

USHMM --Herman Goldberg (5-15-96)

Tape 1 of 3

(beep)

Q: ...name, date of birth, where were you born?

A: I was born November 15, November 20, 1915 in Brooklyn, New York.

Q: Your name?

A: My name is Herman Rafael Goldberg.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family, family life.

A: My family life was, was very busy. My mother was a teacher first and then a principal of the school in Brooklyn. My sister was a singer, she sang with Rosa Ponselle in some of the operatic productions and um there were just 2 of us my sister and I. I loved sports right from the beginning but did not avoid other activities. Um there were some firm expectations from my parents to adhere to my responsibilities in school. My father had a hardware store to which I was expected to contribute by learning about the business and helping when necessary. My father was president of the hardware association of New York City and during some of those days when he had to leave early, I took over in the store and he gave me information that I, I just didn't have. Um, so we had a diverse family, mother very busy in her life. My sister busy with emphasis in music, mine with emphasis in sports.

Q: What about your religious life, what kind of background did you have?

A: Um we were born into a Jewish family. I was working at a very early age. Um again part of my mother's and father's feeling was as I said before my contribution to the family well being included some working time. And uh that included complete family life including attendance at neighborhood temple. Uh including kinds of experiences where I would meet other young men and young women at temple and uh understanding my father's and mother's respect for the religion of their parents which were on display through photographs of an earlier era.

Q: So religion was an important part of your life.

A: I would say it was a vital part. Uh I can't classify it as important because there were a lot of things that were important and the presence of religion and in the

family the Friday evening um service was important to me. Uh it gave me a very nice feeling that when I was in Israel one year, um I um was a professor. I was a Fulbright professor at the University of Belunga in Italy. And um one little episode I will share with you which is a great joy to me. Um a welcoming uh party was scheduled by Abba Eban and Sonya Marabach head of education in Israel. Uh and I was to be the, the guest of honor. Um the taxi driver said to me well where are your flowers, this is Shabbas this is the Sabbath. Where are you where are your flowers, where is your gift. I don't have any flowers, I didn't buy any candy, I didn't buy anything. I just wanted to come. He said well usually on a Friday night, it is expected that you bring some flowers to your host. Um the taxi driver didn't know where Abba Eban lived. He knew the general neighborhood but didn't know the exact place. But he stopped some young people on the street and he said to them, I remember very clearly he said well you, you must have made some kind of relationship with these people from Israel. And I said well we did the best we could. All the florist shops were closed because it was uh between 4:30 and 5:00. They close early and I'm sorry we, we had nothing to, to give. So the taxi driver uh dropped my wife and me off at the home of these officials from Israel and about 20 minutes later, the doorbell rang. And the taxi driver stepped out with a big bouquet of flowers and he handed them to my wife and he said here when you go back in there you will have a gift. You are not supposed to go in there without a gift. You should bring something to your host. And so I asked him how much it would cost and he said there would be absolutely no fee at all. It's my pleasure to be delivering you to, to have delivered you to the party and to see that as guest of honor you were well received. And so uh everyone was very excited about the fact that the taxi driver brought in some flowers because it was Friday night and uh he felt we should have known, we should have remembered but it was our first trip to Israel so I did not know. But the taxi driver made sure that all the passages were open after that.

Q: ...growing up in Brooklyn. In terms of being Jewish, were your social contacts mixed. Did you have non Jewish friends as well. Or was your community really a Jewish community?

A: It was not a Jewish community. There were uh a number of Jewish families living in our area, not many. Uh I would say that we were happy together as a group, playing sports, singing and music, being in school, um doing the kinds of things that kids do in a. in a neighborhood school. I was lucky in being the chance to go to Boys High School in Brooklyn, kind of a well known school. Um with lots of um talented people running the school and I was very delighted to be a student at Boys High School.

Q: So your milieu was mixed, it was Jewish and non Jewish.

A: It was, that is correct. The neighborhood was Jewish and non Jewish. My friends were Jewish and non Jewish and I can't count them and say I had 11 friends this day and I had 14 friends for the next 3 weeks. That didn't happen. Uh you

worked with the young people whom you liked and uh it was your choice. And um it seemed to work both ways that the non Jewish people were looking at us in that neighborhood as newcomers to that neighborhood and everything was in good shape. There was no trouble. We had no feelings whatsoever in that regard. We had normal religious training, we had normal religious output in attending services, in doing the things generally are expected of, of boys and girls age 13 and above. My father and mother saw to that. And uh it was, it was a joyous thing.

Q: And no feeling of being different because you were Jewish or anti-Semitism or anything like that?

