had their hair in -- in braids, and what they called uffenshawkern, which means monkey swings, which is if you take a braid, long braid, and then you make it -- you double it and make a loop, and then they had bows, you know, and kind of cute, and I admired it, but she would never let me have my hair long, which bothered me, and I did see a lot of Hitler youth, young boys and girls. I remember their outfits with the -- with the kerchief and a leather knot, sort of like boy scouts, and yet not like boy scouts, oh yes.

Q: Do you remember asking about the Hitler youth, and -- and who were they, and what they did? Did you remember any discussions with friends or family?

A: Now that you mention it -- you have such interesting questions, but I -- I think I did. But, I think I was told again, in -- in that secret way, like -- like you know, somebody say, it's not for you, don't ask, don't -- li -- it was something bad, but I don't think they went into detail, I don't think. Don't remember any specific answers.

Q: Although, what you were just describing about the braids, and that you wanted braids --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- like that, do you think that you -- do you think that your mother actually told you, you can't have these braids because they are Hitler you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- I mean, did she connect the braids with Hitler youth?

A: Yes, I think she did, I think she did, and she had my hair shingled in the back, just the way I always hated it.

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Q: So as you were growing a little bit older as a child, were you aware of any official growing restrictions on Jew's freedoms? The Nuremberg laws in '35, and any other restrictions? I realize that you were at a Jewish school, but of course some -- some people were not allowed to go to swimming pools, you know, certain things that may have affected you if you were not, perhaps, in a Jewish school.

A: I think they ch -- my parents must have tried to circumvent that, you know, that if you couldn't go to a pool, then we went out to Vunzi, or -- or for some -- there were a lot of lakes and -- and things, outside of Berlin. It's a huge city, you know, and it's surroundings. Remember all these outings, and going to rowboats and stuff with my father, and I have pictures of myself in -- name comes to mind, and that -- one of the pictures that I just gave you, in a place called Pinz, but that was a resort, yeah, you know in bay -- I don't have the f -- I -- except for those, what happened later on with the yellow benches, in -- in that -- by Rushanplatz, and it was not safe to play there any more, and that you had to pay to sit down, or something, that somehow was, for my mother, you know, i-it was like the end, like something was really happening, but they did shield me from it.

Q: Can you describe more what you remember from that time period, with respect to the benches?

A: Ah, it's -- this is before you had to wear a star, that happened later, but the benches -- and there were benches in the park that were painted yellow, for Jews to sit on, and it was like, you know, when, from out of nowhere, you know, now in retrospect it may not seem so terrible, but if you imagine it, you know, it was like a noose tightening, it just seemed incredible, you know, and -- and who is going to sit on those benches? And I -- I do remember that, and that must have been shortly -- I'm sure there were other things happening at the time, oth-other restrictions, but I

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don't remember what they were. I ju -- I just can't think of it, but it -- it just felt very uncomfortable, you know, every day. And my cousins, I didn't see them -- my cousin, rather, just one, because my other cousins lived elsewhere, lived in different cities, Kreenesbergen. But the one that I mentioned, my father's brother's -- the Plachtes, she had problems in her school, too, but I don't remember what they really were.

Q: Do you remember sitting on one of those benches yourself?

A: No. I think that m-my -- my mother didn't allow it, we wouldn't do it.

Q: And was there a fee associated with those who would sit on those benches?

A: I don't think so, no.

Q: You told me a little bit about friends that you remember, and I'm wondering, as you were getting a little bit older now, and before you left Berlin, if you remember any other friendships from that time period, or maybe you've already told me of the friends you remember the most, but from your sort of seven year old, eight year old, nine year old period.

A: The people that I remember were mainly in that class, they were all girls, because it was -- I guess it was all girl's classes, boys must have been in a different class, and if I had that picture that I have of -- several picture -- I'd -- I don't think they're here, I think I have them at home, I can name those girls quite well. And what -- what did you ask me, about --

Q: Just wondering if there were any other friend-friendships that you remember from this time frame, of being around seven year old, you know, seven, eight, nine years old in Berlin, or maybe you already covered that before, when I asked about friends before.

A: Well, you know, I gave the Holocaust Museum my autograph album, and in there you can see what they wrote, you know, and in those days it was not done like here, it was really something. When you gave somebody an autograph album, they took it home, they wrote very carefully,

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they drew little pictures, or -- or put on decals, and as you can see, it's really quite interesting, and they didn't take it lightly, not scribbled in, as you can see the contrast, you'll see fa -- I have some from junior high school in New York, and you just scribbled whatever. I wish you -- I wish you luck, I wish you that, da-da da-da, and one 15, and just went on, you know, from public school to junior high school. No gus -- A-And you could -- Some of them sort of wished me well, and when you read the poems in German, you realize that they were -- it was sort of like the end of something, like they were -- we were going to part, you say, well, we're just little girls, it wasn't like we were going on to high school, or something. It was like as if we were going to part.

Q: What's the first time you remember your parents talking to you about the possibility of leaving your home, leaving Berlin?

A: Again, an interesting question. I really don't remember, yi -- they were, again, not the kind of parents that would discuss anything with me, and I just -- and I never really questioned it, even in my -- until my young adulthood. You know, they were what they were, and I had to do what they said, and I was not -- my opinion was not considered, or -- it was like a fait accompli. And, but I think by the time I went where my mother send me, to that home that seems so blurry in my mind, with these other girls who lived there, I know somebody a -- I guess she was unraveling her apartment situation, or selling furniture, or -- I don't know what she was doing while I was away in the suburbs. That's when I realized -- and also at -- at the same time, I was recovering from that appendix surgery, which was quite something the way they -- old-fashioned way that they did it in those days. That's when I realized that things were really changing, that's what I seem to remember. And then she came and got me, but I don't remember any real discussions that we were -- nor did -- let me say at this point, that they never expected to go anywhere but to

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Holland. That was the end of the journey, hopefully that we were going to get there, cause that's where my father was, they had no intention of going to America, or anywhere else. That seemed far away enough, which sounds crazy today, but not then.

Q: I'm wondering as you grew up in Berlin, did you ever get in trouble with your parents?

A: I'm sure that I did. I'm sure that I did, yeah. It didn't take much, my father had quite a temper, and my mother would often say, "Ludwich dus kins," [indecipherable], cause he had quite a temper and he would smack me and whatnot, yeah, and my mother would try to shield -- shield me from him, you know, cause he was -- didn't -- he had a short fuse. He was a good man, but not cut out for raising a very young child. He was already very set in his ways, you know, and very German. I had a parak -- I was very lonely that I -- I w -- I said that before, but I wanted a sister, or a brother, or a dog, or a cat, in that order. And I used to have recurring -- recurrent dreams about that, very, very often, and I felt very -- I really wanted that desperately, one -- when I never got it -- didn't get any of them. I never got a pet either, except for a parakeet, which thrilled me, and then one day he -- we let him out of the cage, and I don't know what was wrong with this bird, I thought he flew around the room, but he s -- flew into the walls until he dropped dead, and I -- it was very traumatic for me, it really was, cause that little parakeet -- and that was the end of my pets.

Q: Did you ever ask your mother or father for a sibling?

A: Yes, yes, I did. But my mother always told me, I don't know if she told me this then -- no, probably not, I was too young, but later, that, she said, "Well, in Hitler time this is -- it was fashionable, everybody -- everybody just had one child, cause you never knew what was going to happen." That's wh -- I guess she told me that later on. And then I found out much later on, which made me very angry, that she'd had an abortion after me, and she knew it was a -- a male

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child, and -- but by that time, I didn't care, you know, any more. Maybe I was married by then, I don't know. But she always used to tell me -- and indeed, a lot of the kids that I knew, they were single ch-children. Not all, but a lot.

Q: Do you have recollection of the 1936 Olympics?

A: Yes, I do. I do remember that. I remember the hoopla, and I am tempted to say I saw it on television, but of course that wasn't true. But I do remember it, now how do I remember it? I don't know, but I do remember it, and I remember getting one of those Olympic pins. I was very proud of that, you know, with the Olympic circles, and -- and I -- I remember it, maybe it was in the newspaper or magazines. Surely it was, it must have been a very big thing in Berlin. And I even seem to remember some -- I don't know, was it then or was it later, it's hard -- something about, you know, what turned out to be Jesse Owens and Hitler's disappointment that he won, you know, a bl -- a Black man, cause I remember that you rarely saw one, I -- there were, once in a blue moon, on the street in Berlin, you would see a -- a Black person, and you'd say, "Ah, a nigger." It was like seeing somebody with two heads, it was just -- you just didn't see that. But I do remember the Olympics and the -- everything that -- the excitement that it was -- you know, that involved in it, probably banners, and who knows what. I can't say I went there, but I do remember it.

Q: So most of your recollections would be positive, if you --

A: Yes.

Q: -- for instance, didn't know about what may have been happening with Jewish athletes, with African-American athletes, you had mostly positive associations of the Olympics at that time, right?

A: I think so, yeah, I think so.

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Q: Did you know anything about the anschluss in March of ’38, which I realize is very soon to when you would up leaving Berlin, correct? Did you leave in April of ’38?

A: Yes.

Q: From Berlin?

A: Left in April of ’38, for Holland. Was the anschluss at that point, or was it after?

Q: March of ’38.

