United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Inge Sachs Rosenthal
June 19, 1998
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Inge Sachs Rosenthal, conducted by Katie Davis on June 19, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

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.

INGE SACHS ROSENTHAL
June 19, 1998

Q: -- where and when you were born.

A: I was born Inge Marion Sachs, on the 27th of May, 1923.

Q: And tell us a little bit about where you were born.

A: I think you better remember that I don't hear very well.

Q: Okay. And if you can tell us about where you were born.

A: I was born in Berlin. I was born in the same apartment from where I immigrated late -- sik -- 15 years later. So we -- my family always lived in the same place.

Q: Tell us about your mother and father, their names, and where they grew up.

A: My mother came from Silesia. She was married and came to Berlin, and her husband died in the first world -- f -- was a soldier in the first World War, and he left this life. My mother had one daughter, my sister. She was born in 1913, and my mother -- mother was left a widow, I think 1917, something. She had to earn her living, and I have photos of that. She had to bring up her daughter, was a very difficult life. My father was also in the war, the first World War. They were married, and I -- I don't know in which year, might be 1920, and then we grew up as one family. That's to say my sister was my sister, and there was no difference made. My f -- my family was always poor. I don't know what my father actually learned. He was born in 1886, he must have had some sort of profession before the war, he certainly didn't have any profession afterwards. It was very hard going, he was a s-salesman of some sort, or something like that. And in 1923, there was a inflation in -- in Germany, and the -- hyper inflation, was very, very hard. Later on, he fulfilled his dream. He set up, I think with money from his parents, which would have come to -- wh-which he would have inherited, he set up a shoe repair shop, and he really -- that was the sort of thing he loved, doing things with his hands, although in Germany you -- you had to have certain people there who -- who learned the profession, but he worked there, and he liked it, and it was hard going, but Germany is terribly well organized. They even had certificates for people to repair their shoes, in way of Social Security, that was part of Social Security. So when he got permission to use these certificates, things were try -- were starting to pick up.

Q: Can you tell us your mother's name, your father's name, and your sister's. I think we haven't mentioned those.

A: Yes. My mother was Marguerita Colcreeta Copaulna. That was her naiden -- maiden name. She married M-Mr. Suskind, and then my sister was part of the time called -- well,

part -- when I say part of the time, she was later called my name, Saxe, too. But officially Suskind. Olga Minna Suskind.

Q: Your sister.

A: Yeah. But she was really, for all intents and purposes called my family name. And my father's Alfred Zemon Saxe. But you realize that during the Hitler period, every -- every Jew who hasn't got a typical Jewish name also had to be called Sarah, although it's a very nice name, and all men had to be called Israel. So that makes -- but that was cancelled later on.

Q: Did you know any of your grandparents, on either side?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Can you tell us about them?

A: I knew my father's parents, but they lived somewhere else, I didn't have very much contact, but I have a very -- I have a clear remembrance of my father's parents. I was very close to my mother's parents, although my mother's mother died in childbirth, so my grandfather married again. But this grandmother was -- although my -- it was very difficult for my mother in the beginning, later on it was a good relationship, and I always considered her my real grandmother.

Q: Where did they live, and do you remember what they did for a living?

A: Yes, my -- they lived in Breslau, although they lived in Upper Silesia in the beginning. And my grandfather had a -- what would you call it, where you cut wood.

Q: A sawmill? A sawmill?

A: A mill, a mi -- no, no, no, no, no, a mill. A mill to -- for timber.

Q: Okay.

A: Alright. Now, they were quite well off until some sort of relatives or other -- this story I don't know so well, but he went off with some money, so things weren't so beautiful that [indecipherable]

Q: That he what?

A: They -- somebody went off with some money --

Q: Okay.

A: -- and they weren't so well off either, but that's how they made their living.

Q: And j -- if you could just describe -- you said you were close to your mother's parents, and what -- what would a visit be like, or -- what are your memories? What would you do with your grandmother and grandfather?

A: I -- even as a small child, I was put on the train, and at the other end they took me out of the train, and I stayed with them. And there was a number of brother and sisters, my mother's, in the same town, and that's where -- that's how I spend my time, m -- always being together with -- with uncles and aunts, and staying with my grandparents.

Q: Were you scared to go on the train when you were little?

A: No, I don't remember being scared, no.

Q: [indecipherable] interesting. And how about your father's parents?

A: They came to visit us in Berlin, I don't remember ever visiting them. The family saga says I've been there, but I don't remember that.

Q: And what would those times be like, what would you do?

A: I went to school -- when -- I mean -- no --

Q: I meant if they came to visit, would it be for a special holiday, or would there -- would -- was there -- were there big meals? What -- what did you do when they came to visit?

A: Well, we -- we used to go for -- for an excursion or something like this, or visit [indecipherable] there. I don't remember that too well.

Q: Okay. And tell us a little bit more about Olga. She was your older sister.

A: Yes.

Q: Di-Did you sleep in the same room?

A: We s -- m-m-mostly we slept in the same room, later there was a little room where I went to. I always used to quarrel terribly with her. I was stronger than she was, although 10 years younger, and I believe now, I've believed for a long time, for the sake of family union, it was never told to me that she was my half sister. And I always knew it, and there was sort of insecurity about it. I think that made me quarrel with her. Later on we were very good friends. When I -- when nothing secret was kept f -- you know, we were very -- I -- I was always insecure because of that. Would have been -- nowadays one wouldn't do that sort of thing, one would tell what it's all about. But it was done all -- all out of love, to make the family closer.

Q: Can you describe the -- the house you lived in, or maybe it was an apartment.

A: It's an apartment.

Q: Could you tell us about it?

A: Yes. I can see that very clearly in front of me. When you came -- it was on the second, how do you call it, one, two, three.

Q: Floor?

A: Second floor, and you came in, and there was a corridor, and straight ahead there was a kitchen. Well, it was a kitchen 60 years ago. So that was different. Off the kitchen there was a very small room thot -- that's where I slept at times, really meant for the maid, but we didn't have a maid, and there was another exit to the sta -- to the stairs down, which was supposed to be used for maids, and other people who were -- are not the family [inaudible]. Well then, if you go back from the kitchen, come to the corridor again, I still see in the corner, a place where I had all my toys, and which was always very untidy, and I always tried to tidy it up. And then to the right there was a room which was called th -- well, it's much nicer in German to say it, but it was called a gentleman roo -- oh, you might call it a smoking room, maybe. There were books in it, and a table, and a couch, and something like that. And then you came into the living room proper, living room and dining room. It was rather big -- relatively big place. We always had flowers in the window. There was a balcony off from it, and beh -- and then came the children's room, so-called, where my sister and I slept, and I had my desk and work [indecipherable]. Behind that room was another corridor. You could go th -- straight through th -- my -- my parents room, but you also had a little corridor going at the back to go from there. It was a t -- a do -- now, if I say -- in Berlin you had houses which had apartments in front, then a small garden, and then back part of the house. And that's where we lived, at the back part of the house. I mean, it's a four, five story house -- apartment house.

Q: Did you -- did you know other people in the building well?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Can you tell us about them?

A: Children used to play together -- I used to, up to a certain time.

Q: Right. And did you have a good friend, particularly, or did your mother, or your sister?

A: Whether they had any friends?

Q: Well, did you have like a best friend that lived in the building, or nearby, or --

A: Well, I had a very good friend who lived in the building nearby, and we used to have communication not by telephone, but by -- w -- by -- by mail, which we -- w-with strings,

and a box, an -- which we could sort of -- she lived down there, and I lived up there, and we si -- I don't remember how you call it, flafinpost. And I --

Q: Well, you invented your own sort of --

A: Communication.

Q: Communication system.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Yeah. That's great. What was her name?

A: Anita Berger. And there's a story attached to this. One day in the Nazi time -- we were very good friends -- she came up to me, and she said, "I am terribly sorry, I'm not allowed to play with you any longer, my father would lose his job." I was terribly hurt -- well, I mean, there were more things to be hurt about, but this I remember very clearly. And my mother understood it much better. She thought it was very good of her to come up and tell me. I still remember her name.

Q: After she said that, did you ever see her again?

A: I might have seen her at school, but we never -- there was not -- no longer any relationship between us.

Q: What did your mother tell you? How did she explain this to you?

A: No, she explained that she thought -- sh -- she just said -- I think she -- she thought it was good, and nice of her to come and explain that herself, and not just drop -- just let the relationship finish without saying anything.

Q: But how did you understand it at the time?

A: No, I was just terribly hurt.

Q: So when you were younger, it was pretty normal for Jewish children, and -- and non-Jewish children to play together?

A: Yes, it was quite -- I mean, the district of Berlin where I lived, there were relatively many Jews, and we all went to school together. There was no -- well, nowadays I have my doubts whether the non-Jewish really had the same relationship as we thought we had. But I think there was no difference. There was Jewish -- there was religious instruction in school, and the non-Jewish children just stayed where they are, and the Jewish children went to the next classroom, and had other religious instruction. There was nothing much thought about it.

Q: Tell us a little bit about your family, and it's -- it's faith. I mean, how -- did you observe Shabbat, just h-how was that passed to you?

A: There -- we were what you call very liberal in we -- family in way of religion, that we -- we didn't keep any Shabbat, what we kept the high holidays, the holidays, such as Pesach, which was a family affair, and we went to the synagogue. I went -- I had a time of life where I was religiously inclined, but it was all ver -- very liberal, as I said.

Q: Th-This was when you were a young girl? The time in your life that you were religiously inclined, when was that?

A: Well, must have been around 10 - 12 years, something like that. I went -- I --

Q: Can you tell us about that? What -- what did you do?

A: I went to the synagogue on Friday night, or on Saturday morning, I don't remember. Well, that's was all about it, I went to the synagogue.

Q: Okay. D-Do you -- do you remember why you became interested in it?

A: No. It was just one of those things which happens.

Q: Right.

A: Mm-hm. I was in -- I'd never had any Zionist inclination. I don't know whether that was due to my parents influence, or -- I don't know, or I just didn't have -- happen to have those friends. I was never in any youth organization. Many people -- that was to -- to -- to be scouts, or something like this, or -- there were many youth organizations, I was never in any youth organization.

Q: Di -- co -- do you remember any celebrations of holy days in particular where maybe your father really sort of guided the family, or your mother did something special, or your grandparents?

A: Yes, I remember at times being at my grandparents for Pesach, and also at home, my father led the -- the celebration. And I also remember that my sister and I, we usually didn't behave very well. We used to laugh a great deal, I don't know why, but it was always a very funny thing. But it was nice, and it was, in a way, in the spirit of the religious thing.

Q: What did your parents tell you as you were growing up, about their faith, your faith, about being Jewish?

A: Nothing. This was such a thing we -- that was self understood. There was never any doubt in my mind that I was Jewish, that my parents were Jewish, but it didn't -- at that time, it didn't weigh, it didn't make any difference. I mean, that was just one of the -- I

happened to be a female, I take it for granted that I'm a female. I wear glasses, I took that for granted, and I took for granted that I was Jewish. There was never any problem about it.

Q: That's an interesting choice of words, it didn't weigh. It was a more natural thing when you were younger.

A: It was the most natural thing in -- in the world.

Q: Yeah.

A: I happened to be -- I was born in German, therefore I was German, so I thought. I happen to be -- I ha -- happen to have Jewish parents, therefore I was Jewish. Was just a perfectly natural thing. Although I do remember I had a very good friend who was Jewish, and she was brought up without any religion. And tho -- these people had far harder times still to accept later the -- the -- the Nazi time. And my -- I also -- the household wasn't kosher. So there was nothing very -- that separated me very much from my other friends.

Q: What -- what was a -- a regular day like, what did your mother do? Early in the morning, wa -- ta -- sort of try to remember a -- just a regular day.

A: Well, nowadays I have a maid, so if I say she didn't have a maid, that means something to me, it may not mean anything to you. So she took c-care of the household.