A: No feeling of that sort whatsoever, the, the sports were mixed with the religion. The sports were mixed with school. The sports were mixed with music. The sports were mixed with whatever activity was going on in, among our small group and for that reason I think we got along very well..

Q: Were sports an opportunity for everybody to be together and get to know each other?

A: It is, it is an opportunity. Sports is a way in which you can get to know each other, in which you can um be happy together, be distressed together when nec, when it happens. To understand more about the Catholic religion, the Protestant religion in the neighborhood which serves its clientele and it was our responsibility, my mother and father taught us to be together and uh it was, it was a fine, it was a fine way to do it and my father had a hardware store and in the hardware store everyone needs nails and screws, hammers, lawn mowers, it doesn't matter what religion you are, if you need a tool, you need a tool and so I learned a lot about the exchange of information, exchange of equipment tools, um how to make keys, how to fix locks, um l-o-c-k-s. How to prepare uh door checks, how to prepare things that needed repair that my father had taken in for repair and I was taught how to participate un that.

Q: So it sounds like to me that you were an all American boy. You weren't necessarily just from a Jewish community. I mean your identification was just...

A: Absolutely. I've oh I've never felt either on one side of the street or the other side of the street, or with one collect, connection or another connection. I felt that we were together, our group was together and we had a lot to enjoy together. And it did occur. Many of the young people in, in my neighborhood were admitted as students at Boys High School, which was I have to say it, a very elite tough school where you had to work very, very hard to remain to succeed and to get ready for college.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your sports activity, what you liked, how good were you.

A: Uh in my younger years there was no such thing as a little league baseball or Babe Ruth league baseball. Uh fourteen managers and 26 assistant managers uh and somebody in charge of the Pepsi cola and someone in charge of, of something else. There, there wasn't that kind of uh relationship that uh the grouping was, was not hard and in that way um my parents were aware of and permitted my participation in sports so I had to balance out the hours I spent in sports with the hours I gave to sports. And um it was uh a good way I think for me to learn um importance of earning a living how different ways exist for earning a living. And uh participating in certain projects regardless of what background you come from religiously.

Q: What sports did you like? how did you get started?

A: Uh well one way in which you get started I guess is by having things close to hand. My father had a hardware store but it also had a sporting goods branch to it and so I was allowed to go pick out a pair of ice skates. I was allowed to pick out a pair of roller skates. I was allowed to pick out a brand new basketball and go with a team to a certain neighborhood to play. I was allowed to uh pick for myself and my Dad sold many of those sporting good items but it wasn't pushing me into sports in order to sell a few more gloves, a few more bats, a few more balls, not at all. And my Dad liked them very much too and that's why it was such a surprise to me when I played baseball in the Canadian American league, professional baseball on opening day when um the team I was playing with the Rome Colonels, Rome New York Colonels, um frankly uh had a, an opportunity that no one really ever gets automatically. And that was my father coming secretly and I don't mean secretly in a secret, secretive sense but in a personnel sense. He got on a train and he came up to Rome, New York, didn't let me know, stood behind the dugout watched the belgium between Ottawa and the Rome Colonels, watched his son play. After the game was over had dinner with his son, and a couple of his son's friends from the team and after dinner he got back on the train and went back to Brooklyn to his hardware store. Kind of a homey sequence but that's what he did. And uh most of...

Q: Followed your career.

A: That, that started it yes. And as a handball player, tennis player, um I never had golf clubs, we never had that kind of money to fill out all the sporting goods that exist. But that was one, that was one way to do it and the competition that came from sports relationship angles uh was very important kind of experience for me. Because I, I learned to live with the competition, to lose when I had to lose without crying about it. To win when I could win with joyousness and to share with my teammates other, other kinds of experiences. The last thing I would say in this regard is that that may have been the reason why when Little League did start in Rochester, New York I started it. And got the teams together uh got the, the parents together, got it, got it started and then we went off to high school. I

played catcher for Boys High School and then catcher for Brooklyn College. I was on Brooklyn College when I was selected for the Olympic team. Um.

Q: ...how you really got into baseball, did you love it, how good were you?

A: Well I was it was not a great competitor. I was a good competitor. I was fair. I worked hard at it. I had all the moves necessary. I was a catcher very early and being a catcher eliminates a lot of people from vying for that role. How to hold your hand, how to make sure that the fingers are in such a position that when you, when you went to the minor leagues you didn't get whacked and have your fingers broken there or in Germany. And so it was an attempt to be able to scoop the ball, learn how to scoop it without injuring your fingers and that took some doing. Um so my sports really came from high school from being a catcher at Brooklyn College from which I went to the Olympic tryouts in Baltimore. And the Olympic tryouts were held in 3 places in the United States. In Stanford, California, in western state Michigan College and in the Baltimore area and there were hundreds and hundreds of athletes vying for the spots. There were 21 places on the Olympic team, 21. And there were maybe 6, 7, 8 hundred athletes vying for that, those 21 spots and I was a catcher selected uh by the coaches for the Olympic team from Baltimore, from the east coast tryouts.