A: March of ’38. Yeah, I -- I do remember that things got really, really bad, you know, that like a no-noose tightening, and that we were -- we had to go, and that it seemed like the right thing to do, you know, as far as my mother was concerned, or whatever was happening there. And her speaking to her brother, something about her brother [indecipherable] and his wife. I didn’t see them very much. Now that I thi -- I don’t even know where they lived, did they live in Berlin? Heinrich Schindler, and my little cousin Margit. I never even mentioned her til now. Also one child, and my c -- the other cousin, one child. And my Aunt Kate, one child, my cousin Ernest, who died recently in -- in Manchester, England. And who else? My cousin in Israel, one child, MaryAnn from my mother’s sister Ann -- Anna. There were -- In other words, there were three girls and one boy. Heinrich, my mother Margaret, her sister Kate, who went to Theresienstadt. Her sister Anna, who managed to go to Palestine. And each one of them had one child, so maybe that’s -- I accepted this one child situation maybe because of them, but where did Margit live? I know that -- that they didn’t make it, and I am going to look it up, either today, or soon, what happened to them. But my mother was concerned about him, was he ill, he had a nervous breakdown or something, all at that time when we were leaving. But you know, I was 10, and they didn’t talk to me, so that’s why it’s difficult, besides the memory, of course. But they really didn’t discuss these things with me.

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Q: Did you have any favorite hobbies or activities as a child in Berlin?

A: Well, I loved going to the movies, which of course wasn't very often, but love it, I love it to this day. And I was absolutely crazy about Shirley Temple. She seemed to personify everything glamorous, and -- you know, the way people felt about America and Hollywood, and I had, not a Shirley Temple doll, but I got those -- I guess they were all made for -- for export, like a paper dolls, and then you cut them out, and put the clothes on -- on the -- and I played with it for hours. And then of course, what I had, the way ba -- the way kids here have baseball cards, this was my prize possession, they were actual black and white photographs of Shirley Temple in these different movies that she was in, which came in sets like baseball cards, and I bought them, and I have a -- and I had a photograph album of her, and also I collected another -- it was a young Austrian movie star, her name was Trowdel Stark. And I have this album, I took it with me, I have it to this day, and I probably -- probably nobody else would have it. I should write Shirley Temple Black and tell her about her album. And once in awhile, when I see these movies on TV, for instance when she's wearing a -- when she was seven or eight, whatever, and wearing a satin pajama with appliqued bunnies on it, and I'll look at her in this scene, I say, "Oh, my God, I've seen this picture, this photograph of her in that particular outfit so many times, leafing through my album. And you're not getting that album.

Q: Did your family identify as being German as well as Jewish?

A: I would say so, yes, I would say so. It didn't seem at the time that there was anything wrong with it. My father fought in World War One. He fought in the Austrian army, as a matter of fact.

End of Tape One, Side B

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Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is tape number two, side A, of an interview with Anita Sockol. Would you continue telling me about your family identifying as Germans?

A: Well, I -- I really, you know, it's -- I'm sort of embarrassed to talk about it, because it isn't very nice, but it's the truth, it's the way mo -- many Germans felt. I know I have this feeling, from my father especially, that he -- you could almost say it's almost like an anti-Semitic feeling about Jews from eastern Europe, you know, with payess, and with, you know, that kind of clothing, and all the other accoutrements, I had that feeling, carrying it over to America, that he felt like he was a different kind of Jew, very secular. And didn't really -- And s-spoke no Yiddish, I don't think they were brought up with that. We ate -- my mother's cooking was not particularly wonderful, not everybody's mother is a good cook, or a great housekeeper. But when we came here, and I learned, you know, about all these Jewish dishes, I was not used to them because I never grew -- I never grew up with them -- with these things from eastern Europe like latkas and chopped liver and kasha varnishkas, and -- and -- or anything that was -- you know, that people make, that when they're kosher, it was very strange to me. And so I would say that that -- maybe that's also why I don't remember any -- I don't remember any seders, per se, in my house. When we went to seders, they were in New York, in the early days, people that they met. Now, we were refugees, and we were at other people's houses, but it's not something that we had. And yet, we did go to synagogue somewhere. I -- It's not clear. I think that's something I would remember.

Q: Did your family observe Shabbat?

A: No, definitely not.

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Q: Will you tell me when you learned that your father had to stop working, and what you learned about that at the time?

A: He -- He could no longer run his business, you know, it -- he was self-employed, and I remember something about his breaking up with his partner, maybe the partner was leaving, or maybe he s -- was still able to buy him out, or sell it, or leave it. It's not clear, but I know that he had to leave that business, and I don't know if, in 1938, he c -- he could sell the business for any kind of -- you know, that had any value, or he just had to walk away from it. This, again, was not something that they told me. And same with the apartment, you know, I don't remember. No one ever came to look at it, or to rent it, or you know, and that we would leave the way you would normally do now, if -- it wasn't that kind of leaving. I think we just left it, that's what people did. And my mother had a nervous breakdown over her new dining room set, I remember that she did not want to leave her dining room set behind. We just took some things, you know, that were -- that seemed -- that's how I ended up with these pictures that I have in my autograph album, and my Shirley Temple album, cause those little things were important to me. But, we did not move with -- with furniture, no.

Q: Do you remember the process of packing?

A: No. I think that's when I was in this other home, don't remember the process of packing, and I was just thinking about it before you asked me, but you know, they're perfectly logical questions, but for some reason, I don't remember any of that.

Q: I read from your telephone interview summary, something about you seeing an image of Hitler in, I believe your superintendent, the building superintendent's home. Can you tell me about that incident?

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A: Yes, I do remember that, cause that was very scary to me. For some reason, I used to go to -- I was friendly with the superintendent of the building -- with the wife of the superintendent, I don't remember him at all, but I do remember her, and I remember her name. She was a -- I guess a middle aged woman, with grown sons. I think she had three children. She must have had a younger one that I played with, and for some reason, often after school, my mother wasn't home, I would ring her bell, and I would have some cookies and milk, or some refreshment, and she was very nice to me. And one day, everything changed. I walked into her living room, and I se -- now I saw a huge picture of Hitler over her couch in her living room, and her older boys were in SS uniforms, and I knew what that meant, they were in black uniforms, and they were very tall. Course I was just a little kid, I mean they seemed like, you know, really men, scary young men in that dreaded SS uniform. And then my mother told me I can't go there any more, and it impressed me somehow. I was really frightened.

Q: What was her name?

A: Mrs. Tetslaff. Yeah, strange how you remember that.

Q: Do you remember her being mean to you?

A: No, but -- not mean, but her attitude changed. Colder.

Q: Do you remember saying goodbye to any of your friends before you left Berlin? Did you have that opportunity to do so?

A: Only those girls in that home. Was there any of my f -- any of my close friends there? I don't know who those girls were, sleeping in a room with three or four girls, I don't -- I just -- it's all so weird. And I felt very strange, I knew that something was very wrong, and -- and about to change, but really I -- I do remember saying goodbye to the Lerventhals, Hilda Lerventhal in some way, or maybe they left first, I don't know. I-It's a feeling that is hard to explain, because

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you don't -- it's all in retrospect, and you -- just things were changing, but it's -- it's not like in the movies, you know, that you say goodbye, and you hug each other, and -- because nobody really knew what was going to happen next, or where they were really going, or for how long, cause you didn't know what was going to happen.

Q: So, when did you leave Berlin for the outskirts, where you were staying in this home? When was that, and how long do you think you were there? What -- What are the memories that you have of being there?

A: I remember being there, I would say about a month, something like that. And also I remember that that appendix surgery was -- it was not a good time, it was er -- already dangerous for me to ha -- you know, have a doctor operate on me. My mother was not happy with this whole thing, and I would say it all must have been at the beginning of 1938, somewhere between the beginning of 1938, and then April, I think we left in April of 1938. Can really tell -- I have given you -- I just thought of it, pictures I -- I -- actually, you have the actual passports, and you could check in the passport when that really was, if my memory is incorrect by the dates that they put in there. And of course that was the other thing about the passports, that we had a s -- a statenloss passports, stateless, no more German. So there was another thing, I do remember my mother telling me, and I also have my own passport. One day I will find it in my apartment, and when I do, I will give it to the Holocaust Museum, but I've looked high and low, I can't find it. But you have several, you have my father's and one with a German passport, and one with the stateless. And I think my mother's as well, if I'm not mistaken.

Q: So, by the time you left your home in Berlin, your father had already left for Holland. And what did you know about your father at this -- at this point in time?

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A: Nothing really, that we were going on this -- we're going to meet him in Holland, and I have a feeling like it was going to be, once we got there, like it was going to be pleasant. We were going to a resort that was ou -- on the outskirts of The Hague, called Tre-Treverningen. That's how the Dutch pronounce it, I believe. And it was a -- a beach resort that was sort of -- Treverningen to The Hague, is like Atlantic City is to Philadelphia. You know, nearby. And it had a pier, like an amusement pier, and a big beach, and we were living in a boarding -- we're going to -- well, that's when I got there, but the trip going, was -- was dangerous, that I do remember. Do you want me to tell you about that?

Q: Sure, and when -- when was that? So you met up with your mother for that?