Q: Would she be the first one to get up? Did she wake you up?

A: Well, I -- I -- that I don't remember very clearly. I don't remember clearly having breakfast. I remember very clearly having lunch after ca -- I came home from school. My father didn't come home, so he had another hot meal -- hot meal in the evening. I us-usually partook part of the hot meal. And even when you have usually just bread and sandwich in the evening. And she cooked, and she washed, and she was popular in entertaining, but it was just ladies who came in the afternoon and had -- well, what I do remember very clearly is my birthday parties. And there were -- my mother had a great ability to make a -- a party. And so much so that I could take it -- I could continue with this with my children, and now I do it with my grandchildren, although it's not at all done in Brazil. You just have -- in Brazil you just have food, and noise, and parents around, and I try to play with the children the way my mother played with me, with us.

Q: Ca-ca-can you tell us a little bit about how your mother gave you a birthday party?

A: Yes, although I don't quite know how to -- there are different games y-you play, traditional games. They are all the same games on -- every year. For instance -- I ca -- I don't know any proper name to the game. You hit a little present, and then you s -- what do you cook in?

Q: An oven.

A: No, no, no, no, no, no. The food, on the --

Q: The -- the s --

A: The -- the -- the --

Q: The pot.

A: The po --

Q: A pot.

A: You -- you hid some little present under the pot, and then you tie it up, something around the eyes of your -- of the child, and gave her a -- a spoon, and then she had to find the -- the pot, and beat on it, and then the -- was taken off, and she looked underneath for a present that was underneath.

Q: Oh.

A: Or there was one, the journey to Jerusalem, which had one chair less than there were children, and the music played, and when the music stopped, each child had to find a -- a chair, and as there was one less, one child didn't find a chair, and stepped out, until there was just two children, and one chair. Al-Always little presents to give when -- when -- whoever won. And there were different play -- when you were younger you had other plays, and when you were older, a little bit more sophisticated.

Q: Tell us a little bit about school. What -- what was it like?

A: I might even start with kindergarten, which I remember very clearly. I didn't like to go to kindergarten. For a time, I vomited every morning before going. But at that time psychology wasn't very known. After awhile I -- I went there, and I learned a lot of things to -- to do with my hands, to fold paper, to -- it was a lot -- you didn't learn any reading or writing, you played, you sang, and you did a lot of handy work, too. And I have friends which co -- compani -- no, no -- the one friend who accompanied me since kindergarten, she died in Holland, she was murdered in Holland. Well, that was kindergarten, which I remember very -- very well indeed. And then school started, and I still have two friends which -- with which -- whom I started school. One lives in Philadelphia, and the other lives in Los Angeles. The others I lost [inaudible]. We had a very nice first teacher, who I -- got very friendly with me, and even after the Nazi ti -- time, she kept in touch with me, and I kept in touch with her even after the war. I got in touch with her again after the war, that was my --

Q: She was not Jewish?

A: She was not Jewish. She gave me a little book as a farewell present. She didn't have the courage to write her own name, but she wrote, from your old teacher. I remember the name of the ge -- of the teacher who was our religious instructure -- in-instructor. We -- yes, what -- well, we'll just say learn to read and write, and do the -- there were four years of -- of primary school.

Q: What was the name of the teacher, your first grade teacher that you loved so much?

A: Snyder, Snyder.

Q: Okay.

A: Which is German for tailor. There were others later on, but this, I -- he -- now I don't remember whether this was primary school where -- where we learned some Hebrew. Mus -- might have been.

Q: Okay. So even though it was just first grade, she kept in touch with you, she was sort of a friend.

A: She was a friend, yes. I used to visit her in her home. After the war when I -- I had to search for her again, I found her, and she was then very sick. I sent parcels to her.

Q: Yeah.

A: She died. I kept on the contact with her mother.

Q: So even when you were 10, or 12, sh-she was someone you would spend a little time with?

A: Yes.

Q: And did she live nearby?

A: Well, not very close, but near enough.

Q: And yet -- w-what -- what were you most interested in in school? Were you beginning to think about what you might like to -- to do? What -- how were you thinking about being in school?

A: Well, ever since I can read -- and it was rather hard to learn reading for me, but ever since I could read, I've always been reading. What I was going to be later on, I think at one time I wanted to be a teacher, which wouldn't have been a good idea at all. And I do remember later on -- a little later, we were -- some friends of ours sitting together, and discussing what we want to be, or how we want to be. I just wanted to be a housewife in an apartment, and nothing really else, so it turned out quite differently from what I planned. But I had no distinct trends to -- or talents to be something.

Q: C-Can you remember a little bit about your neighborhood, and about Berlin as a city? Di-Did your family move around the city a lot, or did they sort of stay in their neighborhood, or --

A: No, no, we never moved. I mean, we always stayed in the same apartment. And I remember distinctly the street, and the -- the school. One was there, the other one was there. But that, of course, it's different. It was near to Espan station -- to a sta -- train station, very close to the train station. I've been back to Berlin in more or less recent years, and I could remember everything, and in a way I didn't recognize anything. I mean, was there, but it was -- I sh -- I must have changed, the neighborhood stayed the same as it was. I didn't really take it in as something which was near, or close to me.

Q: Did your family go on outings much in Berlin, and -- you know, a -- as a family, an -- and -- o-or did the family pretty much stick close to the neighborhood?

A: No, on the weekends we always made excursions. Berlin has -- in the summer, Berlin has a very beautiful surrounding, there was always something to go o -- we went into the woods, and picked blueberries, or went on a -- on a steamer, on one of the rivers. In winter, my father almost always took me to a museum on Sundays. A little later on, with a friend of mine, we s -- we stood to buy some tickets for opera, was to go to the opera.

Q: You had said earlier that there wasn't a lot of money, that your -- your family was somewhat poor. Can you tell us a little bit more about that, do you remember feeling anxious about --

A: Yes, I felt anxious about it. It was always a cloud over my head. Not really because -- yes, my mother used to make my dresses, and I -- my -- my friends always had much more beautiful dresses. And -- and I felt the sorrow, or the anxiousness my parents felt. Middle class people may -- it's possible that they feel it stronger than people who are born poor. It was always -- it was a cloud. Although it didn't affect my -- the warmth of the family, or our happiness together.

Q: It -- did you ever feel like there wasn't en -- enough food, or was it just an anxiety about it?

A: An anxiety about it. There was always enough food.

Q: And did you ever go to your father's shoe's repair shop?

A: Yes, yeah, I did. And what was a great pleasure, he went to town to this -- to downtown or whatever, to buy leather. There were big sheets of leather for the shoe soles, and he used to do the buying of that, and he took me along, and I liked -- liked that very much.

Q: He took you, did Olga go also, your sister?

A: No, I don't think she did, no.

Q: You had mentioned that you quarreled a lot with her, w-what else did you do together, you and your sister [indecipherable]

A: Well she -- she was 10 years older than I, we didn't do anything much together. We -- we used to go s -- no, I went skating in the winter, and she used to fetch me from the skating rink.

Q: Pick you up?

A: Pick me up.

Q: Okay. What was Olga doing at this time, when you were about eight or 10?

A: Well, when I was eight, she was 18, she already left school. She went -- she -- she learned sewing. In Germany there's a system of having three years of apprenticeship, and then you have to make a exam, and then you went to -- it was something else. And she went in for sewing.

Q: And -- but was she still living with you?

A: Yes. I don't really know what we quarreled about. I don't think we quarreled about money. Every weekend my father gave the coins, the -- well, the pennies you have here, one week to one, and the other week to the other. And I always -- I never had any reason to spend my money, so I always had more money. But we didn't quarrel about money. I -- I lend it to her -- I gave it to her. I mean, I lend it to her, but in the end it was [indecipherable]. No, we didn't quarrel about money.

Q: Do you remember being -- of the first time you began to be aware that maybe things were shifting in your country, that something was different, in terms of your security, maybe being more aware of being Jewish? Can you begin to remember when things started changing?

A: Yes, very little, because in a big town like Berlin, it wasn't nearly as bad for one person, really, than it was in small towns. But the parents were anxious. One heard the screaming voices on the radio. That's when it started. And my worst remembrance is at night, they used to march with -- what do you call it, a fire in --

Q: Torch.

A: A torch. And that -- and singing, same time. And then of course, it started in school.

Q: But -- but before we go on, can you describe what that looked like? Ha -- ha -- where were you when you saw it? I mean, that's a strong image, I would like to see it better.

A: Yeah.

Q: Who was marching? Was it in front of your house, what did it sound like?

A: As there was no television, I must have seen it myself. Do -- I can't remember walking the streets of Berlin and seeing it. So -- and when it got dark, I was usually at home. I don't remember how -- I remember, but that's something which was terrifying, the singing. And I don't remember this -- they marched in front of our house. So --

Q: What were they singing?

A: Songs that Germany was going to rule the world, and all the Jews were going to be slaughtered. I have a-another very plea -- well, a more satisfying remembrance, at school there was a -- one class which was for -- for music. And all the children were singing one of those Nazi so -- songs. And the teacher said, "Now we sing the first verse, and then second. And now we sing the fourth." So a wonderful colleague of mine asked, "Why don't we sing the third?" So he said, "That would hurt some of your colleagues." And that was when Jews were cut their throat and all the -- the blood was dripping from the knife. So I've never -- I don't remember his name any more, and I'm sure he died in the war, but I've never for -- it's a memorial gift to him. And this was great things to do. I mean, this wasn't just something somebody might say, that -- you had to have courage to do that.

Q: You said you heard the screaming on the radio, do you remember who was talking, and what your parents might have said about it?

A: Well, it was Hitler, and -- and this Goebbels and some. I mean, they knew it were hard times, but unfortunately they didn't wri -- realize early enough how hard they were.

Q: Hitler, and then Joseph Goebbels was sort of a mayor of Berlin, and somewhat in charge of Berlin.

A: You refer to the two names, on -- or you --

Q: I'm saying ger -- Goebbels was.

A: No, Goebbels was a minister.

Q: No, he wasn't, okay. He was a minister, okay, so this -- I was thinking earlier -- I'm probably mistaken. Do you remember ever overhearing your parents speak about it?

A: I think so. I mean, I don't remember any time, any -- any occasion, but there was always talk about it.

Q: So that wasn't something that was hidden from you?

A: No, that wasn't something that was hidden from me. I mean, they didn't themself realize how dangerous situation was, so there was nothing to hi -- but that it was a dangerous situation, that wasn't hidden from me. It couldn't have been hidden, it was too loud -- from the outside.

Q: And we -- tell us a little bit about your father's shop. Did he begin to not be able to get supplies, or w-was there a point where he could no longer run his shop?

A: Yes. There was the ninth of November, 1938, when it all smashed. You heard of the --

Q: Right.

A: And that was the end of it.

Q: This is Kristallnacht?

A: Yeah.

Q: But before that, was there any fay --

A: I don't think so. I think things were looking up, financially.

Q: So as things began to shift, and friends could no longer play with you, di-did your family ever consider sending you away, or putting you into hiding, or --

A: No, there was no question of hiding at all. But I had to leave the public school where I went, because things were getting too unpleasant. S -- pinpricks. Jewish children weren't allowed to go on the excursions any longer, and that sort of thing. Although, in my school it was relatively liberal, I mean, but things came to the point when I ha -- I went -- I left that school and went to a Jewish school, a Jewish private school.

Q: You said pinpricks, so just what did you mean?

A: Oh, well, Jewish children were sat at the -- sat at the back, maybe, and princ -- principally that we cou -- weren't allowed to go to the -- to the excursions. The school had a house in the country that belonged to the school. I don't think I'm wrong to saying that the -- it was mainly built by Jewish parents, with Jewish parent's money, but they weren't allowed to go there any more, and that was very, very hard. The class went twice a year, once in the summer, and once in the winter. And they weren't allowed to go any more.