Q: You must have been pretty good.

A: Uh I worked hard at it, I worked hard at it. I knew what I was doing and uh wanted to be a catcher right from the beginning and catching is so hard and so difficult and uh it, it's one of the positions in sports where injuries are more likely to happen because of the close activity of the batted ball against the swinging bat and your fingers don't always give that much. Um and so I went off to school, went off to Brooklyn College, became an athlete on the Brooklyn college team, went to the Olympic tryouts, was selected for it uh and then had my chance very happily with meeting up with Hank Greenberg, the uh first baseman of the Detroit tigers who that year was being shifted from first base to outfield. Uh and I talked to him about some things that were going on that I felt needed adjustment and he gave prompt attention to what he thinks he, what he thought he could do. And he did some things that were very helpful to teammates and others on the team.

Q: ...go back to the Olympics. While you were playing baseball in high school and at college, were you ever thinking in terms of Olympics?

A: Never. In the first place you couldn't hope and dream for something that didn't exist, there were no Olympics in the baseball area, there just weren't any. It was track and field where Johnny Woodruff participated, sprinters, jumpers, runners, uh long distance athletes uh you can think about it. You can dream about it and you can measure yourself uh side by side with other athletes and begin to think of your own chances and you try for it and you shoot for it and by shooting for it and

at some of the materials that um may become available to you, you will see that uh I worked very, very hard to try to get that.

Q: What you're saying is that while you were playing baseball in college it hadn't occurred to you that you might be going to the Olympics.

A: Never.

Q: ...complete thought.

A: What, what I could say is that the uh thinking about playing in the Olympics as a specific activity compared with uh playing baseball with a semi pro team with a neighborhood team, with a college team, far differed and thinking of playing baseball in college, uh and getting a bid to be on the team, all of which were helpful, um and I was lucky to be one of those selected and as I said they came from Stanford, western state Michigan and the Baltimore area.

Q: Did a coach or somebody at college suggest that you go to these tryouts. How did this come about?

A: Uh the coach at the college uh at which I, I earned a silver medal in baseball when I was very young, 16, 17 years of age um kept pushing just said go ahead, keep going, keep going, keep going, keep going. Uh yes he wanted me to, to keep trying out. Um I gave more energy. I spent more time in practice I worked harder with my teammates. And um when I went to Baltimore, there were 2,300 athletes in the competition. And uh you were tried in all the positions, sliding, hitting um throwing. Uh doubling, triple activities. Uh all of which I knew something about...

(end first tape)

(Tape 2 of 3)

A: ...for over a month.

Q: How did exhibition baseball in the 1936 Olympics come about?

A: Are you ready for the answer now. Exhibition baseball in the 1936 Olympics really started because there was an American committee on baseball that was pushing very hard for baseball to be introduced and attached to the Olympics. The uh number of baseball players in the world were limited pretty much to Central American teams, to all the American teams of course, South African teams uh the kinds of athletes who got started early through films, through television and began to play at a very early age. It really got introduced because

frankly and I don't take this as a compliment for myself, because of Herman Goldberg who was in charge of developing baseball in the country of Italy.

Q: I want to go back to Berlin.

A: Please.

Q: So the United States Olympic committee decided that they were going to try to promote baseball.

A: They were going to try to promote it.

Q: Who came to this decision?

A: Judge J. L. Hoffman of Cincinnati, Ohio was the one who headed the group that pushed very hard for baseball to be an Olympic sport. Also the American Olympic committee wanted to see baseball in the Olympics. They had seen uh ski jumping; they had seen all the other sports and they really wanted to see baseball in there and it came about because the committee of the various sports, finally agreed that it would be a good thing for American baseball to be on the calendar and as far as I can tell that's when it started because I began to get mail. I began to get the first uh pieces of information about the possibility of a baseball tournament being held.

Q: And so it must have been pretty exciting to be in this.