A: That was -- wi -- yeah. I met up with my mother for that. I guess I -- she took me back to Berlin, or you know, we left, you know, by train, and I guess we didn't have very much with us. What could it have been? I mean, suitcases, can't carry more. And we're in the train, and she was very nervous about the border, and she told me not to talk, not to say anything, bec -- cause you know how they come in at a border, first you -- the Germans come in, and then the other country, in this case it was Dutch. And we were in a town called Bedtime first, and these people sort of hid us. We were there one or two nights. And it was a border town, and we stayed in -- in an attic, and we did not come down for meals or anything. They were very nice, I guess it was in Germany, and they -- they hid us, even in those days. And then -- I don't know quite why -- why we couldn't go directly to Berlin -- to Holland, but we didn't. And then we made a connecting train on another day, and that's when these -- these German Nazis came in. There was a conductor, German, you know, regular conductor, but then the Nazis came in, looking at your passport, or officers of some sort, and my mother said, "Don't say anything." And I, of course -- she se -- he said, "How old are you?" And I said, "I'm -- I'm -- I'm 10, but my mother said I

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should say I'm nine," or something like that. And my mother thought she would die, she was ready to kill me, cause any discrepancy could, you know, if -- I don't know why I did that, or -- it was one way or the other, but it -- they let it slide, but I remember that, and I remember how I felt inside, that I knew I made a big mistake, but that's kids. And then we did get there, and then my father met us. Where we were, I don't know. Maybe went directly to that town, to -- or maybe it was in The Hague, and then got to it -- but we stayed in a boarding house until -- through the summer -- spring and summer of 1938, til we left for New York, and --

Q: The boarding house was in this resort?

A: Yes. It was like i-in a house, you know in a -- a boarding house. The reason I say boarding house is what I remember is that we had these communal meals, and as a matter o -- there was an actor at -- there, at that boarding house, at -- I didn't know it then, but I since then saw him the -- he was in many, many American musicals. His name was S.Z. Sakall, S-a-k-a-l-l, or something, and he was called Cuddles in a lot of movies. He was in movies, you know, in musicals with Betty Grable, and Don Ameche and played a -- the roly-poly, good-natured funny role in lots of movies, but he was emigrating, and we had these communal meals, you know, like in a boarding house, which I've never had before.

Q: Did you get the impression that other people there besides him were also planning to leave, planning to emigrate from there? Was this a place for people to gather who were trying to emigrate?

A: I didn't know. I didn't really know what we were doing, again the secretiveness, the secrecy, I should say, until -- oh, I must say an asi -- a footnote, I saw -- everybody has bicycles in Holland, you know, and we saw the queen, Queen Wilhelmina and her daughter, riding around on her bicycle, and -- very, very casual, not like England. One day, my father said that he was going to

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Rotterdam, to see if he'd get tickets to come to -- to go to New York, that he -- and the reason, I guess by that time they told me that much, that he could not -- he was under the impression that he could work there, or start a business, or something, but he could not. It wasn't permitted. So, it would have been just a question of time until his money would run out, so he went to Rotterdam, he said he was going to Rotterdam to see if we get tickets to go to New York, that's how it seemed. And if we could, we would, and if not, not. It seemed so casual, like if we can get theater tickets we'd go, and if we can't, we can't. And he came back a day or two later, and he had tickets to -- on -- on a ship called the Startendam, and we went. And when I'd ask him about this, you know, years later my daughters would always urge me, "Talk to Papa, talk to Papa. Ask him how this happened." But he never wanted to talk about it, you know, he'd always say, "Ach," you know, "stop, I don't want to," -- you know, he'd gesture with his hand, and he al -- he'd say, "Ach, you think it was easy? Ah, it wasn't easy." So I presume what he meant by that was bribes. What else could it have been, you know? But he must have had the foresight to have money or whatever, cause that's the only way you got anywhere in those days.

Q: Was there any problem with you having the stateless passports, you and your parents, at this point?

A: No, I guess they were good for something, in -- at that time, y-you have to remember, it changed like monthly, or less. You know, there were always new -- I'm sure they would have been worthless. I -- I mean in -- that was September. We arrived here in New York, in September -- on September 18th, 1938, and the Crystal Night was not even two months later. So, the timing was very, very fortuitous. And we were hearing things, we were hearing things, you know, reading things about, I guess the -- I -- I -- I -- well, not the anschluss, but Hitler going into the other countries, or maybe it was right after, because my father, very soon after we got here, the

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first thing that he did was to get -- send tickets to my Uncle Martin, and his wife and my cousin Ilsa, the ones in Berlin, for him to ge -- to -- to emigrate to Shanghai. For some reason or other, that was easier. Couldn't get her to the United States, but that was possible, but they didn't use them, they didn't use them. And I have found out since, here at the museum, that unfortunately they were all killed in Auschwitz, the three of them. I sa -- I looked it up, and it was very -- it was very sad, and to -- to actually see it, you know, on paper. I never knew.

Q: What was the trip like to the United States?

A: The trip, the way I remember it, was quite pleasant. I mean, it was a -- I guess a Dutch ship, and it was, you know, just on the cusp of something, they were -- it was a real -- it was a -- it -- it was like going on shi -- on a ship. It was not a refugee ship, we were going second class, which I realized not long a -- not long ago, when I went to Ellis Island, and I was listening with the headset to Tom Brokaw, I found out why I never went to Ellis Island, because we were -- I never knew, we just got off the ship when we got here, and cousins, you know, second cousins, whatever, were waiting for us here. But the reason was, if you weren't in third class, you didn't have to go to Ellis Island. That's what he said, and -- but it was quite pleasant. I remember meeting this American family, with their children, who had gone to Europe on vacation, cause it was, you know, early September, summer vacation with their children, and they befriended me because the mother, the father, they wanted their children to meet a little -- a real little German girl. And I remember they took me into the lounge of the ship, for a -- in-into the cocktail lounge in the afternoon, for a drink. And this drink turned out to be som -- it was horrible, and it turned out to be Coca-Cola, which was something that I had never -- i-it's a very, very strange flavor, if you've never ever had it, and I don't like it to this day. But -- And then I -- My mother bought me -- I had it til not so long ago, a little sailor doll from that ship, with a -- with a little sailor hat,

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the way they had them, you know, a little white, like a little brechen is it? And the little black ribbon around it, with the name of the ship, and it was like a little stuffed doll, with velvet, and I lu -- I wanted it desperately, I wanted this doll, and they did get it for me, and I had it for years and years and years, you know, little sailor from -- as a souvenir. I do not ha -- remember this as an unpleasant sh -- sh -- it wa -- it was like going -- sort of like on some kind of vacation. I mean, I didn't know the difference, I'd never been on a ship before, maybe it was pretty -- I wouldn't say primitive, but maybe Spartan, but it -- it seemed fine to me.

Q: Did you know that you were moving to another country at that point?

A: I must have, but I -- it's -- for some reason, it has like no -- no memory, or no great meaning. I -- I -- I -- I just -- of course I must have known, I mean, we were going to -- but it had no -- I didn't know what -- what to expect.

Q: What do you remember first seeing?

A: What I -- First seeing, I remember getting -- I don't really recall s -- being o -- seeing the Statue of Liberty, like in the movies, I guess it's all mixed up with a million documentaries that I've seen. But I do remember the pier, getting off the ship, and I guess they did have people coming onto the ship, you know, it wasn't such -- you didn't just get off. People who -- you know, health examiners, or whatever, you know, and -- were looking at your papers, it's a whole process, and then eventually getting off on this huge pier in New York, and then getting into these relatives' car. These relatives were my mother's relatives, and -- who were -- the -- the woman was the sister of Arthur Fiedler, the conductor of the Boston Pops, which didn't mean anything to me at the time. And I remember get -- driving from the pier to this -- wherever we stayed in that first apartment that they rented for us -- probably did, and I said something ab -- you know, I said, "Oh, these skyscrapers, they're not so tall," or something like that, I said,

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having expected -- “They don’t seem like anything so big.” I remember saying something like that.

Q: In German?

A: In German, of course, I didn’t speak a word of English, not a word. It was always just done.

Q: Can you tell me the date on which you arrived to the United States?

A: Yes, that was a day after my birthday, it was September 18th, 1938, I do remember that very well.

Q: How old did you turn that year?

A: 11 on that day.

Q: Do you remember your birthday on the ship?

A: That must be when I got the sailor doll, I think, as a present. Yeah, my birthday was always you know, to me, a big deal. After all, I was an only child, and children like their birthdays, so I think that probably celebrated it in some manner on the ship.

Q: What do you remember about starting school in the United States, in New York City? Correct?

A: Mm, yes, I do remember -- I remember the s -- the school very well. Eventually, after a few years, we moved across the street from that school, but at -- the first apartment was, I remember the address, 650 West 172nd Street. That was off between Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue, and the public school, PS 173 was on the corner of Fort Washington Avenue and 173rd Street, so I just had to walk dow -- you know, two blocks, one down and one across. I remember an interview, vaguely. My father taking me to school, and they telling me, whoever, maybe it was the principal, that -- what grade they were putting me into. They put me into four A. In those days the semesters were split up, A and B, ha-half a year, you know, not like fourth grade, A and

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B. So it was the beginning of the f-fourth year, four A, which was five sem -- five semesters less than what I should have been in, two and a half years. And they said that when I would learn English, that it would be sort of automatic that I would catch up with myself, which was not true. And I remember feeling very -- feeling very bad about that, you know, w-with -- with these young kids. Again, it's -- it's a filmy kind of dreamy memory, seeing myself in that class, but I was not happy to be with children that were that much younger, and I didn't speak any English, and also, I don't remember other children that I was -- could be friends with, or drawn to, because there were other little German girls or boys in the class. It was just me. So I guess they came later, or at other times. And eventually I did become a very good student, and it was only because of that that I skipped a lot of grades, and I wen -- went to summer school somewhere in -- you know, before finishing public school, that I made up at least a year or two, and then I -- then in junior high school, I was put in what they called RA, it was called rapid advance classes, you know, for kids who were doing well, and made it two years out of three, or something like that. But in the end, after high school, graduating high school, I just a pi -- I came out just about right, so if I hadn't been, I'd be going to school til I was -- the end of my 18th year, I think. But school, I remember my f -- early on, I had to -- I came home with a poem, which I had to learn by heart. And my father, as I told you, was -- didn't have much patience, and I just couldn't get it into my head, I couldn't seem to grasp it, the engli -- an-and he smacked me, you know, for again not getting it right, and it turned out to be "The Star Spangled Banner," that's what that poem was. I didn't enjoy school ats -- at first, but the kids were -- I -- I guess they were all -- all right. I -- I don't remember, I don't remember them being particularly -- I felt isolated, but I don't remember being, you know, taunted, or -- particularly one way or another, particularly cruel, or -- but isolated. And early on, going to the -- as a school outing, going to the 1939