Q: How was that explained? Did someone stand up at the front of the class? I mean, how did you -- how was that explained to you?

A: Well, lip te -- I don't remember that very clearly, but the teacher who organized it said, "We're going from the seventh to the 14th, and the Jewish children can't go over there." I don't remember that very clearly, but there was no doubt about it, that we had to stay

behind. There were also performances for Christmas for some sort of -- the whole class took part, but that was when the Jewish children were not allowed to take part in the performances any more. Well, maybe even more than pinpricks for -- for a child.

Q: So was there a point when all of the children left the school, or finally that your family said, we want [indecipherable]

A: Well, there wer -- didn't -- n-n-not everybody left at the same time.

Q: Okay.

A: But they were always getting less, and wasn't to be done any more.

Q: Did this make your family become any closer to the Jewish community in Berlin?

A: Hardly. No, hardly. There was -- as we're not allowed to go any more to the cinema, to the concerts, to the opera, to the theater, the Jewish community organized a Jewish cultural club, and that's where -- where we went, there.

Q: So it did, a little bit.

A: Oh, the Jewish community in Berlin did a lot in -- in the way of cultural activities, although there is a s -- there are people who nowadays say, maybe with some reason, that was a fault. If everything had been cut off, and no substitute, cultural activities would have been offered, people might have realized it sooner, what was coming -- what was coming. I don't know. We enjoyed it at the time, but it might have been better if na -- if it had been left as it was, and not offer any alternative.

Q: So your father took you to some of these events, your father and mother?

A: Well, ow -- to where?

Q: To the Jewish cultural events that were organized [indecipherable]

A: Yes, yes, I -- I went with a friend to concerts, for opera. They did quite a lot.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: My mother always regularly went to the opera, when it was still possible, and then of course, she -- she missed that very much. She was quite a talented musician, she played the piano. But, nothing professional.

Q: Did you have a piano in the house?

A: Yes. I had also piano lessons.

Q: So, things were changing, but as you said, adjustments were being made, so it didn't seem like there was --

A: Very gradually -- very gradually.

Q: Mm-hm. Okay.

A: But as I say, I lived in a big town, and somebody who lived in a small town, or in the country would tell quite a different story.

Q: Di -- did you hear anything about what was happening with your grandparents, and your uncles, and --

A: No. Everybody was more or less the same, that they ignored, and thought it would pass.

Q: Did you -- any of your friends, or family friends, did -- did you see them making plans, and -- and leaving, for instance?

A: Gradually, yes, gradually [inaudible]

Q: Leaving Berlin?

A: No, leaving the country.

Q: Leaving the country.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And what was -- if -- if your family talked about that, what did they say?

A: Oh, it was talked about a lot. My father, like very many other Jewish men, said, "I've been in the f -- I've been a soldier, I fought for Germany, nothing will ever happen to me." So many people said that. And this was -- I now remember when I left primary school, went into high school, if I remember rightly, the permission to enter high school was only given because my father was a so -- had been a soldier. And even that should have given people food for thought.

Q: But at that point your father was right? I mean, you were able to go into high school because he had been a soldier.

A: Yes, but I mean, it should have been a right fo -- for e -- for e -- there were many people in high school whose father was not in the war. So that shouldn't be a reason.

Q: Just going back again, if you can try to remember if they're, you know, as things changed, and you couldn't go, for instance with your school on the excursions, or when

you finally did decide to leave the school, what was the discussion with your parents like, or how did they tell you, we think it's time for you to go to a different school?

A: I -- I think it wasn't a decision my parents did, it was a natural thing to -- I don't remember that there was a discussion about it. Other -- my other colleagues, other friends left, and so I left, too. And that was not something I remember as a trauma.

Q: When you got to the new school, what was the atmosphere like?

A: I went to a very small school, I don't think there were more than 50 people. An interesting school in as much as there were a Jewish school, and there were very little room for people who were Jewish related, not Jewish by religion, and who didn't have no -- nowhere to go to, really. And this school took all children in who were in any danger. They -- strangely enough, there was just one thing that was not allowed. That -- she -- this -- this school belonged -- belonged to a woman, a highly educated woman, who didn't want to have any Zionists in her school. She was -- it seems incredible today, a Nationalist. She later immigrated too, to the United States, and saved her life, while through her influence, a number of people stayed in her school -- i-in Germany, because of her influence.

Q: You said it was a school for any child in danger, could you tell us a little bit more about that?

A: Well, I don't want to use er -- the word non-Aryan, because I hate the word, but, I mean, that explained it -- explained it. Was a Jewish father, a Christian mother, or something like this, who were just as much in danger than -- than the purely Jewish children.

Q: What was her name?

A: Lachman. Dr. Vera Lachman. She was an extraordinary woman, she could -- she had to original Greek book before her, of the Odyssey and the Iliad, and read it to us in German, translating it. On the other hand, she spoke fluently is -- islane -- the language they speak in islend -- ice -- Iceland.

Q: Iceland.

A: Iceland.

Q: So she wasn't just a principal, she taught you, too.

A: She taught, she taught. And she -- it was a very small school. The commercial path didn't make any difference to her at all. I think she got into a very great [indecipherable]. But we really had excellent teachers for the different subjects, who just came in to teach two or three lessons a week. [indecipherable] Al-all my, if I may say so, intellectual interests which I might have, I owe to her. No, that is not quite true, as I said, my father took me to the museums every Sunday on -- although he wasn't an int -- intellectual.

Q: Did the school cost anything?

A: The school cost something, but those who couldn't pay, didn't.

Q: And do you remember if your family --

A: I don't think we paid anything.

Q: I think we'll stop now, for a -- a minute or two, and we'll change the tape. We'll take a little break, okay?

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: I wanted to just go again, over some of the changes that were going on. You had mentioned seeing the people, seeing the marching. Who -- who exactly was it, who was marching? Do you remember?

A: Who was marching?

Q: Who?

A: Well, the Nazi army, the so-called SA. I don't know what [indecipherable]. The -- they were in uniforms, and they were a political military arms of the regime.

Q: Did you ever see any evidence of the Hitler youth?

A: Oh yes, they were all around. Hitler youth were the male, and they were called -- for the girls there was another organization, BDN, Bund Deutsch Nation, German girls [indecipherable] association of German girls. They were youth movements. Oh yes, they were -- they wore uniforms, and they were all around.

Q: They wore uniforms just every day, or on certain days?

A: That was different, some wore them all the time, some only wore them to -- for the meeting.

Q: Did some of your friends, the children who had been your friends join the --

A: Everybody -- everybody had to join. And there were -- i-if -- I -- I would have joined, too, in a different situation, because they did nice things. They sang, and they walked, and they went on excursion. I -- I think I would have tried them, too. Everybody had to, but it's very possible that I would have enjoyed it. That part of it was -- well, it wasn't harmless, because it turned -- it got increasingly worse, but as such it was a harmless situation at the time, for the moment.

Q: Do you remember seeing some of the kids going off on these excursions, and wanting to be with them, or --

Q: Well, they were all over the place, you went to a railway station, and there they were, all ready to go into the railway. I don't remember that my heart was in it, that I all means wanted to, and later on there was plenty of -- of mistrust and hate. But before all this happened, I could imagine that I would have liked to join.

Q: You mention mistrust and hate. Some of the -- the young people that you had been friends with, and now you're not going to school with them, maybe you're not even in contact, did -- did you begin to become suspicious or alienated from old friends and neighbors?

A: One certainly had to become alienated and suspicious. I think the real hate came later.

Q: Okay. C-Can you remember a situation with a neighbor, or a -- a friend, where you had some sort of experience where you thought, mm, I don't trust this person any more? Or perhaps your parents had it?

A: My parents certainly had it. I mean, you knew that you couldn't trust anybody, you couldn't talk in your own living room without being afraid that the telephone was -- cou -- it's -- it's a word that's used very much now.

Q: Bugged.

A: Bugged. I mean, even in those days, one was afraid of bugging.

Q: And this is about what year?

A: From '33 on, but it got increasinging -- increasingly worse.

Q: So would your mother or father say no, don't say that on the phone, or something, to you, or to each other?

A: I -- I don't remember them saying that. I do remember that it was always understood. I -- I haven't got rid of that feeling to this day. I mean, it wouldn't be a political situation, I wouldn't -- I don't want to discuss on the telephone, but if I would say our friend X is a terrible person, I wouldn't say that on the telephone. I don't know whether that's my past that makes me do that, but I'm certainly careful.

Q: What were some other things that you and your family started being careful about? Do you remember details of daily life shifting because you had to be more careful?

A: No, I don't really remember that. Again, that's because I lived in a big town.

Q: Now, your father got up and went to his shop every day. Did -- did he ever come home and tell you about experiences, or did you ever -- were you ever with him, and encountered an SS person?

A: There was nothing -- there was nothing like that, that hit us personally.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: I mean, the friendships, yes, but nothing in -- my parents also lost some friends. On the -- on the other hand, there were friends who stuck to them. They might not make a big show of coming to see them, but there were many -- well, I don't think my parents had many friends, but there were some who -- who stuck to them.

Q: There was a book burning in Berlin.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you n -- can you tell us about that?

A: No, I can't tell you anything about that. I know that really as history. I wasn't witness, and it was talked about, but I can't say anything mo -- more about it. I -- they might have -- my parents might have been more aware of it, but I don't remember anything about that.

Q: Did you ever witness, for instance, a Nazi ha-have an interaction with a Jewish person that was disturbing to you?

A: No.

Q: Just in a kind of casual way.

A: No.

Q: What was it like for you when you came across somebody from the Hitler youth, or a Nazi, let's say. I mean, what was your reaction?

A: Well, one met them all the time on the -- on the road. There was no reaction. Maybe because, so I'm told, I have not what was then considered a typical Jewish appearance, so it -- it never -- I've never personally experienced any anti-Semitism. Personally, to me, I was never felt that I'm being aggressively treated.

Q: Do you know if your parents ever considered pretending you were Christian?

A: No, no. Pretending that I was?

Q: Christian.

A: No, no, never. There was never a question about that. And I don't think one could have done. I mean, there were documents which proved that was not in it at all.

Q: Not a possibility?

A: E-Except maybe that my mother let me go to a concert, which I shouldn't have done.

Q: Can you tell us about that?

A: Well, there's nothing much to tell. There were tickets, and I just went in. There wasn't a -- at the entrance, anybody who would ask me whether I am Jewish or not Jewish. I mean, it wasn't done that way, it's just Jews didn't go to a concert, weren't allowed to, and I

did. I remember that very clearly. I didn't feel there was any danger. Later on, I revolted against that, I didn't want to do things which weren't allowed for Jews. I don't remember ever sitting down on a bench in the park where it was written Jews and dogs are not allowed. I don't remember doing that. Another thing which might be interesting, we -- I said we were very liberal Jews, and nowadays, of course, everybody celebrates Christmas. We always celebrated Christmas, was part of our tradition. And -- and from 30 -- and it was a lovely family affair, and very warm and close. We celebrated a Jewish festival, and we celebrated Christmas, and we searched for Easter eggs at Easter. So we didn't leave anything out. But I think from '37, we revolted against it, very much to the sorrow of my parents, we didn't want to have any more Christmas celebrations. So we went instead to -- to relatives of mine who did continue celebrating, they were only half Jewish. I hate these words, but my grandmother's youngest sister had married a non-Jew, so they continued and we went there.

Q: You say you revolted, you and your sister, what -- what were you revolting against?

A: Yes, against -- well, actually it's a religious festival, we didn't celebrate it as a religious festival, but I think it was a German tradition, and we revolted to -- to a German rid -- tradition -- against a German tradition.

Q: So there came a point where you no longer wanted to participate in the things that you weren't allowed to participate in.

A: No, no.

Q: Mm-hm. And you said that made your parents sad?

A: Yes, because they liked to do -- to have a nice atmosphere, a Christmas atmosphere in Germany is particularly nice, and so they missed the family tradition.