A: It was very exciting because well first of all the stadium was very large. 125,000 people watching a baseball series, unheard of, unheard of before. Most of the baseball teams in America, 40,000, 50,000, 60,000 maybe but 125,000 who ever heard of such a thing. You heard of it in Berlin, Germany for the first time and it was promoted by the small group of 28 baseball players. There were 28 of us assigned to play a series of exhibitions against each other and then go out into the countryside and demonstrate baseball to schools, to colleges, to many German institutions, how it's played uh what the difference is between baseball and soccer, uh what the rules were. How the umpires played, played the game. Um it was done um because of America and I was very proud to be a part of the group that kept pushing without pushing. We kept encouraging, encouraging, demonstrating. This is how left handed first basemen behave, this is how right handed pitchers do this. If you are left handed this is how it's done. And um we, we put it on the map.

Q: What was the reaction when you were playing these games in Berlin? What was the audience reaction?

A: The audience reaction was very poor, very poor. They didn't like the game, they didn't know the game. The diamond, the baseball diamond was never laid out

like a diamond. They took a four inch white silky tape and they pressed it into the grass. And they made a, a, a uh diamond out of it for baseball. But they never actually made a baseball field, never. It caught hold to some extent, not to such extent as in other countries, especially central America. But it became a vivid activity because it came from America. A lot of the kids wanted very much to know more about America and the sports were very important to them too.

Q: But the audience was not excited.

A: The audience was not excited because the pace of baseball much slower than soccer. In soccer the, the ball is moving, moving, moving, moving, moving all the time and the kids are kicking you, and they're kicking you, they're kicking you and they're circling and they're beating out the other guy whereas in the the sports you play hard or you jump hard, you, you run hard. You do all of the things yourself, but in baseball you're part of a team. And it's necessary to uh understand that and uh the crowds on the baseball field were 100,000? not 125,000

Q: ...the period before you went over to Berlin. How much did you know at that time about what was going on in Nazi Germany?

A: I knew less than I guess I am told I should have known by many people who asked me how come you went to Germany when this was going on. The uh number of Jewish athletes, sort of about 8 or 9 out of 328. Um the number of Jewish athletes who made the team and then quit 3 or 4 of those. Knowledge about what was going on with Hitler beginning to come more close to us. Um. One of the most telling experiences that I had personally we'd lived in a small cottage. Mine happened to be named Brandenbourg cottage. Because Hitler had charged money to all the dead residents of Brandenburg. To pay for his cottage and then they, another group paid for the, their, their named cottage. Another group paid for this and I can recall very vividly the um concern I had when I went down and I saw a big chain at the basement door of our village. There were 28 players who lived in the Brandenbourg dorf in our village and uh what I saw in the rear of the cottage was a door and another door and then a chain. And I opened the chain and I walked, started to walk downstairs in the bottom of a basement. And there was a big cavernous area. I didn't know what it was for but I sure found out. That it was for Panzer tanks, German tanks because what they did was declare the Olympic dorf, and the athlete and the military chiefs were housed where the Olympic athletes were housed after the Olympics were over and I was told by a woman who took care of that building. Raus, raus, raus, get out of there. Get out of there, get out of there. She didn't want me looking down in the basement. I didn't know what was down there but it turned out that it was large enough, the cellar or the basement whatever you want to call it, in my, my cottage you, you find these picture material that was brought to the studio today. Uh you will find uh structures that look like resorts but when you walk down there, the cavernous, they're empty. They're the thick the uh the cement was about 10, 12,



15 inches thick. And that couldn't be for just a car or a jeep or a truck. Something big had to be in the basement that had floors this thick. You never saw such thick floors and uh it turned out that that became the west point of Germany

Q: At what point did you realize this was what it was?

A: I realized what it was after I was in Germany and after I had seen enough of the activity that led to uh the early movement of labor camp people into army men and from boy scouts into young soldiers and from ordinary men uh with ordinary credentials, carrying shovels, dressed in regular clothes but carrying shovels ready to clean out as soon as the American athletes left, ready to clean out what they could from there to get it ready for the army.

Q: So you saw this as you were departing?

A: I saw this about half way there. I would say about 4 weeks, 4 weeks before we left. I saw it and they were very strict very angry because I, I was the only one who went down to the basement and it was just a happenchance walking down a flight of stairs, we were moving a chain and being yelled at by the German hausfrau and house man who didn't like what they saw. I mean American down in their property, that was going to become a Panzer tank unit as soon as the games were over.

Q: You stayed in Germany for how long after the Olympics?

A: Um, about 2 weeks.

Q: So I'm sorry but I'm a little confused. When you say you saw people coming in with shovels getting ready to transform the Olympic village. This was while you were there for the Olympics?