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World's Fair, that was very thrilling. I re -- I remember doing that, and enjoyable. And I think I only did it once after that, on my own with family or somebody else. But once I got the language, then -- and also I was becoming a teenager, I became a much happier child, and really sort of found myself, which wasn't easy with my parents and these circumstances, you know, little apartment and I was -- I felt -- I never had a room of my own, I slept in the living room. My parents never had a bedroom again, ever. The other room was -- was had always two rooms, and it was sort of like a -- with two couches in it, each -- they slept separately, sort of like a studio, like you sometimes get in a motel, L-shaped, one couch here, one couch there. In that apartment as well as the next apartment, as well as their last apartment, long after I was married. And I slept in the living room, I was -- this is sort of personal, has -- I don't know, much to do with anything on this subject, but I was always -- well, I guess sort of ashamed of the way we lived, and also, you know, I didn't -- the friends that I eventually made, their apartments seemed much nicer, and they had sisters and brothers. It was not all that happy at home, and my mother was working right from the beginning here. My father, on the other hand, wasn't. He -- I guess he came with a little too much money, that he didn't need to be forced into taking a job, or -- or getting -- or starting all over, or like most of their friends -- friend's husbands did. Some of them were doctors, and they started off, you know, the way they do, doing I don't know, working as -- I don't know, in -- in -- learning how to s -- you know, their English, and taking medical exam -- and much more difficult things they -- but my father never really did, and my mother -- my mother worked in the -- no, that came later. She worked in people's apartments, cleaning or something, it -- it -- I -- it's not such a happy childhood. And she was not happy with my father's being home, so she got up and did something, and eventually she worked in the garment center in New York, which she liked. She liked being out on her own, and working.

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Q: Did your father ever go back to work, eventually?

A: Not in the way that I presume you mean. Never at a job where he had to be there nine to five, or answer to somebody. He did something with -- with fluorescent light bulbs, he sold them to -- to businesses or something, for their fixtures. It was never quite clear to me what he did. I think he mainly played with his stocks, and -- with his stocks.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is tape number two, side B, of an interview with Anita Sockol. If you'd like to continue telling me about your father, and his work in the New York area?

A: I think -- now that, often I think did come up, that he thought that he had enough money, and -- invested in stocks, that he could live on that, indefinitely, for the rest of his life. I don't think he -- he counted on -- what did we have, depression, inflation, whatever it was, that it turned out not to be so. I thought he -- He thought he could live better, or maybe they were just ve-very frugal people, but they always lived very simply, I think, sort of below their means. And my mother was really never -- never really adjusted to America. She always dreamt of her life in Berlin, and how it was. She was never really, really happy here. Never really perfected her English, neither did my father, even though my father read the paper, and -- with a dictionary next to him, looking up every word that he didn't know, he did that. But -- But n-neither one of them really became all that Americanized. They lived up in Washington Heights, we lived there all their lives, with the other so -- you know, so-called refugees. And they enjoyed that life, and everybody spoke German, and they had café and kuckin in each other's house, and -- and other -- you know, and that was the -- but the other people, who came with less, most of them lived a much better life. They went to Florida, and they went here, and did this and does that. I always

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had the feeling that my parents never really -- never really became Americanized, and allowed themselves to live a really full life. Always like -- it's something from that change of coming here in the way they did, I think.

Q: Was it a real change from how you lived in Berlin?

A: I would say so, yeah. That's i-it seems to me, even though I was a little kid, that it was a much -- I mean, my mother never had a cleaning lady. I mean, nor was the apartment all that f -- was she that fastidious. Didn't care about those things. No, it was always very modest, and the way we ate, and -- and what she bought, and -- and the dinn -- it was always sort of cheap, which is something I had to learn to get over.

Q: What language did you speak at home with your parents?

A: I guess German and English both, sort of mixed together. And then, of course, when I got older, o-other than the American friends that I had from the different schools, I also had f-friends, you know, at ca -- from wa -- one way or another, friends who also were emigr-emigra -- immigrants? And I knew that they spoke German, and we would -- used to -- we u -- whatever came to mind first, we'd sort of mix it up, because we knew that we understood each other. But now, I've sort of lost it, because I don't --

Q: Do yo -- Do you speak fluent -- fluently still?

A: I th -- I th -- Yo -- I could say I do, but I really don't, because when I'm -- been, on occasion with people who speak perfect German, and -- intellectually, there are lots of words that I don't know, and I guess never knew, because I left too young. Like when you read documents, you know, that you get, or from the [indecipherable] stuff, my prunci -- pronunciation is good, but a lot of words that I don't know, and the sentences are so endless, you know, when you read that stuff, I forgot what the beginning was when you get to the end.

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Q: Was it particularly challenging for you to learn English at that age, when you arrived to the United States? Do you remember special challenges, and how you went about it?

A: Another good question. Yeah, I was a little older than some, so it -- it was -- it was challenging, and I remember the penmanship, and the -- the script was something different, because -- never thought of that til just now, that the script in Germany that I learned, which was quite difficult, was different than the -- the way we write here. And -- But then they had penmanship classes, we all had to take penmanship. And it -- it took awhile. I think it -- it -- it wasn't all that easy, and how I learned it, I don't know. But my parents were not for education. It was a difficult -- they were difficult. I wanted to learn how to play the piano, for instance, desperately. There was a period in my life, you know, like a window of time, and finally I mean, I nagged so -- so much that my mother did give me piano lessons, but I had to practice, and I practiced for awhile in the -- in the piano teacher's house, which is ridiculous, I mean, how long can you keep that up? And I didn't, and then after awhile -- but I loved doing it, and I lu -- but then I -- I lost interest because they wouldn't let me. They were not, in that respect, not like Europeans, who are so much for education -- Jew -- I mean, European Jews. No, they fought me in college, and I just needed to learn a trade, something to -- to -- that I could make a living, or could support myself, if necessary, yeah.

Q: Were you helped at all by a refugee organization when you arrived?

A: We must have been. I remember the word HIAS, in what respect, I don't know. I know they exist today. We must have been, but -- and there was somebody who -- that my father knew here, some man who was not really a rela -- a f -- a relation, I -- but he -- who had to vouch for us, but didn't have to put up any money, or however that was in those days. You know, you had to be sure in those days, that you would not become a burden to the U. S. government, and that was

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never an issue, but we lived very simply, frugal, and it was really -- was still the -- toward the end of the depression. Wasn't really until World War Two that we got out of the depression. I remember penny candy, and eggs were a nickel a dozen, and you know, I ga -- I -- we -- we managed.

Q: As you were adjusting, do you remember noticing many cultural differences being in the United States, being in the schools, meeting friends?

A: I -- I -- I liked it, I know I liked it. I liked going to these other wa -- once I got acquainted enough with the cl-classmates to become friendly and be invited to their house, suf -- I liked doing that, and it somehow -- it was different. I liked the American way of doing things, it -- it seemed more casual, more lighthearted, more spur of the moment. People seemed generous with their milk and cookies, or candy, or whatever. I -- I -- It's just a feeling that I ha -- that I have, you know, not specifics. And I do remember going -- [indecipherable] certain people that were friends of mine. Carol Shiff, and somebody named Edith Pearlmudder, something. This is early on, you know, it must have been 1938 - '39 -- 1940. And some kids, you know, that -- but it -- it -- I began to really like it, that's what I remember. My parents, I don't know, but I liked it.

Q: Were most of the students in your school Jewish?

A: Good question. No, mixed. No, mixed. I mean, there were a lot of Jews living in Washington Heights, but they were mixed. I think there were a lot of Irish and Italian. No Blacks or Hispanic, that wasn't -- that wa -- they -- you know, that was not an -- they weren't there. But I -- I think it were -- they weren't just Jewish.

Q: And do you remember having friends who are not Jewish then, as you progress through your years in school?

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A: Yes, I do. I remember somebody named Barbara Krunendonk, and her father was a -- was a musician, and he played in that orchestra, was it Lawrence Welk, or some famous orchestra, that was famous at the time. I'm not sure it was Lawrence Welk. But somebody that -- that at the time was a very well known orchestra, and we were friends, and yeah, there were others. But there was a Y, a YMHA, where now is a Port Authority building, right at the George Washington Bridge, on the New York side of the George Washington Bridge, that became like my haunt. That's where we hung out, so to speak, you know. Cause after all, I was already almost a teenager, you know, after I learned the language, and met a lot of -- so tha -- there were -- that was definitely Jewish.

Q: Did you ever, yourself think, or did your parents ever think that you would return to Germany, or to Europe?