Q: At one point, did -- was there a point when you began to feel fear in your daily life?

A: When my father, after the so-called Kristall night, came t -- went to a concentration camp for I think three or four weeks, there was fear in the family, yes, certainly.

Q: You were still home during Kristallnacht?

A: I was still home.

Q: Oh, then let's -- ca-can you tell us about what happened on Kristallnacht?

A: Yes, I can tell you exactly. On the night itself we stayed at home, there was nothing, but in the morning my father thought he had to go out and see what happened to his business, and while he was out, the secret police came to get him. And my father wasn't home, so my mother said he wasn't home, and the man asked, I believe quite politely, whether there was anybody else in the house. And she said, "Just an old sewing woman." Which

was the truth, there was an old lady who did our sewing. She did not say that her brother was also in the -- in the -- in the apartment, who came from Breslau, from another city. So the man went away, and said my father had to report to the police station when he comes back. I don't know when and where my uncle left the house, but I do know that my father came back, and he said, "Oh, they said I should come to the police station, so I'm going." My mother said, "Don't go." He said, "Of course I have to go. If I don't go they'll take my -- my wife and my daughters." So he went. That's a typical German man for you, who observes the law of the land. He was taken -- I remember also he was allowed to make a phone call to us, to my mother, and saying he was now going away. He went to the concentration camp. Not one of your extermination camps, but a concentration camp.

Q: I-If you could go back, and you said nothing happened the night a -- but did you know something was going on on Kristallnacht? How did you know it? If you could tell us a little bit --

A: Must have been something over the radio.

Q: Did you see anything outside your window?

A: No, I don't think I was allowed to go outside. I do remember to my shame, that afterwards, a day after or so, I was told to go out to do some shopping or other, and my mother asked me to bring her some -- some -- something to calm her nerves, in the drugstore. I'd forgotten that. And haven't -- haven't ever forgotten that I've forgotten it. And she needed it badly.

Q: And when you did go out, did you see anything unusual?

A: Yes, I saw the -- the men in uniform, standing outside Jewish shops, and preventing people to go in. I believe I remember that, it might be that I saw pictures of it, but I do believe I remember that.

Q: And tell us what happened with your father's shop.

A: I don't know, it was never -- i-i-it was smashed. I remember being there again, and they didn't talk about it in front of me. I don't remember that. But he never went there again, afterwards it was gone. I don't know whether it's one of the employees took over, I can't tell.

Q: So, what you understood was one day he had a shop, and he -- he went -- he went every day, and then one day that was it, he didn't.

A: No. And then for four weeks he was gone, and I can't remember what wo -- what it was like when he came back. From that point on, they tried very hard for -- to immigrate, and as that was very hard, at least try to get me to England on a children's transport.

Q: What were those four weeks like without your father at home? What did your mother do?

A: Well, my mother was nervous, and I didn't bring her any-anything to calm her nerves, but I'm sure afterwards she did it. Don't remember that, whether she try -- if she went to the police, and -- station and tried -- tried any -- I don't remember that.

Q: And -- but your sister was around?

A: Pardon?

Q: Was your sister there?

A: My sister was there. My sister went to England in February, so that was all at that time being organized to get things --

Q: So tell us about your father coming home.

A: Well, most men who came home had a shaven head, but as my father didn't have any hair on his head anyway, so he didn't look very different. I don't think he -- yes, he did talk about it. He said it was very, very hard for many people because they were beaten. But if you were put in a line, and were told to keep still, and somebody hit you from the back on your head, and you turned round, that was almost fatal. There were two kinds of people who managed better than others. One were the wa -- the soldiers in the first World War, the others were the Communists. The Communists at least had an ideal, and knew what it was -- for what they were put into prison, or concentration camp. And the s-soldiers, former soldiers knew what discipline was, so they didn't turn around. So he wasn't treated as badly as some. Bad enough I'm sure [indecipherable] and the fear was very great.

Q: Did you feel that he would come home? I mean, what was the feeling those four weeks?

A: Looking back I think I always knew he would coming ba -- one didn't know about these terminal concentration camps. They didn't exist at the time. So we always hoped and thought he'll be coming home. Or maybe I was just a child, and felt things will turn out all right.

Q: Well, if your father wasn't working, then how did your mother provide for you?

A: I don't know. That's a mystery, I don't know. I'm sure there were a great many savings, I don't know what happened in that time. Whether other people helped, or the Jewish community as such helped. I can't tell, I don't know.

Q: And you say after he was in concentration camp, then they tried to emigrate, what was -- where were they trying to go?

A: Anywhere. To England if possible. To the United States. Later on also to south ameri -- atose -- South America, yes. I remember a letter, very late in the day, when we were already in England, they even considered Shanghai because that was the only place in the world where you could go where there was -- without a visa. That's to say there was no system of closing the door. But the sister of my mother went there, and it was very hard life in -- in Shanghai. And she wrote back, "You better stay where you are. It couldn't be worse in a concentration camp." To her everlasting shame. But even so, I'm not quite sure whether my parents would have brot -- came up with the courage. I remember reading somewhere it would have been so far away from you, or it would have been so far. I mean, people in Shanghai survived. They're all living today in the United States, if they haven't died a natural death.

Q: When you say they tried to emigrate, what did that mean? Did they spend the day going to embassies, or what did they [indecipherable] that mean.

A: A -- no, my fa -- my father had a brother who already immigrated to Holland, so I remember him traveling to Holland to try to get into Holland. I think he rather enjoyed the trip. As a -- was not much to it. But, I mean, it was a serious undertaking. Subsequently his brother and his wife were also deported and murdered. His two ch -- do -- their two daughters survived, they are living today in the United States. I think they survived in hiding, they were baptized, which was later revoked, and they could tell a very good story, too.

Q: What are their names?

A: The one lives in Florida, and the other in New York City.

Q: And what are their names?

A: Mariana Greenbloom, and Hannah -- she reverted to her maiden name, Saxe.

Q: Oh, okay. So when your father traveled to Holland, di -- was there ever any consideration that he just perhaps might stay there?

A: Nothing illegal ever entered into my parents mind. I mean, there wouldn't be -- no sin attached to it, whatsoever, but I don't think it ever entered into their mind. I have friends who went over the border illegally. But Holland wouldn't have been a solution at all.

Q: So at that point when they were trying so hard to emigrate, what were they saying about the future? Wh-What were they saying to you about why they were trying so hard?

A: Well, at that point, we -- everybody knew why they have to immigrate. My sister went to England a few months before I did. I think she went in February, I went in -- in March. She was beyond the age of kindertransport, she went as a housemaid, she had a permit as a housemaid. Now, my parents tried very much to go and g-get into England as a married couple. He -- he couldn't drive, but as a gardener, and as a cook, or something like this.

My father had a course in -- came up yesterday -- in pedicule. Oh, and I have letters when he -- they tried to learn English, and they had courses to learn Spanish, and my mother had a course in learning to sew underwear. So they were preparing for immigration.

Q: And when do you first remember hearing about you possibly going o -- to England by yourself?

A: My school closed down Christmas when there was a [indecipherable] vacation, Christmas, '38, and from then on it was -- tried very hard to get, generally, children out, and even if it was an opportunity open still.

Q: Your school closed permanently then? You said your school closed, did it close --

A: It -- i-it -- it was closed, yes, permanently. It wa -- finished.

Q: How was it closed?

A: By decree. Strangely enough that school, a very tiny building, was next to the house of Himmler, and that he allowed those Jewish children to make a noise in the interval, and play around, and his two blonde children looking over the wall and watching us, it's one of the amazing things, and I think he was too busy really, doing hart -- harm, to -- to bother about that. But in -- in December we couldn't go back to school any more, that was finished.

Q: Do you remember saying good-bye to the teacher that you liked so much?

A: I met her again in New York later on. No, I don't remember saying good-bye to her, I don't remember seeing her. But I think she was behind the organization to get the children out at that point.

Q: What did your parents tell you as they started to talk about you possibly going to England?

A: It was generally understood that immigration has to be done, and there was a saying, what a good job when we have the children out, I mean to save the children. I might add that from the moment when the school closed, till I actually could immigrate, three months, I went to a household school, I was supposed to la -- do I -- do -- do something, not to let the children just hang around and not doing anything, and being [inaudible]. So I learned how to sweep and dust. Not very successfully, but that -- that -- some were allowed to cook, but I don't think I ever graduated to cooking.

Q: So how -- you say your parents were taking classes, how was your mother preparing you to possibly leave? What was -- what else was going on? Was she teaching you anything, or buying, or making clothes for you?

A: She was making clothes for me, and preparing all the things I had to take along.

Q: And what was -- what was that?

A: Just clothes, and I don't think there was anything special. Life was much simpler in those days. What I did take along were photographs. I have photographs of my mother as a young girl, and from there on. And apparently my sister took all the correspondence and all, because it's with me. And it was saved, it's in our hands. That -- that she put into the -- that was given to us.

Q: What did you think about going? I mean, what -- how did you imagine it might be? What -- did it seem like an adventure to you, or something you didn't want to go?

A: At one poi -- point during the trip, it was an adventure, we went by ship. But beforehand I don't remember what I really thought about it. I thought it was a necessity. I was homesick, even then, before I left home. But that's -- can't remember any more reaction to it. Everybody was preparing to go, so it was nothing special that was just for me.

Q: Do you remember your mother helping you pack, packing you the few nights before?

A: I don't think it was a question of helping me, I'm sure she packed. And there were lists made of everything that was in there -- in the [inaudible]. You were only allowed -- oh yes, so nothing variable left. I mean, you couldn't take any money with you. I left with 10 marks in my purse. And with two knives and two forks, and two spoons, silver cutlery. I think my sister took more, because she was more marriageable age, and her relatives gave her -- her father's brothers gave the money to -- I don't know, her. Yes and no. I remember she had a set of coffee cups, and bed linen, and that sort of th -- that's -- I didn't take it on her -- s-she was more marriageable age.

Q: What were you supposed to do with the forks and spoons?

A: Well just the only valuable thing I could take out that was silver.

Q: No jewelry? Your mother didn't send you away with any jewelry, or --

A: No. I don't think there was anything special, but it was -- some people who were brave, took it to some other place -- to Turkey, somebody left for Turkey, and he took something along, and it was la-later sent to me. I don't know any more when, but it came into my possession later on.

Q: And what was that?

A: Bracelets, and a little watch, which I still have in my possession. Things like that, trinkets.

Q: Was there anything special that you wanted to take? I don't know what it would have been, a book, or something that was your favorite thing?

A: Probably, probably.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Probably, yes.

Q: Can you describe the night before you left?

A: No. No, don't remember it. I remember leaving, but I don't remember the night before. My father took me to the railway station. I always understood that my mother didn't have the courage or the strength to take me, but I've read recently that only one part of the parents could take you to the railway station.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we were sitting in the -- in the train, and I remember it was quite a cheerful occasion, actually. It was a sort of adventure. It wasn't cheerful at all for my parents. And then we left the -- the person or persons who accompanied us, because there were crowds of children, were very skillful, they made us sing. And then we came to Hamburg, to the port. And there was con -- control, and there were some women who didn't have -- who -- who made a -- a s -- personal search, whether we had anything on our bodies. And I do remember that I thought if I was tickly, I would laugh now. I wasn't, but it just made a grin appear on my face, I'm quite sure. So it wasn't a terrib -- for us, or for me, it wasn't a dramatic situation. And then we came on board ship, and as I said, the person who was respons -- or persons were responsible, they were very skillful. They made us sing, and we were quite cheerful.

Q: Do you remember saying good-bye to your mother?

A: No. I remember my father waving, and -- but I don't remember that [indecipherable]. I'm sure they weren't cheerful in any way.

Q: You remember him waving, you're in the train?

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah. A-And then you got to Hamburg, and you went on the boat?