A: Hm. I never -- I never thought of it, you know. My mother, I don't know. I think she would have if she could have, but my father, no, he wouldn't -- wouldn't hear of it. He was perfectly happy here. And -- But she just never -- never got -- my mother was like a dreamer, you know, and she'd love opera, and she would buy herself records, and she loved, you know, travel, and she'd see a movie, and I'd say, "Why don't you go on a trip, instead of seeing a movie? Why don't you buy yourself a ticket to go to the opera, instead of listening to Mario Lanza," or whatever, on the record. But she didn't, as we say, fagin herself. Not that they couldn't have, but that's how they lived. She was like a [indecipherable] happy with her -- her record, scratchy record. You know, and -- and the furniture that she bought early on, I think she had it for the rest of her life, that when my mother died, I just liquidated that apartment with my daughters, in a day. I told the day care person, "Take what you want." There was just nothing. But she never -- never really settled in, or bought herself things, or buy herself a fur coat, or like her friends did,

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go a lot to have her nails done, or something. You know, it just wasn't -- not that she was an intellectual who -- su -- for some -- she felt like she wasn't worthy, I think, of doing these things for herself. Talk about it, but didn't do it.

Q: Did you feel safe in the United States?

A: Yes, I think I felt safe in the United States.

Q: And how long do you think it took for you to no longer feel so isolated after first arriving, and perhaps even to feel as if you were an American?

A: I think -- I think it took -- took a few years. I think it took until I began to go to junior high school. Now, I -- I said they put me into four A, but it didn't take until the end of six B, it wasn't two years, I skipped somewhere. I told you I skipped five times, but I don't know when all those five times were. One of them was in high school. So I would say it took -- I'd say at least a year and a half.

Q: And when did you receive your U.S. citizenship?

A: Ha -- I have those papers at home. I'm not sure, because first -- it -- it was twice. Once I became a citizen through my parents, cause I was too young to be a citizen on my own, and I forgot how many years it took, do you remember?

Q: I'm not sure, no.

A: I'm not sure. Was it five years, was it seven years? No, probably wasn't. I don't know how old I had to be, did I have to 21, or was it 18? But I had like two certi -- but I do have a certificate which I have at home. I don't -- I don't really remember, but I know it was a -- it was a thrill. I'm very proud of the certificate, and studied for the questions, and all that stuff, which were not difficult at the time, or maybe not for a kid who was learning history, wasn't difficult. I think they're much harder now.

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Q: So, as far as hearing news from abroad, from Germany, and from elsewhere.

A: Yeah.

Q: How much do you remember hearing during those years, especially as you became a teenager, the beginning of course, too, and then as you got older, and became a teenager, perhaps more aware of events anywhere, but how much did you really hear?

A: I think we -- like everybody else, we weren't really aware about the concentration camps, until much later. I don't really know it -- but we did know about, like you said earlier, about the aschluss, and then very soon after we came here, you know, what happened in Holland, and Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and you know, as -- and France, and what was happening, and then the concern about my -- the relatives, and where they were. And somehow then, my mother did find out -- and of course she was in touch with her sister in Palestine, and she knew -- she found out, I as -- surely that she must have been involved with those organizations, because how did she find out that my Aunt Kate was in Theresienstadt, survived Theresienstadt, and somehow came to the United States, and she was just thrilled to have her sister here, because she was very close to that sister, as a child. They were closer in age than anybody else, and they were just closer. But it wasn't to be for very long, because she died before I got married, and I got married in 1947, my first marriage, and she wasn't there. But I do remember her coming, and she was a tough bird, and I would -- used to be very angry at her, because she was another one of those, like my father would, in Germany, go back to Germany, always afraid I'd have too much -- too much pleasure, like a birthday party, and go to the movies all in one, and no, no, no, no, and she was of that same -- she was tough, she was very smart, and was, I think, quite a figure, an important person in Theresienstadt, you know, like a -- a leader within the circles, whatever they did there, and a Bridge player, and so on and so forth, and I think she even had a romance there,

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which I wrote in the -- one of those guest books that they have, when I was there last year. It was -- I -- I met that man, they both survived, even though she was married to somebody that -- you know, not a happy marriage, she managed to fall in love there, which is sort -- sort of, you know, as an adult, life goes on, even those things happen there. But anyway, when she came, she -- I would be angry with her for not -- for being str-strict, you know, and -- and sort of siding with my father on issues, whatever they were, things that I wanted to do. It was not -- not easy for me as a -- the upbringing of my parents. I think that was one of the reasons I got married very early. The other was that my mother pushed me into it.

Q: How did -- What did you hear specifically of Kristallnacht?

A: What did I hear? Well, we must have heard about it, I mean, I -- I -- I really -- I don't remember d -- I -- I really don't remember, probably you know, I don't want say something that's incorrect, and say, oh we heard this and that, only to find out -- I mean this is something that's easily checked through American newspapers. Did we hear about it at that time? Did we? Yes, we did? Well, if -- if it was so, then we -- then we did, and we were very upset. I just don't know whether it was as it happened in the newspapers, or it came later. Well, maybe we did.

Q: And, did you get the sense --

A: Oh, I -- Yeah, you're right, we did, because of my Uncle Martin who did not take my father's -- he did not use those tickets that he sent him for Shanghai because he felt like he was going to be -- I used to say that, like he was -- sent him a ticket to go to the moon. I mean, he was a very provincial guy who, I don't know, worked for the mu-municipality or had some kind of civil service type job or -- and if he lived in something that's comparable to Brooklyn, and just go to Shanghai, when he's never been out of Berlin, and you know, in a -- it was just -- he c -- he

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couldn't seem -- you know, couldn't get himself to do it, and he didn't have much time to just get up and leave, and he didn't, so --

Q: Do you remember hearing from them -- from him, or your other family members --

A: I --

Q: -- about Kristallnacht, or other incidents?

A: I think that was -- that was soon at -- I -- I don't know. I have no letters or anything among my memoirs, you know, and things that my parents have, or that they saved, that they were actual letters.

Q: Did you have the impression, over the years of the -- of the war, that things were getting worse for Jews?

A: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Q: And as you were growing -- growing up, and of course by the end of the war, I -- I believe you're about 18 years old at -- at that stage perhaps. Is that ga --

A: Well, you know what I really rememb -- as -- as a -- I became very Americanized, and I -- as I think about the war, I remember th -- I think about the war from an American girl's point of view. I went out with -- my friend had a brother who was in the army, and he took me this -- my first date, my first play. Because he was in the army, he got tickets to see "Oklahoma!", which was a play, and nobody could get tickets for anything, except G.I.'s, you know, and I was thrilled to go to the theater. But I thought through -- and -- and then you -- you got some -- the soldiers gave you their -- their -- whatever they are, insignias, the bar from a lieutenant, or -- and these were the -- and working for the -- what was it, AWVS, something, and do-doing things for the war effort. I remember, as a kid in the -- as a -- in junior high school, doing things after work, saving silver foil, the ration stamps. I -- I see it, myself, as like a little American girl, an-and

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seeing it through the eyes of American soldiers, and sailors, and Marines, and Air Force, and the songs and the tremendous patriotism that we all had. That's what I think this generation doesn't quite have that, it's a -- and of course, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, I mean, he was like a god to me at the time. Didn't want to read the things that I read, you know, on Ellis Island and -- and not knowing about the -- the SS Saint Louis. Didn't even know there was a German ship til I read your things from the Holocaust Mu -- cause Saint Louis, you know, you think it's an American ship.

Q: When did you -- When did you learn of concentration camps, and the mass murder of Jews?

A: I don't know when I learned it. I don't know. Again I have to -- I mean, I know that my aunt is like, you know, by that time I knew, because she came here, but I -- I -- I guess I knew it when everybody else knew it, whenever that was. I -- Certainly my parents were very interested to s -- an-and worried about their relatives not knowing what happened to my -- her brother, and th -- and the -- and the family, and I -- I -- if I'm -- I'm going to look it up when we conclude this interview, but -- so they -- whatever wa-was news on the radio, and in the paper, they kept up with, but when exactly -- I mean, I guess I learned it as everybody else learned it.

Q: Did you meet many Holocaust survivors then, coming to America after the war?

A: Yes, yes I did. People came, I did meet people. I met -- meet people who were eventually friends, you know, through, because I have these -- s-some American friends, others that weren't American, and I met people who had been in Auschwitz, I -- I was friends with Holocaust survivors who had been in concentration camps, cause I remember their tattoos, you know, on their arm. But I me -- I had a lot of fr -- I had a lot of friends who were from -- early on in my first marriage, met a lot of people who were -- they were really mixed friends, friends who were born in Germany, and others who were American.

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Q: Did you ever experience anti-Semitism in America?

A: I rememb -- Yes, I think I did. I -- When I finished junior high school -- was just telling this to a friend of mine the other day, cause my father was such a disciplinarian, that he insisted that I go to -- everybody was leaving for George Washington High School from this -- almost everybody, all my Jewish friends, yes, they were mostly Jewish. Somehow you just -- naturally you gravitate to them, you know? He insisted that I go to Washington Irving High School, which is a sort of high school that -- with an emphasis on needle trades, because he -- being that's the business he was in, he wanted me to become a designer, or learn how to sew. He pushed it so that to this day I hate sewing. And then, at any rate, I -- under duress, I went to George Washing -- to Washington Irving High School. Had to take the train downtown, all my friends went to the other school. And one of the -- on the first days in the school, I saw that everybody was Italian, and I sort of felt I had to -- sort of -- I felt out of place, and one girl said to me, she says, "You want to hear a joke?" Said, "Sure." And she said, "What's the fastest thing on two legs?" And I said, "I don't know, what?" And she said, "A Jew passing a draft board." When I heard that, I really put my foot down, I went home to my father, I didn't want to be there in the first place. I said, "I am not staying in that school, I am not going to stay there." And I insisted on being transferred to George Washington High School, which they did do, and then I was much happier, and I was a very -- was a good student, I was an arrister, and I sort of found myself. Actually in junior high school, I -- I did well, but then I, you know, found myself in my teenage years, but they were turbulent, I was never -- I had a lot, I think, to contend with as a teenager, more than, you know, had I been born here with parents who were, but that's obvious.

Q: When did you and your parents get contacted by the German government as part of reconciliation efforts? I believe that's called vidogutmachen.

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A: I cannot remember when that was, but I know f -- I know it was uf -- early on, when they began to do that, it wasn't really I think the German government so much, as the Berlin government, because they were getting these checks, you know, so -- from the German government, for lost property, or -- my mother got something that was sort of like the equivalent of -- loosely speaking, like Social Security, because she could prove her -- she had her employment records or something, and taxes that were taken out, sounds strange, but it was based on that. And she di --

Q: You mean she had worked in Germany?

A: Yes, she did --

Q: And then --

A: -- as a -- as a young woman. Remember, she was 27 when she got married, and she worked, as a matter of fact, for my uncle. She worked in -- he manufactured hats in Kemnets, and when she lived it -- she worked there and somewhere else. Not a profession, but something, you know, sales. And so there was a connection between her and -- and the government, and they were contact -- I know they didn't contact -- my parents didn't contact them, because when they got this information -- also, it was around Washington Heights, everybody was -- knew about it, or people here and there were getting these invitations. But they did not want to go. And then we just sort of let that -- and I said, "Why don't you," you know, "why don't you go?" "No, no, no," my father said, "Don't want to ever go back to Germany, no, not interested." So we just dropped it. And then there were years in between, I presume it was like in the early 70's or something?

Q: How did your mom feel? She had shown so much interest in -- in perhaps in staying in Germany at the time.

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A: She -- I -- I don't know. I guess she just -- he absolutely didn't want to, and they never really went anywhere, or did anything. You know, going to Florida for a couple of weeks was -- that he wanted to do, and she hated it, because they did it year after year after year, again [indecipherable]. But if she did want to go, it was sort of crushed, you know, that desire.

Q: How did you become more involved in either receiving things from Germany --

A: Let me just add, yes, she did really want to go places, because she finally went to -- to Europe, I forgot about that, my mother, by herself. She went to Israel to visit her sister, she said she wanted to go. Her sister Anna. Kate had died in 1946, I guess, because I got married in '47, and she was no longer alive, died of cancer here, recurrence. But, she went by herself, my father did not want to go anywhere, and she picked herself up, she went to Rome by herself, and she went to Israel by herself, and that was pretty cons -- for her, quite a feat, and she loved it, but that was, you know, the biggest trip. And she always used to talk about when her sister Anna, and her brother-in-law, who lived very well, very comfortably, took her and her mother, Frieda to Nice on the Riviera. Must have been in the early 30's or something. No, I don't know when it was. Was it after she was married? I don't know, but how she loved that trip, and how glamorous and how wonderful it was, you know. So, she might -- she might have wanted to go, but never did.

Q: Tell me about some of the items that you started to receive. I believe it's books, I don't know if there are other items from Berlin, from -- and who did you receive them from, actually?

A: From Berlin, yes I started to receive a lot of things. Some things were annual, some things were quarterly. Annual were calendars, very beautiful calendars, I -- I think I get those to this day, they're still doing that. But they sent books, you know, Berlin 1979 - '70 - '80 - '81, every year, and always relating to Jews, they were like soft cover books, very interesting, in German, with pictures, and I'd get something about a famous cartoonist, who had -- her name was Zille,

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Z-i-l-l-e, and -- who died at -- in the late 1920's, and was very famous and it was very funny, to --

End of Tape Two, Side B

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Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is tape number three, side A, of an interview with Anita Sockol. Would you like to continue talking about the items that you received from Berlin, through the years?

A: And among these books, you know, that had -- we receive every year, they we -- in 1988, I believe it was, I got a book about the Jews of Berlin, and it went back from the 19th century, into the 20th century, up until 1939 or '40, whenever, you know, something like that. And I leaf through this book, and I couldn't believe it, there was a picture of me and my cla -- in my classroom, with me in it, my -- all the -- all my classmates from, I think, 1935. And when I saw that, I said, I've got to -- I said, "How did they got ahold of this picture?" Well, obviously, somebody else had the same class picture, I found that out subsequently, somebody who lived in England, and submitted it to them. At any rate, I -- I -- it -- it piqued my interest, and I now -- I thought I wanted to go to Berlin, and get this trip that my parents never took advantage of. So I got in touch, it's a lengthy involvement, I won't go into it. And we had a lot of corens -- correspondence back and forth. I told him about the picture, they were very interested in the picture, and I traced it, and said I could identify the g -- most of the girls to this day, which I did do, and then they published it in yet another publication that they had, a g -- like a newsletter, that went to all former Berliners, and I started receiving mail from all these people because they -- I -- it said something about Anita Sockol in New York, blah, blah, blah, and I started receiving them. And because of this -- so I had two things going on at the same time, it was very exciting really, receiving these letters, and also questions. Did I know somebody named Ilsa Plachte, and -- because that was a very good friend of mine, and where does she live? And I would call that person back, they lived in Columbus, Ohio. I said, "That was my cousin, I heard that, you know, she died in Auschwitz." Other people wrote to me, they were -- th -- this woman just knew the

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name, and as I was busy writing and corresponding with these other people, I was also talking to this woman in Berlin, and sort of pushing it to get the trip. She said I was too young, if I wanted to come with my mother. And I said, “At this point, my mother couldn’t possibly travel.” And -- But because of it, I think they gave it to me. And I did go on the trip to Berlin, in 1989, in the spring. March, I believe it was, before the wall came down. And it was a very interesting trip, with many -- with wonderful things that they did for us, and yet you had such -- such strange feelings, everybody did, you know. And I have a cousin who lives -- second cousin who lived in Berlin at the time, and the free time that we had, he showed me the railroad tracks, you know, over a bridge, that’s where the Jews were shipped to Auschwitz from, and a little doorway that looked like a closet, you know, you’d walk right by. And he said, “In there is an Orthodox shul,” which you’d -- you’d never think there was anything in there. And told me -- So, I had very mixed feelings. At night I couldn’t sleep from all the things that were -- that my -- my feelings were, you know, accosted with. And we met the mayor of Berlin, he talked to us, and there were cocktail parties. We met a senator, a woman senator, and they made these speeches, dear former citizens, and it was very strange. Very difficult to explain the -- can’t say love, but the -- some kind -- some kind of memories, and yet the -- the anti-German feeling that you -- that sort of rides over everything. It -- It was very strange, and we went to see -- everybody ran to s -- to wherever they lived. And there was a man who was [indecipherable] from this area, I think he was from Maryland, and he lived near where I lived, and we went to -- by train through eastern Berlin, to where I lived, and the address existed, but not the building, so they must have kept the address, but -- you know, but it was some modern, ugly building, cause of -- obviously that whole area was bombed out, and like rebuilt.

Q: What is the address?

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A: Tw -- Bamburger Street, 26, number 26, in Vilmasdorf, is the section, cause Berlin is very big, very big.

Q: How were your interactions with other Germans, non-Jewish Germans living in Berlin?

A: Well, they were, of course, all hand picked people for this thing. They were younger, and very sensitive to the issues, you know, but I -- I realized that. And one -- I had a very interesting conversation on one of the days with one of the tour guides, when we went to the -- not the Reichstag, but the -- that stadium, the Olympic stadium where Hitler spoke and he showed us, you know, and I -- then I remembered it from, I guess newsreels. I forgot to mention newsreels, was i -- cause there was no TV, but how did I hear the voice? Of course, it wasn't just the radio, newsreels in the movies. And he said that h-he -- something I never thought of, he said, "Oh yes," he said, "it still exists very much." He said every Sunday when he goes to his grandparents house for Sunday dinner with his -- he -- they talk about the old -- good old days, you know, they're died in the wool -- I don't know if they're still Nazis, but they long for those Hitler days, and they talk about it. And he said there was a lot of neo-Nazi stuff going on that he knew of, and he felt -- he and his fiancée, that if it got any worse -- this was in 1989, that he was going to move to Canada, he just didn't like what was going on. It was interesting to hear it from a young German fellow. And I really didn't think about that two generations back, that the young ones are exposed to all that, and they're still alive and -- and not ashamed, or anything. They are what they are.

Q: Did you feel unsafe, yourself?

A: No. No, I didn't. I didn't. It was so stra -- you know, I -- I felt sort of pleased with myself that I could speak German in Germany, you know, it made it easy to get around, and it gave you like a -- it's very strange feeling, it's hard to put into words. That this was once your home, and yet

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it's not recognizable, it's -- I -- I -- I can't put it into words, the -- the feeling. Like a real love-hate relationship.

Q: Did you feel any anti-Semitism while you were there?

A: No, but I'm sure I could have. I was in a control group, really -- controlled group. We went -- They -- We saw what they wanted us to see, you know? Took lovely boat ride on the river, and oh, the whole thing was conducted in German, though, and had wonderful -- we went to the theater, everything was brand new, the acoustics, the sou -- everything was better than -- I -- I never ex -- I never expected to have such a trip, you know, I thought it was -- I didn't know what to expect. Didn't know everything would be so deluxe. The hotel, the -- even, you go -- show your passport at a certain bank, and they gave you money, spending money. It's all part of it, I mean, they do a very, very good job, so that you go home and say it was wonderful, which I can't really say it wasn't.

Q: How did you feel about divided Berlin at that time, and -- you were both in east and west?

A: Yeah. They -- A tremendous difference, tremendous difference, it -- it was like night and day. East Berlin was very d -- you know, just like you would expect a Communist place to look like, very old and stodgy and -- and neglected, and even the food. We had coffee and cake or something there in the afternoon, was awful. And when you went -- when we came back to East Berlin, it was -- dusk was falling, and you see the neon, and the lights, and the -- and the music, it was like night and day, was really amazing dichotomy between the two places.