A: I went on the boat, I went to Southampton, but there was a stopover in France, in Avri, and we could go make a land excursion, and that was an adventure. I mean, I've never been outside Germany, and that was an adventure. And then the boat went on, and landed in Southampton, and from Southampton we went by train. And in Southampton there was a number of ladies who gave each child a box with sweets, and sandwich, and so on. And then we went to London, to Waterloo Station -- this is all very vivid in my remembrance. And we sat on wooden benches, and the name was called. You see, some youngsters

went to -- with the kindertransport to s -- to a boarding school. Some went to a Quaker organization, and many went to private people who wanted to take a Jewish child in. And I was one of those. We didn't know the people. There was some correspondence beforehand, but -- so the name was called, and the name of the person who would take the child in, or the school, or ever was responsible. And that really when life started in earnest. There were many children crying because they only realized at that moment they had left home and parents. I don't think I was crying. But then my name was called, and the la -- the name of the lady who was expecting me. I had an aunt living in London at the time, she was at the station. She waved to me from afar, greeted me in some manner or other, but not very long, because people didn't want to interfere, or be, you know. So Mrs. Stevenson took hold of me, and we walked away, and she drove me to her home.

Q: Mrs. Stevenson was your guardian?

A: Yeah.

Q: What -- what was your first impression of her?

A: Oh, she was an elegant woman. I was lucky, she could speak some German. She was of Austrian extraction. I think she was a little bit Jewish. I mean, I say a little bit because she didn't make much of it. But she's been in England, I think of -- of a first generation, second generation, something like that. So she could speak some German. Because I've learned English at school, but there's nothing much to -- about, about my English.

Q: When did it hit you that you had left your parents?

A: At that moment. I mean, it's a complete stranger, and I was 15 going onto 16, but in those days one was still considered a child, and was a child. I was expected to go -- I expected to continue school, but when I arrived and they realized in a month or two ti -- ti -- I -- I will be 16, they said, "N-No more school for you, it's too expensive." You had to be a uniform, and whatever, no school. And was a -- that was a very big blow to me.

Q: What was your first day or night like in the family?

A: Probably very sad, I don't remember well. She was really -- I don't know -- I can't to this day say why they took some Jewish German child in, I don't know. She was a very hard woman, extremely hard woman. He was a -- a nice, warm, maybe too warm man in his, I would say early 60's. He was -- had been born in India, Scottish extraction, and he was a typical colonial English -- Scotchman. He went to England to study medicine, lived in India for many years practicing medicine in -- in -- in -- in India, and then he went to -- back to England. He had to practice in England. Was both their second marriages, and he was a widower, and she was divorced, and she was a charming, good looking woman, and I think she was as cold as ice. And -- which doesn't make sense why I -- why they took a German Jewish child in, but that's how it was.

Q: Did they have other children?

A: Yes. Not together. He had a daughter, and she had a daughter.

Q: So when you got to the house, you weren't the only child?

A: No, they -- their children weren't living there.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Later on in the war, her daughter came to live there, and I moved from her room, which today is perfectly clear, and normal, and right to me. I had a nice room, and I had to move out -- out of that room into a maid's room, which hurt me very much, but I don't think that would have -- should have done much difference to me.

Q: So -- so what -- what were your feelings in those first days about being there?

A: About?

Q: About being there.

A: I was terribly lonely, I had ho -- was homesick. My sister lived in -- in London, I must have talked to her somewhere, although I didn't meet her very soon. I didn't get out there -- it wa -- it was near London, I -- where I went in Surrey, near Croidon. Oh well, I don't think I had much feeling, I just was raw and traumatic -- traumatized [indecipherable]

Q: And if you weren't going to school, what did you start doing?

A: Yes. Then they decided I was going to be a children's nurse. I was going to be trained as a children's nurse, and I was put into a day nursery. That's to say, day as far as the children are concerned. The -- the nurses, the trainees stayed there. And that was --

Q: You were sent to a -- like a school?

A: No, it wasn't a school --

Q: No? Training.

A: -- it was -- it was a day nursery, a real day nursery where the working women left their children in the morning.

Q: Oh, a daycare center.

A: Daycare center, yeah.

Q: Okay, okay, okay.

A: Well, that was an extremely hard time for me. In the morning, the di -- the children changed their clothes. They had clothes that belonged to the daycare center, and they had to be washed. So one of my jobs at one time was to wash clothes. Now, there's no harm in this, if somebody tells you how to wash clothes. I can only advise you never to wash clothes like that. I didn't have any more skin on my fingers. I mean, my life has been saved, so I'm not complaining, I'm just telling you. In the morning my -- my fingers were all raw. I couldn't hardly do this, but I had to wash washing again. Do the washing again. For some reason which is not understandable, we're not given enough food. Not because there wasn't enough food, but because, I suppose, the matron, and the sister learned at some school or other, you give so many grams of these vegetable, so many grams of that vegetable, and so many grams of meat. I suppose that must be the case. And you didn't help yourself, you're -- just like David Copperfield, it was put on your plate, like this. I was always hungry there. Now, the other fellow nurses -- trainees, were also hungry. But they went into the larder in the evening, secretly, and took whatever they needed to satisfy their hunger. They didn't take me with them, but they said afterwards when it was found out, that it was me who had taken the food. I mean, that sort of thing I've never encountered in my life. I was taught sort of, one stuck together. I would have gone with them, I would have helped myself too, I was never a -- my English was as good as non-existent [indecipherable] in those days, and yes, I remember there was -- we were sleeping all together, 10 or something like that. And I had a drawing which I very much liked, and I took with me, my drawing teacher did that. And I put it with -- I put it on the wall with pins -- with -- and every morning it was found taken down. Now, I wouldn't, if I live in a house where there -- a house where there's a wall, I wouldn't advise anybody to do this either, but I would have talked to the girl, and said don't -- please don't pin it up, makes hole in the wall. But it's just taken down, and -- and that sort of -- those sort of things were very bad to take. And I had -- I remember very clearly that I had to take care of 25 children who had a rest after lunch. And they were supposed to close their eyes and sleep, if possible, but at least keep quiet. Well, under my care they didn't keep quiet, and I didn't know how to ke -- let them -- how to manage to keep them quiet. So I shouted at them, and I remember very clearly that I always said, "Shut your eyeses." Which was a great success in the way of humoring them, and they thought it was very funny indeed. So that was a -- and I remember more. I remember that every two weeks -- it could have been every week, there was no reason why half of the trainees stayed over, and the other could leave for the weekend. But however -- before every -- before that half which had the weekend off could leave, the whole place had to be cleaned, washed. Now, after awhile I realize if I just throw water over the furniture, that'll do nicely, and get us off quickly. But I had thought that cleaning the place means taking off whatever dirt. So it took me -- I'm always -- I've always been slow, it took me ages to get it, and the others couldn't leave. So that didn't -- couldn't leave until everything was finished. So that -- that didn't make me much more popular either. On the other hand, there was a party at -- which wasn't very far, the people, Stevenson, I lived -- I had -- they had brought me over, didn't live very far. They had a party, and there was cake left over. And the rest of the cake was brought to me. I had a chauffer at that time. It never occurred to me, I wasn't brought up that way, it never occurred to me when I had the cake, not to vide it -- divide it among everybody in equal parts. So everybody had something, but they didn't take me into the larder with them. One of the things that had to be done to be a children's nurse

one day, is to knit -- to knit something for a child. Well, I would never finished it, because there was always some -- something wrong with it, and I have to try -- like Penelope, I always say to -- to [indecipherable] again, and start all over again. I would never meant -- made it. That war broke out in September, and the -- the children were evacuated, and the place closed down. So I went back to those -- to family Stevenson, and thought I was lucky, but then my hard time really started.

Q: How so?

A: How -- why?

Q: Ho -- yes, why?

A: Well, I was a housemaid there, I lived with the family, which didn't help at all, didn't make it any better. I got a very small amount of money each week, tiny. Two dollars or something like that. And I was terribly lonely. Occasionally I went up to London with my sister, my relatives, and a friend, very good friend, but most of the time I was terribly lonely. I -- it was suggested to me -- and don't know now whether it before I went to the child care, or afterwards, it was suggested to me that I join the Girl Scouts, and I did go there one afternoon. I never went back again. And they were so -- there were uniforms, and -- and military drill, so to speak -- maybe it wasn't as bad as I -- I had the ex -- impression, but it reminded me too much of Nazi Germany, so I never went back, which was a big mistake, I might have made some [indecipherable] there. But nothing could make me go back.

Q: Why -- I -- why didn't you live with your aunt?

A: Every -- well, these people made me come over. They -- they gave the guarantee, and whatever it took. So, one of the things was not to interfere, after all, they took on the responsibility. On the other hand, my aunt, too, they had -- they were economically not settled down yet. I mean, it was difficult. After three years, they decided a child -- a child -- I was 18 by then, had to learn something, so I -- I did go away from them. It was very hard, they didn't want to let me go. I was a very bad maid, but I was very cheap. And was a hard struggle, but I did go to my aunt.

Q: How -- how did they treat you? You mentioned that Mrs. Stevenson was cold. Did -- did she -- just what was it like to be in the house with her? How did she treat you, or -- did -- did you have conversations with her?

A: By the time I learned to speak English, I had conversations with her, yes. I don't think she had any understanding of what was going on. I used to write letters, that took an awful long time. By hand, of course, not by computer. And I don't think we had much in common, but I can tell you one thing that might illustrate the coldness. I told you about our Christmas celebration. Well, in the beginning of December, or the middle of December, it was decided that the family was going away somewhere for Christmas. There was another maid in the house, she was also a Austrian refugee, but she didn't live

with the family, she came over as a maid. Everybody was going to leave the house, but the house couldn't be left alone. So it was decided that I should stay. So I stayed all alone over Christmas in the house. Snow was falling, to make it a picture. Well, when I learned that I couldn't leave, I couldn't go to my sister, to my relatives, I had the first nervous breakdown crying spell in my life. I couldn't stop myself. Afterwards, when it came to the 21st -- 24th of December, I'd calmed down, but it was very, very hard. So that might illustrate the coldness.

Q: And this is your first within a month or two of you having left your family?

A: No, I'd left the family in March.

Q: In March, okay. But it is your first holiday?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you in touch with your family?

A: Yes. At that time, that was still '39, there was regular correspondence. No, no, in -- war broke out in -- in September. But there was still some -- I could still get Red Cross messages, which I have with me, across [indecipherable] I think they went by porch -- via Portugal, and they could -- my parents could write on this -- on the other side of the -- of it, a reply.

Q: Did you tell your mother what was going on, or what was the -- what were the contents of the letters?

A: I don't have my letters any more, but I don't think I described it very drastically.

Q: I think we'll -- we'll go ahead and stop now.

End of Tape #2

Tape #3

Q: -- would like to talk a little bit about, you were in a -- a communication with your parents. Do you remember the first letter you got from your parents when you were living in England?

A: No, I don't remember the first [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, or -- or any of them?

Q: But, I mean, they wrote about daily life, they wrote about the birds, which -- the canary and the parakeet, and with people they met I knew. They wrote about my friends who came t -- who were still in Berlin, who came to visit them. And they were constantly writing about the possibility to come to England, and that these people -- the people my sister stayed with, they were very kind, and they tried to do their utmost to get permission for them to come over, and -- looking for a job as a couple who take care of the house. And that was a constant worry.

Q: Did you think that they might come?

A: Yes, we hoped the would come.

Q: You were out of Germany at this point, and you were perhaps maybe beginning to hear more about what was going on with Hitler. What -- what was your sense of what was happening in your country, the country you had left?

A: We were sure war would broke out, and I don't know whether many people thought so, but it never occurred to me that Hitler, Germany could win the war in the end. I mean, it was just a question of evil against good, and it was just impossible that Hitler could win the war. Which wasn't a factual statement, because it was very possible that Hitler might won the war.