Q: You mean when you came back to West Berlin, in the evening?

A: Yes, when I came back to West Berlin in the evening, jus -- as you cross the border, it's like you're in a different world. It was very interesting. But as far as what I felt was concerned, I have no -- I -- you know, I had no fear for anybody who seemed -- they seemed poor, and a lot of

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people seemed unemployed or whatever, but I didn't -- I certainly didn't have any great feeling for them, nor the other way -- and -- and still don't. And if it costs Germany a fortune to com -- you know, to integrate it, I couldn't care less. They took it on.

Q: How about memorials regarding the Holocaust? What memorials did you see?

A: Oh, something else that just came to mind. I was in Germany in 1949, not in Berlin, but when I went back to Europe for the first time with my husband, my first husband, we went to Frankfort. He wa-was on business, and first time I ever went back to Europe, and we're in Frankfort, and the city was absolutely decimated. You could see for miles and miles and miles, it was just rubble. And way in the distance you saw the famous Kerner Dome, which is a cathedral. And they did this precision bombing, and I remember seeing all these Germans, this is '49 now, rolling around on makeshift -- like torsos rolling around, lots of them, on a wooden crate, with like the wheels of a -- of a -- from roller skates, you know, one on each corner, so that they could -- you know, their legs blown off, and -- and I remember -- and they wer -- the food was terri -- no, the food was good, it was bad in England, and in -- in London, and in Paris, you couldn't, but in Germany, through the PX's, you could get almost anything, and it just bothered me, and I -- it just -- seeing these people rolling around, I just couldn't have cared less, is -- it's -- you know, I had no sympathy whatsoever on how difficult the war was for them. It was very strange being there, I had forgotten that I was in Germany.

Q: How do you feel about Germans, and Germany today?

A: To be honest with you, almost the same. I am sure that I will die with that feeling. Don't know quite why I feel that way, being that I -- you know, didn't have to go through a concentration camp, but I'm very -- just so grateful, you know, that -- and feel so fortunate that I -- like, I missed it by a hair, and I just feel a -- a tremendous -- a tremendous feeling of

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something to all the people that died there. I -- I just -- To me, that's sort of like my religion. I just feel compelled to read, you know, almost anything on that, or see every film, or every documentary. I just feel very drawn to it, and I'm always very annoyed with people -- most of them are Jewish, who say -- and there are many, I -- I can't deal with that, I -- I can't watch it, I can't look at it, I can't read it, and I always feel like, I said, "You can't look at it?" I said, "You di -- it -- it's like you -- you ought -- you know, you didn't have to go through it, why can't you look at it? I feel like that's your duty to look at it." Or, I couldn't go to a Holocaust Museum, and it -- I find that very annoying, and many people say that to me.

Q: What are your impressions of how Germans are dealing with, or not dealing with the history of the Holocaust?

A: Well, I'm certainly no expert on it. I -- I see -- you know, I read these -- the answer -- you know, that Daniel Goldhagen's book is such a hit in -- in Germany, and that they like klesma music, which is sort of weird to me, like it -- I'm sure there are some -- I -- I really don't know, maybe it is a generational thing, but I -- I think that many Germans -- and I've learned that they're -- heard this from really very well known, and very knowledgeable professors, I take courses in international politics in New York. They -- They don't really know what to do with democracy. It's sort of inbred. I'm not generalizing, but they feel comfortable under -- you know, being told what to do, and as long as it's orderly, and clean, and neat, and no crime, you know, at least, you know, the ordinary kind of crime, that they feel comfortable with that.

Q: What are your impressions of the memorials that you saw in Germany? And I think you were in Germany in recent years twice, in 1989, as well as 1998?

A: Correct.

Q: Correct?

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A: I was, yeah. ’89 was that trip, and 19 -- October 1998 was a -- a couple of days in Berlin, a trip of eastern Europe. I was in Budapest, Prague -- Budapest, Prague, where else was I? Vienna. Vienna and Berlin. And I have that same feeling, by the way, for the Viennese. I mean, Austria and Germany, as far as I’m concerned, I lump them together. If anything, I dislike them more, because they’re so -- you know, so like our southern people or something, you know, with that smaltzy Viennese, but that’s just me. What was your question, how?

Q: About the memorials that you’ve seen.

A: Oh, the memorials. I th -- I -- I -- I didn’t see anybody looking at them, or noticing them. I’ve seen some, they’re -- they’re very subtle, you don’t even know what they are. And I’ve seen chil -- they’re like in a children’s playground, and kids climb on them, or play around them. They’re not revered. They’re just up here and there, again, only the ones I’ve seen, maybe there are some, but -- but there was one ri-right on the Krufensadum, and very -- right by the main -- the main subway station, right near the Kaufasdesvestens, this famous department store. And it’s -- that one referred to different -- it just mentioned different concentration camps, like on a -- on a post, but it’s -- it’s well done, and I think that people just go about their business, nobody looks at it. And that’s a spot sort of like Times Square. What they do look at, and it is interesting, is that church. You must have seen that church, we bombed out that famous cathedral, and they left that standing there in the middle of modern Berlin, which is quite interesting, but that’s just a reminder of the war, not -- nothing to do with Germans -- nothing to do with Jews. It’s very dramatic.

Q: Did you notice many differences after the wall had come down, on your second trip to Berlin, in 1998?

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A: Yes, I did, I did. I -- They are building there like crazy. I've never seen anything like it. And our tour guide, who was excellent, a guy from Munich, told us, among many other things, that 90 percent of building cranes in Germany were all in Berlin, and this really wasn't a good time to visit Berlin, if you wait a year or so, it'll be like a whole new city. It was just amazing. All the -- you know, the Fortune 500 companies, or whatever, of the world, were building there, and they weren't just building buildings, they were building like whole plazas, and it's ju -- tremendous, un-unbelievable the building going on, which was -- there was nothing going on in -- in 1989.

Q: Did you have much communication with Jews living in Berlin today, or in the modern day?

A: No, none. We were at a very nice hotel, and then we went and did things, you know, on our own, really. And of course, a famous muse -- you know, went to a museum, the thing that tourists do, including the zoo, which is spectacular, and the -- you went to that museum, I know you did, the Pergamon Museum. And -- And went to -- to try that Berliner food, which -- which was very interesting.

Q: Was the Jewish museum constructed when you were there in 1998? Did you visit the -- the new Jewish museum in Berlin?

A: I did not go, no, I didn't. I don't -- no, I did not.

Q: How would you say -- Oh, one more question about visiting Germany, have you -- did you have a chance, in Germany, or elsewhere in Europe to visit concentration camp sites?

A: Yes, for the first time. I know that -- that -- that other time I was -- yeah I'm -- as I realize it now, I was also in Munich once, forgot about that. But I did not go to -- to Dachau. I was near it, but I didn't go. That was years ago with -- I don't know. But this time, in 1998, I did visit Theresienstadt, because it was part of the tour. We were on our way from Prague to Vienna, I believe. It's that right? Think so. Whatever, and via Dresden, and we -- we went to -- yeah,

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because Theresienstadt, I think, was near, or in Czechoslovakia, and it was quite an experience. I -- And I knew that that was not the worst ones. I remember hearing that from my aunt, and she did survive, and -- and they had, you know, some kind -- some sort of a life there, but I don't think I could bear visiting Auschwitz. I don't ever want to go to Poland.

Q: What would you say, if you can identify this, is the long term impact that your experiences, of having to flee Germany, and be a refugee, and then, in general, the Holocaust has had on your life.

A: It's a hard question to answer, but I am sure that it has had a profound affect on me. You know, you think it hasn't, but it has. It has -- I probably would have be -- been a different person. I mean, it's hard to speculate, but I mean, I'm happy that -- that I came to America, but coming as a refugee, I think if I -- if I had been born here, I would be a different person today. Maybe not everything for the better, but I think most of if, yes, s -- educa -- and it's hard -- hard to say.

Q: Do you think that the Holocaust has had an impact on either your politics or your religious faith, or any sort of, career decisions?

A: I think on my career decisions, because my parents -- well then, of course, that was my parents. Had I been -- Had it -- had not happened, I probably would not have gone on to much higher education. In Berlin, I guess nobody did it, or almost nobody. Here, you have more opportunity, and still my par -- it was maybe more my parents doing than -- and their feeling -- I think they always felt like refugees, all their lives, and therefore, you know, passed that on to me, to get married, and you know, get -- I -- I don't know why I had to, you know, get married, so I -- I just had turned 19 -- no, just had turned 20. My birthday's in September, I got married in October, but I -- in those days, chronologically, you know, I was just 20, but otherwise, I, emotionally, I was like 16. And I was, you know, something that really should not have had -- I

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should have gone, you know, and furthered, you know, gone for more of a career, and so it -- it did affect me. But what did you ask me?

Q: And also whether you think the Holocaust has had any effect on your political interests and inclinations, and also your religious faith.

A: I think it -- on my political inclinations, yes, I think most people are pretty democratic, and liberal, and I think it has something to do with that, of course, because you can see yourself in that same position, in relation to Blacks, or whatever, minorities. As far as religion is concerned, well, I wasn't brought up on a religious home. My first husband was very religious. I was not, that was a bad combination. And it sort of, if anything turned me against it, I found it very cumbersome, and cumbering and -- and I just have a tremendous feeling about the Holocaust, and still more as I get older, as I said earlier. I still do. I -- I -- I have more -- more and more so. And that, somehow, is like my religion, you know. I -- I don't really -- I'm not a religious -- I like tradition, a little bit of it, you know, with the family, and we spend the holidays together, but it means more to my children than it does to me, to be honest.