Q: Did you -- I mean, when you thought of your parents, you thought about them coming, did you worry about them?

A: Yes, but I don't think I was more aware -- or fantasy didn't reach the point to which they could come. I mean, the worry wasn't as great as it should have been, if one could have imagined things that happened, could happen.

Q: Was there ever a point when you will -- that they had to move out of your house, and you realized it?

A: No, no, luckily they'd never had to move out the house. I -- I only realized that re -- fairly recently. I did think somehow, I don't know why, that they had to move out. They were deported from their own home. This one of the very few, small, consolation ca -- I had.

Q: You had mentioned the letters that you would send to them through the Red Cross, I just wonder if -- if you can share a few of those now.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Well, I believe I only have two left.

Q: That's fine.

A: This one is -- well, it's in German, of course. Do you want me translate it?

Q: Sure.

A: Ollie, which is my sister, and Inge send their mother -- their dear mother, the very best for her birthday. To keep healthy is a main thing. To osh -- to -- to you all, many kisses. You don't have to worry about us. There were so many words you were allowed to write. And my father replies on the backside. That was sent on the eighth of August, and my father replied on the 25th of November.

Q: O-Of what year?

A: '41. Many thanks for the wishes -- for the birthday wishes. Happy about your well being. We are very -- we have great desire to see you again -- it's another word there. Send gradulation for Ollie for her birthday. To you both, our sincerest, or dearest kisses. And then it's signed by him.

Q: And h-how would that arrive to you?

A: I don't remember that. I remember that I had to go to a certain place, to a certain Red Cross place, but I don't remember how it -- how it arrived at -- how it came into my hands. And this one is of October '49 -- '41. Happy Christmas to you both, and a good new year. Our thoughts are always with you. Let us hear from you soon. Love. And this is how my father answered. Beloved children, return your Christmas and New Year's wishes. Be happy and stay healthy. S -- congratulation to Ollie's birthday. What do -- and then there came -- come a number of names of friends, and relatives -- of friends and relatives, he asks how they're doing. Kisses, father, mother and the two birds.

Q: What were their names, the birds?

A: Well, the parakeet d -- was called Aquilar, and he -- I can't help that, and the canary was called Henshu. That was usual, to call a canary Henshu, as [indecipherable] name very much invented. I don't seem to have any other.

Q: Th-This was probably the only news they had of you?

A: Yes. At that time, the United States was in war with Germany, but I do not remember whether there were any news with -- by -- by relatives United States. It was very difficult, mail, also. I mean, there was no air mail as far as I remember, and ships were in great danger to be torpedoed on the way. So I don't remember that.

Q: Do you know anything about what your parents life was like in -- after you left?

A: Well, I don't know, I can only imagine. They left wor -- for -- they had special permission to use the public facilities, pu -- I'm sorry, that's the wrong expression, public transportation. And they worked, and they came home. In one letter my father writes that he had pneumonia, and was very, very sick, he was always a big man. And he writes we wouldn't recognize him again because he lost so much weight, and all his clothes are just not fitting him any more at all. And of course I suppose at that point, I'm not sure there was rationing, and I'm quite sure there was less rationing for -- for Jews, and all this was very hard. And the -- ever a constant longing for their children. There was no television at that time, any case it would have been taken away from them. There was not much diversion like it is today, so they'd had themselves, and they had a very few friends -- even non-Jewish friends, secretly. But life was very simple, and had to depend on one's own resources.

Q: Do you think that they felt that you were safe and well?

A: There was constant preoccupation whether we were well. And they did realize things weren't going so well with me -- with us -- Mrs. Stevenson. But well, they -- there was lots of preoccupation, but they hoped -- they knew I was -- we both were well, and that was a main thing for -- at least the children are safe, that was a constant saying.

Q: That was something they really wanted to accomplish.

A: Yes, yeah. Well, they didn't accomplish it. My sister died. And one of my unforgivable sins was that I let them know. I mean, I was pressured into it by relatives. They thought parents have to know, and after the war they'll be confronted with the fact, and this, so -- I mean, I could have avoided that, that they still had to have that sorrow.

Q: Well, tell us about how -- what -- what happened with your sister.

A: My sister died of cancer at -- at the age of 28.

Q: So which year was this that she -- which year was this?

A: That was in '42. And my parents were deported in '43, so there was no necessity at all, they would learn of it. I could have spared them that.

Q: How did you tell them, you wrote to them?

A: Via the Red Cross letter. I faked the letters for a long time, and that's probably why my aunt said they have to know. I think I overdone it. I wrote in her name, and she was always very exuberant, and I imitated that style. And I overdone that, probably, and my aunt thought to put a stop to it they should know. And I let myself be influenced. That was, well, my unforgivable sin.

Q: Did your sister die at home, or did she die in a hospital?

A: Well, she didn't, in that sense, have a home.

Q: Yeah.

A: She died in hospital.

Q: And was she very sick for a long time?

A: She was very sick.

Q: Were you involved in taking care of her?

A: Not in taking care of her. I lived with the [indecipherable] I visited her constantly -- not as constantly as I should have done, but she -- there were people who looked after her, too. I can't say that I looked after her, but I did go and see her frequently.

Q: You said by that time you had quit quarreling and become very good friends.

A: Oh yes, by that time we were very good friends, that was -- it's nothing that's on my conscience in that respect.

Q: So what led you to feeling that you should write to your parents?

A: I was influenced by my -- by my relatives. I would never have done it on my own account, which is no excuse, but their argument influenced me, and so I wrote it.

Q: Did they write back?

A: Yes. I still have letters about that. Oh, the following happened. I have a great -- I have -- that's why I have letters, and that's why I don't have letters I wrote, because I couldn't write, but they wrote as if they write to me, but it was never sent outside Germany. I had an uncle, a great-uncle who was not a Jew. He married my -- the sister of my Jewish grandmother. And he took care of them very well, and they were in constant contact with him. And he sent the letters to me after the war.

Q: Your parents wrote you letters that you never got when you -- but they kept writing, and writing.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then your great-uncle saved them?

A: Yes.

Q: And where are those letters?

A: In Washington.

Q: Oh. What was it like to get those? How old were you when you finally got them?

A: Well, the war was over in ’45, he might have sent them a little later, but I was 23.

Q: Was there a point when you gave up, that you thought that your parents wouldn’t be able to come? I mean, as the war progressed?

A: I didn’t quite ge --

Q: Was there a point -- I’m going back to your parents were in Germany, and you’re in England. Was there a point where you began to feel that they might not be able to emigrate?

A: Well, after war broke out, and -- well, the first year people still went to Shanghai, and there was still some immigration. I believe 1940, I can’t say when the phony war, as it was called, was over. I don’t think I -- there was any more chance, when real war began, that they could get out. But I’m not the only one who couldn’t imagine what would ge -- would happen. I must admit that I’m -- wasn’t constantly worried about it, because it was 18, 19, there’s so much that involves one’s own life. I probably didn’t see the danger in the same way as many other people didn’t see the danger. I mean, I saw danger, and it wasn’t -- I could leave that all unsaid, I think. No, but I couldn’t have done anything anyway. But one feels one’s own pains very strongly, too, at that age.

Q: What was it like for you when the war broke out, and then eventually, really, the war was felt profoundly in England? Did you experience it?

A: No -- the outbreak of war?

Q: Well, the bombing, the shift in -- you know, as the country really went actively to war.

A: Yes, I remember that very clearly, all of it. I remember clearly when Mr. Chamberlain on the radio declared war. Dr. Stevenson, who was a colonial Englishman, or Scotchman, stood up and -- when the national anthem was played. I remember that. And I remember the first bombing. I can’t s -- on London, that was -- s -- what you would consider a small bomb nowadays, but made a lot of noise, and frightened terribly at that time, because it was a quite new experience. I was alone, this was on a Sunday morning, I was alone in

the house, and I was terrified. The bomb fell quite close. The first thing I did, I went in the kitchen, turned off the gas. I was told that. And then I went to the -- I -- I h -- I have these very vivid memories, I went to the mirror, and looked into the mirror and wanted to see how a person looks who's really terrified. Well, there was lots of broken glass about, and afterwards I had to sweep it up when the people came back. And that was that for the time being. But it cured me. I think I'm perfectly honest in saying I was never afraid again. Things were quieting down, and the real bombing on London started when I was in London itself. I never went to a shelter, I slept in my bed, perfectly safe and sound -- no, safe I wouldn't say, but perfectly sound. I didn't hear anything. I inquired the next morning how the night has passed. On the other hand, I mention that always because it's -- human nature is so strange. I lived in a -- by that time in a very old house, and there were mice around, and I was terrified of mi -- I -- I am terrified of mice. And they ran around in my room, and when they did this, I woke up. But at that time, I realized it didn't really matter to anybody whether I am alive or dead. So that gives you a sense of safety. I could never go through that again without being afraid. It didn't matter.

Q: It didn't matter to anybody?

A: To -- no, well, I wasn't sure of my parent's death then, but I was in a vacuum, I was alone, so I n -- never really had a responsibility there. I have responsibility today, but I -- I can tell a funny story if you want to know. As I was very cool, calm and collected when my uncle had to go to a hospital. They called me to take care of his wife, and his two children. Well, so that anybody who is cool, calm and collected would be with them. Well, I went over, I slept there, and in the middle of the night the alarm sounded. So my aunt got up and called me, I didn't reply. She got her children ready, because it went downstairs, and she called me again, and the third time she took off my -- the covering off my bed. I didn't move, I didn't realize it. And when all the -- the all clear was sounded, she came back, put her children to bed, put the cover over me, and they told me all about it the next day. That is as far as my taking care of -- of them was concerned.

Q: Did this become a family joke?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: I-It -- it -- it strikes me for -- what you were saying a few moments back of how often you were by yourself.

A: I was?

Q: When you -- how often you were alone.

A: I was alone [indecipherable]

Q: Did you make any friends in those first couple weeks?

A: No, I didn't make any friends.

Q: Oh.

A: I didn't make any friends. I had a friend in London which I saw very seldom, but I was really very alone. After I left Stevenson, because my aunt -- my relatives said, "The child has to learn something." I went to live in London, I lived first with them, and then I lived in a furnished room, where the mi -- mice ran around. Then I had -- I was still very lonely, but I had a happy time. I worked in a factory where they make glasses, and there's a na -- there were another two refugees there, and we decided we want to study optics. So there was a course at -- today it's a different type of cour -- a university course, but at that time it was a course that took place on Sunday. So I went to school every Sunday, and I as I don -- didn't have any school finish -- that's not -- school certificate, and in order to graduate in optics, I had to have a school certificate. So at the same time I went three times in the -- in the evening to have -- to study for the soos -- school certificate. And in the factory I got my paycheck every week, I get paid a week, and I live by myself. I was still alone, but doing things which I liked, and that was really a relative happy time.

Q: Was that unusual for a young woman to live by herself?

A: I wouldn't know. I know that I had a difficulty finding the proper room, but that might have been more because of my foreign name, and hence of my Jewish -- Jewishness, because there's also quite a lot of anti-Semitism in England -- in -- anywhere in the world.

Q: Did you -- you just reminded me, but did you, after you left home, after you left Germany, did you ever celebrate Jewish holidays again?

A: No, no. No.

Q: Tell us what you know about what happened to your parents, and how you found out.

A: Only after the war.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Through this uncle, and through the different places one went to asov -- to inquire.

Q: What did you piece together, what happened to your parents?

A: Well, there's enough literature about what happened in Auschwitz, I didn't have to do any piecing together. I have official notification that they are considered dead.

Q: D-Do you know, though, how they were taken?

A: Yes. My mother wrote, and this I have. Short notice on pieces of paper that minutes before she was deported, that she's now going on a -- on -- on the trip. And she also

wrote day before that her -- my beloved husband has been taken, the whole factory -- whole -- whole people people in the factory have been taken. And she was left alone.

Q: Who do you think she was leaving the note for?

A: For this uncle, and for me. Take care of the child. The child was not a child any more by then.

Q: Do you have that?

A: Yes, I have that. Now my father was also giving notice to -- to this uncle that he was being taken away. He just managed to write the envelope, and he didn't manage any more than put three empty pages into it. That's the last notice of him. And this here above is written by the uncle, and this is practically the last -- this is the last but one notice she wrote. Do you want me to read it to you? My dears -- this is not meant for me, this is meant for those relatives. Please send the Red Cross formula to -- to our dear friend, send it back. But I don't know what she really refers to -- that will be sent from here. But be very careful what you would write -- whatever you would wri -- will write. This letter will be sent only if we are, with God's help -- I get a bit emotional [indecipherable] together again. That was it -- if we -- this letter will only be sent if with God's help, we'll be traveling together -- if we have to travel together. Farewell, stay healthy, and we hope -- we hope all ch -- we hope that also. Think of us -- no, think with us, of our beloved child. Love, Grete and Alfred. But this isn't the last one, they didn't go away together, my father was fetched two days earlier. Now, there is one letter from a friend -- from a non-Jewish friend who take -- took care of them in Berlin, obviously, and they made out that if mother and father would meet again, they would send a postcard one way or the other. And this friend writes that she did receive the postcard. So I am to think that they got together again in Breslau. I have never believed it, but I hope it is the truth.

Q: Did anyone ever see them at Auschwitz?

A: No. I don't know how long they stayed there. The end might have come very quickly, that's -- was told that. And this, on the first of March, my father was taken on the 27th of February.

Q: Which year?

A: '43. My very dears -- this is agains to -- to the relatives, not to me. I'm still waiting that one will take me to my beloved Alfred. He als -- he -- he -- he needs, after all, his things, his clothes, and I believe he also needs me. What -- how much he -- he'll be worried. The hours become very, very difficult. The arranged registered letter you will get only when I am out of the house, so that you will know -- so that you will know I have arranged it that way. Independently from that, I'll send you today, again, a small amount of money. This is -- it is enough if I have a little with me, and in the end it will be all for our child. Oh, it will be the -- to -- to the good of our child. Somehow, with God's help, shall we -- shall we get in contact with you again. To the list which you got from Mrs. B -- it's -- it's

almost incredible, these are people condemned to death -- in the list which you will receive from Mrs. B, is now also -- i-is edit, one electric watch, one red -- something with a -- something red with -- with -- some other things, and small things. A broom, a little icebox, and a bowl -- and a bowl, a glass bowl. The English boo -- books, one dress, one cap. Please do not write to our friend any questions. Please -- don't -- don't let her answer back. It could be -- it could be understood wrongly, and the results would be disastrous. Well, my dears, for the time being, keep well. Keep -- we -- we wish that for us, too. Most lovable greetings from your Grete. The icebox, and the broom are meant as a present. If we come back, we don't need it, and if we don't, it should be a remembrance for our friend. Can't believe that, can you? Now these are the two notes which my mother, I think, wrote literally minutes before being deported.

Q: She is very conscious of documenting what was going --

A: Well, this is typical German. There never existed a more typical German citizen than the German Jews. This is for my uncle. Go on the trip today. We are always -- our thoughts are always with you. Take care of our child. We -- we hope of our to see you again. Stay well. With very much love, yours everything, Grete. I'm trying to translate it -- and this is for me, this all has been sent to me after the war. I'm just thinking of the English word. Thinking -- s -- always with great sorrow, and in be -- with big love to you, and to all who are good to you. We travel today. Stay well. Good-bye. I hadn't looked at those papers for years. I think my guardian angel prevented me to looking at it in my happiest, and my unhappiest time. I had it in my hands again last November. It fell on me like a bomb.

Q: Where had they been?

A: Always close to me. They were -- they were in my house. I immigrated with them from England to the United States, and from the United States to Brazil, and they've always been with me.

Q: I mean, you say you don't know exactly what happened to your parents, but in some way you do, you know what your mother was thinking those last --

A: Yes.

Q: -- few hours.

A: And what physically happened to them, there's enough literature about it, too.

Q: Where were you when you got those? Where were you living?

A: When?

Q: When you originally got those. When your uncle gave them to you.

A: Oh, he send that to England. It was between ’45, and ’47.

Q: After the war -- when the war was over and you could begin to make contact, di -- di -- did you go back to Berlin?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: So how -- how long was it before you knew that your parents had been deported and killed.

A: Oh no, I knew that soon after the war, like everybody knew, everybody searched for [indecipherable], I had -- but there was no need for me personally to be in Germany to find that out.

Q: Did you ever see your uncle again?

A: No. I didn’t know him. I didn’t know him personally. He send photos, and I knew him through my parents, I knew him through photos. I didn’t -- I’ve never met him.

Q: She obviously had great faith in him.

A: Yes, but that developed with time, because he was such a -- he -- he was really a -- I mean, he always knew that he existed, but there was no close relationship. But that developed during the war, and he was so good to them, and far and above what was safe to him -- for him.

Q: What was his name?

A: Karl Heinrich Meyer.

Q: And di -- does he have children that live in Germany?

A: He had a daughter, yes, and the daughter had one child.

Q: You say that it was -- very quickly that there was no need to know what happened to people who had been deported. Ca -- can you talk a little bit about your first awareness of what happened in the concentration camps? Did you see it on a newsreel, or read about it? What -- what -- as you began to know what had really happened?

A: I don’t remember how I reacted or -- or -- or --

Q: Well, do you remember just what was that like, as that information began to become known?

A: I very soon lost hope. There were people who were searching years and years. I very soon believed what I read, and what I saw. And if they had been alive, they would have found ways to get in touch with me. That doesn't mean that I didn't search, or -- we searched together, people who were involved. But I didn't have much hope, no.

Q: Searching entailed looking through the lists of names?

A: Yes, and writing to the authorities who were doing these things. I mean, we had written, photocopied news that they were declared dead. And I took their word for it.

Q: Just tell us a little bit about what made you begin to think about leaving England.

A: Well, after I became a optician, I had a very nice job -- I left the factory, I had a very nice job, and I had more time, but I didn't have any more social life. I continued being very lonely. Not totally, but empty. And I had a cousin in the United States with who I corresponded, and he su -- put the idea into my head, and then -- he had relatives who give an affidavit, and I thought, it doesn't matter really, where I live, so I might just as well try something new. I was just as lonely in the United States.

Q: At that point did you still have contact with your original guardians, the Stevensons?

A: I did for a long -- yes, I -- I even wrote them from the us -- United States. I visited them, and I said good-bye to them, and I even wrote to them from the United States, but they weren't very much more interested in me. I don't know what became of them. They can't be alive any more now.

Q: I mean, that's surprising, because they -- that you didn't have a very easy time with them.

A: Yes, that's surprising, I'm surprised about my -- about it myself, yes. Yeah. He was a warmer -- at times almost too warmer, party. And he did send me Christmas greeting, and put a 10 pound note or whatever it was into the envelope, saying I should not thank him for it, I should not mention it. This just to illustrate what sort of people they were.

Q: You've said twice now that he was too warmer. Did he ever make you uncomfortable as a young girl?

A: He made me uncomfortable. Not seriously, but he did make me uncomfortable.

Q: He -- he was inappropriate sometimes?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes.

Q: Because I had read that that had been a situation that some of the young girls had encountered as they came over.

A: Yes. No, it was nothing -- I just giggled it away. But that was a fact. But I'm alive today, and it didn't really hurt me, and I wasn't -- I don't think anything serio -- serious harm would have come to me.

Q: But can I ask exactly what he did? What -- I mean, did he try to --

A: Well, he touch --

Q: -- have a relationship with you as a young girl?

A: No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: I mean, he touched me in inappropriate places, but not that seriously either.

Q: Did you tell anyone about that?

A: No, I just giggled it away, and I didn't sit on his lap any more. I mean, he was a father figure, so -- not that I was that naïve, but naïve enough to sit on his knees because he was a father figure really, and I realized there's nothing so terribly fatherly about it. But nothing really serious.

Q: Y-You said a couple times about how -- how lonely you were, what -- what -- what did make you feel less lonely? Was there anything, was it -- were there some people, or animals, or reading, or -- was there anything that you were able to find to sort of fill yourself up?

A: You mean what I did with my lonely time?

Q: Yeah, or -- yeah, I guess your lonely time, or what -- what was --

A: What --

Q: -- pleasing to you in that time when you were alone so much?

A: What was pleasing to me?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, I always read.

Q: Okay.

A: And three years, almost four years, I studied very intensively. I went to the -- there wasn't much time to -- I had no vacant time. That's to say I always knew what to do with myself. During that time in London, I went to -- went to the factory in the morning, I did my shopping with my ration coupons during lunchtime, I had something to eat. I came home to my room, to my furnished room, might have been five or six. And I made myself something to eat on a little stove, that size. Put a shilling in till the gas came out. And -- and I studied, and then I went three times in the evening -- three times a week in the evening I went to school, and I went to school on Sunday, so there wasn't much time to throw away, or not to [indecipherable] but I was just -- didn't have any close relationship with anybody. Not on a regular basis.

Q: And tell us a little bit about going to the United States. Were -- were you excited?

A: Did I?

Q: Tell us --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- a little bit about the United States, that [indecipherable]

A: Well, I arrived on board of the Queen Elizabeth, and there were many people on board of the Queen Elizabeth, and just for the comic relief, I stood in line, in big, huge lines, for the -- for the immigration ceremony. And the lady in front of me turned round, and said -- cause there's so many people on the Queen Elizabeth, "Last time I saw you, we were both bending over a basin, and you said, "Life isn't worth living."" You were so seasick. Then I arrived, friends came to meet me aboard ship. I don't know whether it was the same day, or the next day, they took me to a concert played by Jaffa Heifetz. That was very nice. And then I lived -- I lived in several places, but I spent this very small apartment in Greenwich Village was lent to me by this friend, and I lived there. And on weekda -- on weekends I went to New Jersey, and -- to spend time with them. But it was still lonely. I could go -- I eventually found a job at a doctor's office, which wasn't easy, although everybody I went to see said with your qualifications and your experience, it should be very easy to find a job, it wasn't. But I did find a job in the end, in a doctor's office, in a eye doctor's office [indecipherable]. But if I went to work and came home, and then didn't -- it didn't occ -- I -- I died, and nobody was the wiser for it until after four dee -- days, it couldn't be hidden any more. I think that would be a def -- a defin -- a definition to say that I was lonely.

Q: When did that change?

A: When I met my husband. I did have a boyfriend, so to speak, and he took me to a friend's one evening for dinner. And the boyfriend disappeared. But the people who had invited me for supper, called me one day. Now, I'm going to tell this story somewhat shorter. My husband had come to Brazil in '39, and he opened his farm, and then he came for a year to the United States in '47, '48, and that's where we met. And then he asked me for a date, and that was the beginning of the end.

Q: What is your -- what was your husband's name?

A: Pardon?

Q: Your husband's name?

A: Hans --Hans -- Hans Rosenthal.

Q: Okay, we'll stop now, for supper.

End of Tape #3

Tape #4

Q: Tell us ho -- why your husband went to Brazil originally.

A: Oh yes, he is a Jew, or he was a Jew. So -- it's a very long story, maybe. There was -- he went to a training farm in Germany, and they wanted to immigrate together. They were non-Zionists, they wanted to immigrate together. The other part of the story is that his brother, his older brother immigrated years before to Brazil. I don't know why Brazil and no other country, because he was engaged to a non-Jewish girl. And they had to leave the country very fast. She went first to France, and then later on to Brazil, and he went to Brazil.

Q: And so where did you get married?

A: In New York.

Q: Okay. And then he suggested that you move to Brazil?

A: No, he didn't suggest that I move to Brazil, and especially not after we got married. That was part of the plan. I mean, he told me all about what I have to expect in Brazil, and I thought I would like it.