Q: How do you feel about the ways in which the Holocaust has been portrayed, especially in this country, in the United States, especially in popular culture, movies. Also, even portrayed in this museum.

A: Oh, I think the museum is fantastic, I really do. I think it's a fabulous museum, it's portrayed very, very well, and all the high tech things, and all the little films you can see. I haven't really begin -- begun to scratch the surface, if I really wanted to see everything, cause I'm never here long enough. If I lived in the area, I probably would have done it, but I -- it's not the end, I'm going to continue to do it. And in films, I ge -- I mean, I think much more -- I think s -- it's -- much more is still being said, and I think as we get more sophisticated, and as the generation is

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ready to die out, that there are scholars and people still writing from -- and pursuing it from, then -- and researching it from different angles, and different points of view. Especially, I'm interested -- I am interested a lot in -- well, like that Daniel Goldhagen book, sort of to prove to myself that -- about the basic German, how could this really happen, that it isn't just the hierarchy and everything that we know, that it could not really have happened without the cooperation of the ordinary German. I feel like it's in their blood, I really do feel that. There are exceptions of course, but -- I mean, how -- all the little things that happened day to day, how c -- how could anybody take just stones, and smash windows, and take an old man in -- into the street, you know on an individual basis, when you look at it that way. Nevermind the concentration camps, before the concentration camps, people that you knew, and were your neighbors, and you knew them all your life, and all of a sudden you turned your back on -- what does it take in a person to do that? You know, one to one. I -- I have to wonder about that. What kind of people are those? And other countries, you know, you take a country like Denmark, was it? And they're just like good people. They just didn't, and they wouldn't. You know, it's -- I don't know what that is, when you lump it together as one country. Or the people of -- I -- I -- but I -- and I feel that way, yes, to this day, and I feel that about Polish people, Austrian people, the whole Ukraine, all those people that, you know, when you see modern day movies that were made in this -- last year or this year, and you see these old ladies, with the babushkas, and a couple of teeth, it -- it -- you could transpose them into a movie of 1938, and if I understood their language, they're still -- they -- they're born with that anti-Semitism, that's -- I feel that, I really do. That's why I never want to go to any of those other countries. I only went to Berlin, because after all, well, it was offered to me, and it was -- there is a fascination, it's a morbid fascination to see the city. And it's also an interesting city.

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Q: Would you say that you feel hate toward Germans, Germany, and perhaps other countries that collaborated?

A: Yeah, I do. Yes, I do. Yeah, I don't forgive. I -- I'm not -- I don't have -- I'm a very -- like a very practical person, and I don't really have religion to fall back on. I'm -- I -- I'm not forgiving in that sense, or can turn to God. I -- I just see it -- what -- what's the right word, I'm a very literal person. Is that the right word? I don't know. Yeah, I see it, you know, the way it was, or read the way it was, and no, I cannot forgive it.

Q: Do you have any particular impressions of movies such as "Schindler's List," and more recently, "Life is Beautiful"?

A: Oh, don't get me started. We'll be -- We'll -- You'll need another tape. I hated that movie, that shi -- that -- that "Life is Beautiful." "Schindler's List" was an interesting movie, it's a story about one person, I mean. But it was well done, I like Steven Spielberg, and what he's doing, The Shoah Foundation and all that. But I hated that -- that "Life is Beautiful," and I've had endless discussions with people about that movie. You had to ask me that at the end. I just -- I -- It's a fable, and I also take a film course, and we discuss it in the film course. An-And people loved it, and I -- I just -- and when that -- that guy climbed over those chairs at the Oscars, I ju -- I just -- I -- I said, "Let it end already." But there is no end. Do you know that they're making another movie? Yup. S -- Th -- Oh, no, they're -- they're -- they're putting it with eng -- in the -- making it in English, without titles. I knew I read something. And I just feel that -- like, it's like a sacred thing, that you can't write a fable about -- a movie about a -- an experience like that. And I feel that anybody who went through the experience, that it was like an insult to people, that nothing in that movie could have possibly have happened. That they -- he took the little boy with

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him into -- I felt such an affront, I -- I don't know why, but I just hated it. And I hate that little guy, and his annoying interviews, so don't ask me any more on that.

Q: Did you -- Well, can I ask you at least, did you talk about it --

A: Of course you can, of course. I'm just being, you know, cause I've discussed it a million times.

Q: Did you talk about the movie with several other Holocaust survivors?

A: Yes, and the ones that I know, which are limited, because they were in my class, I take a -- a film course at the new school in New York, and almost everybody there, for some reason or other is -- well, they're retired people, and most of them are Jewish, and some of them are survivors. And the survivors felt as I did, but I don't know if they were as vehement. I -- I just -- I just found that movie very annoying. I just -- I didn't like the humor, and I didn't like any of those things, and I don't agree with people who say that well, at least then they -- more people would be exposed to it, you know, who wouldn't see it, because they're exposed to something that never could have happened, it was so much more horrible. And how can you make a fable about anything, but not --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: Tape number three, side B, of in interview with Anita Sockol. I'd like to ask you how you talked with your children as they grew up, about your experiences in Germany, leaving Germany, and about the Holocaust.

A: Well, through the years, I -- I guess the -- we talked, you know, it came up naturally, but they -- well, one of my daughters is quite interested in it, my older daughter. She wanted to come with me today, you know, but that was not appropriate. But she is interested, she reads books on it.

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She is interested through her synagogue, she's very involved at the Washington congregation, I forget where Hebrew -- Washington Hebrew, yeah. My other daughter is not all that interested, and also I tried, you know, even though it's German, but it is a language, when they were young, I tried to speak German to them. My mother always said it doesn't hurt to know another language, which we all know. But they really fought me on it, and I just gave up after awhile. My grandchildren are sort of interested, but I think they're interested because it's a school project, you know. I'm suppose -- because they in turn are learning about the Holocaust, or in Hebrew school, or they have to do something in history, and sometimes they question me the way you're questioning me now, but not that -- not that closely, especially my youngest one, Michael. But how did -- did I speak to them about it? I -- I guess it was maybe -- they would -- they did become interested, but I think they spoke more to my parents, probably, than to me. And they became interested when they were adults, but then they didn't really say much. My father didn't want to talk about it, and -- how he came here, and this and that. I -- I -- We lived in -- in Forest Hills, and I'm trying to think back, I -- I don't know how much it really came up, except that the friends that I had, as I said earlier, they were from Germany as well, or German speaking, at any rate, and they would grow up hearing mixed things, but they knew a little, but nothing much has really remained, they are really just very American, Americanized.

Q: Did you try to talk to your own parents about Germany, about the Holocaust very much?

A: Boy, I have to really think about these things. I -- No, not so much, just about this, as they call it Ausvanderon, you know that leaving, that process of leaving. And the immediate, the relatives and what happened to them, and where they are, but then, after years, you know, when the war was over, and we knew that there wasn't going to be any -- you know, weren't going to hear from anyone, except their -- her sister, Kate, and the other one, who lives in Israel, we -- we

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didn't talk about it very much any more. I -- I don't know how. I guess I sort of just accepted it or something. My father -- I don't remember my father talking much about his brother, you know, as the years went by. He was a very self-involved man, not really a family man.

Q: Did you feel a close connection to the creation of Israel, and thereafter feel a connection -- strong connection to Israel?

A: Myself, I was happy, we were proud, you know, when watched those proceedings at the UN, and -- but as a -- as an American Jew, no I don't have a very strong connection to Israel. I -- I never felt that I wanted to move there, or live there. As a matter of fact, when I was there the first time, which is -- was in 1963, after a very wonderful trip to Europe. Europe was very luxurious in 1963, and then hitting Israel, it was big disappointment. I was not very happy there. No, I -- it's -- I'm -- I don't have a -- I'm happy that it exists, but I don't, personally no, I don't have -- and I have relatives there, and I care about them, and we are in constant touch through the years, letters and sometimes phone calls. And they just were very hospitable this last month to my grandson David, who lives in Bethesda. He was in Israel, as was my la -- grandson Lawrence. He went two years ago, and they were lovely to them. And they stayed with them when they had time to visit people on their team tour, each one. And they were saying that I should come, we talked on the phone a couple of weeks ago, that I should come, they have a new house, I should stay with them. And I'm considering it, maybe, to go back to Israel. But otherwise -- it's -- it's really because of them, and to see Isra -- and then my other experience was in 1993. I'd had the bad luck to go on a poor tour -- poorly organized tour, it really wasn't a tour at all, and I -- if it weren't for my cousins there, it would have been a pretty disastrous trip, cause I was really on my own. It was sold as a tour, but it was -- when you got there, it was really like a day tour. I could have booked that myself, to see, always with different people, and different places, you

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know, and put -- it was like a day tour in Tel Aviv, or Jerusalem. And at the end of the day you were plunked down at your hotel, and you had nobody. But as I said, I had my family there and they really saved the trip for me. So I don't have such a gra -- it wasn't -- I -- I -- I think I'd want to try Israel again, and I might consider going there in the near future.

Q: Well, I think I'm just about done. Is there anything else you would like to say or mention in closing our interview today?

A: No, I -- It was a very enjoyable experience to c -- trip down memory lane, which is kind of big hyphens there, spaces missing, but it was very interesting, and I'm glad to have done it, and if it's -- if it is of any value to future researchers, or whatever you do with it, then I'm very glad to have done my small share. Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Anita Sockol.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview

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