Q: So here you are again, going off on another -- you know, to another country you've never been to, and a language that you don't know.

A: Oh yes, I like traveling, but that's another story. I am at home at last in Brazil, on my farm. And I'm not any more lonely. I live by myself, alone, but I'm not lonely. Can you see the difference?

Q: When did you know you were home? How did you know?

A: Within 24 hours. It's hardly not believable except that's a fact. I knew exactly, my husband, or my then to be husband explained everything there is, was very primitive. There's lots of virgin forest still there, which was already opened a path, and there was some coffee on it, and there was a house, a very small house. But we didn't have any electricity, we didn't have any running water, we didn't have a car, we had a two wheel carriage with a horse, or we went horseback riding. A little later my s -- s -- brother-in-law gave us a radio as a -- a wedding present. We did have -- we have kerosene lamps, and a kerosene icebox. It was really very, very primitive. I didn't mi -- on the first day or two I searched on the wall for the -- put the light on. But as I knew exactly what to expect, and the people I was going to meet -- and he explained everything to me, I was never for a moment feeling strange, except once, when the radio arrive as a wedding present. If we put the radio on, and I her -- heard the sounds from all four corners of the world, I felt I am really deep in the woods, but that passed very quickly.

Q: And you had children?

A: Yes, after we got married in ’49, I had my first child in ’51. That was two and a half years afterwards.

Q: You had four children?

A: I had four children, yes.

Q: And I’m curious, did you raise them in a religious way at all, celebrating the Jewish faith?

A: Well, yes, we tried in our very primitive way, we tried. They were always told that there were Jews, and what happened to their grandparents. And they were always informed.

Q: S-So the story of what happened to your parents, that wasn’t something you made a secret, or just didn’t discuss?

A: Oh no, on the contrary, on the contrary. It was always talked about. Oh, they even had religious instructions. Our neighbor, she -- we asked her to give [indecipherable] religious instruction, well, like a -- like you would have at school. They learned a little bit of Hebrew, and Bible history and so on.

Q: You mentioned once earlier going back to Berlin, I’d just like to ask a little bit more about that. Did you go to your street, the street where your house was -- your apartment?

A: Yes. That was very strange, my daughter -- my eldest daughter, who lived in Germany at the while, I told her at the time, she should go and see where her mother had lived. And she said, “Well, it looks very shabby and run down, but it’s there.” And years later when I went to Germany, I saw her in Munich, she said, “Do go and see it.” So I went there. As I said, I knew everything, but I didn’t really recognize it. Well, the house where I lived was just a construction place. There was -- everything was gone. The apartment where we lived was just one blank wall. I took a photo of that, and months later I realized the photographer had eliminated that. He didn’t -- he didn’t realize that I wanted to take a photo of the blank wall. It was all gone, and I never had that photo. But there’s nothing left of it. But that in itself doesn’t affect me emotionally.

Q: I wanted to ask a little bit more about Olga, actually. Can you just tell us a little bit about what it was like a-as she got sick? Where would you visit her, or would you -- would you spend time with her? What was sh -- what were the kinds of things she was thinking?

A: Well, she was always a very lively girl. I think in fact as a child, she had a certain nervous condition which made her overactive. And then -- you want to know about it. Well, I didn’t observe it at close range, because we lived apart. Not -- not really very apart, but we didn’t see one another. I remember her vividly in the hospital, being very sick. But I can’t say very much about the beginning of the sickness. She was always very thin, and I can’t say more about that, I don’t -- don’t remember it.

Q: Did she want you to not tell your parents, or to tell your parents?

A: That didn't come up, I don't think that came up.

Q: And she was 28, how long did she live with the cancer?

A: Well, one doesn't really know when it started, and she just didn't feel well. I don't think in the final stage it took very long, but long enough.

Q: Before she did get sick, though, were you and Olga able to do some things together? I mean, did it feel like your sister was living, you know, nearby, and that you would -- you would do things with her on, you know, some days.

A: Do things together with her?

Q: Yes.

A: No. I mean, build up a life together, live together?

Q: I -- I guess that's what I mean, maybe if you're not even living in the same apartment, but that you were relying on each other as sisters, again. Or was it because --

A: No, I was still living --

Q: Okay.

A: -- with the Stevenson then, and I was sort of tied down to them. I think at that point she didn't -- she wasn't a maid any more, she worked in a factory, sewing uniforms. And she also lived in furnished rooms. She may have even lived with a friend, but I don't recall that.

Q: But did she -- she ever get married?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did she ever get married?

A: No.

Q: She didn't, okay. Well, I think that's what I wanted to ask about, but I wonder if there are some things that I haven't asked you, that you would like to share.

A: Well, as this is a -- on the whole -- I -- I -- I'm a very happy person, and when life lets me, I'm happy. So this seems to be a terribly sad story, but as I said, I was home when I came to the farm. But -- I mean, it sort of -- well, I don't think it's out of proportion, but

it needs to be said that my husband died in ’73, and my eldest daughter died in ’48 -- ’84. ’84. So you asked me, I said I had four children, just to round the picture up.

Q: Well, I think that it would be good to show some of the photographs.

A: Yes.

Q: Think that they’ll adjust --

A: See that far, so I can’t say -- it’s written on the back who is who, so I wouldn’t -- can’t say this.

Q: Well, you could say just a general thing, when they’re ready.

A: Yeah. Mm.

Q: We’re ready now. Who is this? Is this your father’s family?

A: That’s my father’s siblings. Only the girl in the middle survived, the others were murdered.

Q: And this picture, who is this?

A: This is my father as a soldier in the first World War.

Q: And what is this building?

A: This is the house -- the apartment where I was born, lived all my life, and where I emigrated from, and also where my parents continued to live, and were deported from, from that apartment they were deported.

Q: Do you remember the address?

A: Yes. Fluta styshash examfofemsee. I even know the telephone number.

Q: And what is this picture?

A: This is one of my birthday parties. I’m at the extreme right, and the girl with the tilted head was a friend and a f -- far relative. She had a non-Jewish father, and a Jewish mother. They immigrated to Holland and survived. She managed to study medicine. She later emigrated to Canada, but I think she had a unhappy love affair and committed suicide.

Q: And the picture on top?

A: Yes, both pictures are more or less in the same place, i-in the kitchen of my -- of our apartment, and there are two birds, a canary, and a parakeet. And one of the letters I still received from my parents, or were given to me after the war, said that now, also, the birds have been taken away from them. Not only the gramophone, and the telephone, and whatever, even the birds have been taken away from us, and so the last thing that could give us a little bit of happiness in life, has also been taken away from us.

Q: Now this is a copy of what photo?

A: That's a family reunion -- well, just a family gathering, because my pa -- grandparents were in Berlin, it's in our apartment, and I might say from the upper row, from left to right. This is a great aunt from -- from me, she was murdered in Lódz. The next one is also a great aunt, she was also murdered. Then comes her husband, who was also murdered, and her two cousins, two daughters of the lady at the extreme left. They immigrated to England. One was a dentist, and other a social worker, but they both worked in factories in England. Then comes my aunt, who lived -- who immigrated to England. My sister, almost hidden behind my sister, my aunt's husband, the one who lived in England. At the extreme right at the bottom is my father. And then comes my -- going now from right to left, my grandfather, my grandmother, and my mo -- my -- my grandmother who -- my father, who was murdered in Auschwitz, my grandfather, who was lucky enough to die in '32. My grandmother, who together with her sister, was murdered in Lódz, and my mother, who was murdered in Auschwitz. That's, I think a collection of 12 people, and 50 percent were murdered.

Q: And this photograph here?

A: The photograph is a grave, and the gravestone of my grandfather. It says there, I believe the date of birth and death, and the name Hammond Copaulna. And below is the -- are the names of his two sons who died in the wa -- in the first World War. Below is a photocopy of the register they have at that cemetery. And it says the field and the number of my grandfather's pla -- grave. Below it is the place next to it, which was reserved for my grandfather -- for my grandmother, and it's empty, and it will always be empty, because she hasn't got a grave, she was murdered in -- in Lódz, in a concentration camp.

Q: And this photo?

A: That's my sister's grave, who died in '42. And I put up a plaque in memory of our parents Alfred and Grete Saxe because I always felt very strongly about the fact that there's no grave for my parents. So this just --

Q: Is this in London?

A: That's in London, yes.

Q: This photo here?

A: This is my sister. I think it must be the year 1940, because I do think she sent it to my parents. And at the back of it she wrote in her first, best English, isn't she a lovely girl? She wrote that herself.

Q: And this picture?

A: Well, this is a boat trip which my parents took in June '39. They send the photo to us. It's the sort of thing people who live in Berlin always -- often did on a Sunday. And the remarkable thing is they were still moving around freely, in -- before war broke out in '39. Now, my parents can be seen to the left. I can't know how to desc -- well, they -- they're on the photo. On the other side it's also written that they've been picking strawberries, wild strawberries in the wood, while the boat landed somewhere. And the thermos flask got broken during the searching for the strawberries. That's what's written on the backside.

Q: And this photo?

A: This is a Pesach celebration at my sister's relatives. Her father's brothers and sisters, and she had contact with them. She is at the extreme right, my sister.

Q: And this photo?

A: This -- the first lady at the right, sitting at the typewriter is my mother. She's in mourning because her first husband died in the first World War. She is -- she has to work because she has a child to bring up, and she worked for re-armament -- armament adminis -- for the re-armament administration. She's still in deep mourning.

Q: And who is this person?

A: This is a girlfriend of mine I started school life with, we started going to school together. My mother wrote that Inge is now s -- at the time of ri -- of her writing the letter, she is now swimming on her way to Shanghai, but she came to say good-bye to me before she left. Must be 1940. [indecipherable]

Q: And this photo?

A: This is my father in our house, in our apartment, which was sent to my sister's birthday, as a birthday greetings. He was then a very strong man, fat, you might say. He later on wrote that he was very sick, lost a tremendous amount of weight, and put in -- we wouldn't recognize him again. I mean the weight through undernourishment, and not being well. Well, he was taken very well care -- taken care of by my mother, but other circumstances made him not recover again, his former size.

Q: And what is this group here?

A: Well, this is in a place at the Baltic Sea, where we went several times during vacation time, to spend vacation there. Now, this is a group of people who just came together to be photographed. Haven't -- hadn't known one another before, and they'll never see one another again, but they are group photos, which was a habit to take at the time. I am -- my mother and my sister are in the picture, right up in the middle. I'm sitting on the lap of a lady who is probably the girlfriend of the gentleman who's lying down reading the paper. But the rest of the people I do not know, I haven't known before the picture was taken, and nobody ever will remember who the others are. But it was a habit in Germany at the time.

Q: Now, who is this gentleman here?

A: The gentleman at the right is my great grand-uncle. He was not Jewish, he married the sister of my grandmother, who was Jewish, but during the third [indecipherable] she was dead, he was a widower. He was a enormous help to my parents. He didn't -- he was not afraid to put himself out to made this bi -- Jewish niece and nephew. He went to Berlin, he lived in Hanover. He -- he gave them moral support, and material support also, in the way that he kept all of my corres -- all the correspondence which was sent to him, which were meant for me, and which he sent to me after the war. My mother wrote on one occasion, he is like a father to her.

Q: And his name?

A: Karl Heinrich Meyer. Next to him is his grandson, and his daughter.

Q: And this?

A: This is a Red Cross message, which was still ali -- there -- there was no correspondence between the two countries, England, and Germany, dur -- we -- after war broke out. But it was still a possibility to send messages of so many words to Germany by the Red Cross. So I send those. I believe I could send messages from England, and my parents could, on the other side, reply, and I got it back again. But I don't think it worked the other way around, I don't think they could send messages on their own. They could only reply, they couldn't send any messages.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: That's a reply --

End of Tape #4

Conclusion of Interview