A: Yes and the materials that we found by our beds, they were very large books marked Berlin. Just the name Berlin on the outside and in that book were pictures of men marching in parade but they weren't equipped with Army uniforms, they were equipped with regular clothes, with work clothes, with uh seemingly baskets and then shovels on the shoulder and they were walking this way, this way, this way through the whole area there and uh what we found out was that they were not only being prepared for their part in the Olympics, but some were ready on, on the grounds. Ready to be instructed in how to go ahead and um fill in the tanks that were going on.

Q: You said there were books that would say Berlin. Or boxes.

A: There were boxes of books. Very, very large books.

Q: With photographs of the...

A: Yes, on the outside it just said Berlin, one word, that's all and you turned pages and you saw pictures of the army and you turned more, there's one on everybody's bed, propaganda material and it was, it was on everybody's bed and nobody gave them up because you, you were intrigued, and you were reading them, what is this all about. So I began to learn more about Hitler and Goebbels and some of the others after I turned pages. And uh I noticed that the um Olympics were for other purposes than storage.

Q: How odd this is that they would leave this for you to see.

A: How what?

Q: Odd this is.

A: How odd? Well I, I would say it would be stupid first, odd yes. Uh. An open door down to a basement that had no use other than for storage of large tanks and materials. Uh that's of war.

Q: So before you went to Berlin, you didn't know too much about Nazi Germany?

A: That's correct.

Q: Now there was some movement in the United States um in regard, regard the boycott, were you aware of that?

A: I was aware of some of the activities that were going on throughout the United States in different parts, there were programs which uh um displayed the feeling about uh Germany, what was happening, what was going on. Hitler's preparation um the uh um activity going on in the in the field, in the manufacturing areas, the building the construction, all of those things were, were apparently going on. Also uh the American athletes and all other country had its athletes separated by action and by that I mean by what, summer sports, winter sports, differing kinds of activities trying to separate them and you could see that uh if you opened the doors to look into places and the house man and the house frau caught you, you'd get yelled at but they didn't do anything. They didn't want to hurt anybody and they didn't want to give away their, some of their secrets about their, their non relations with the United States. Um that's one of the one of the I, I think first, first time he ought to be aware of what is surface, the surface on, on a cottage game. And uh if he has another chat we should have the chat, we should have the chat, we should not be afraid to have someone here telling us how he or she feels about what's going on. It may not get it all so smoothly. You may or you may and you have to work it out to find out what, what is going on that is happening with the Olympics that you are part of it, you're really not part of because somebody else is running it now and you're someone else in a cotton uniform

ready to run uh for the next period of 3 or 4 weeks. I, I'm not sure what else I can say on that particular topic. I may have, I may have messed it up.

Q: ...a sense of before you went to Berlin. Excuse me one minute...boycott in the United States, were you aware of it?

A: Uh yes I was somewhat aware. The press gave some space to the problems in Germany not full space. Not full uh description of what might be going on underneath the table uh. It wasn't that kind of a, a fullness of expression. But there was enough information coming because Hitler was beginning to, to make demands which were so great and impossible that you, you had to have a feeling that you were into something that was going to be very, very rough.

Q: Was there talk about a boycott, about not going to the games?

A: There was some talk about it, yes there was and, and a lot of the talk was directed at the president of the American Olympic committee, who I think gave very little preliminary credence to it. But he wanted to see what was happening and he as an old time pole vaulter from Yale University and the head of the American Olympic committee behaved in such a way that um 8 or 9 of us who were Jewish were, were not in the games. I was there because I was working with a demonstration group, not a competitive group at that time. We were striving to teach enough skills so that they would say next time around, we want a baseball team, we want a baseball team and didn't happen that way.

QW: So you were allowed to play in Berlin because you were in a non-competitive sport?

A: I think that would be one reason that the American Olympic committee chairman uh Norman Armitage uh did not have any feeling against me or against Jews that he was visibly going to show.

Q: Did you think before going to Berlin as a Jew that maybe you shouldn't go?

A: Not for one minute, absolutely not one minute. I talked with a number of the sports leaders in our local area in Brooklyn, New York. I talked with the coaches at Boys high school and uh I told them what the goals were and I was not discouraged. I was not encouraged. I was just say well, here's your chance to learn something and I did not speak German but I uh began to use some of the German that I knew in some of the discussions. Now the Olympic village was about 12 miles from the city of Berlin. Marty Glickman and I were headed for downtown Berlin from the village town to downtown. Um we were interested in two things, one uh a boxing match that was going to take place that day and some other events about uh kids who uh were in difficulty but uh were good athletes. Now in the first instance that I mentioned uh the bus we had missed and there was a bus that ran every 30 minutes from the Olympic village to downtown Berlin. If

you miss the bus you are out of luck for the next 30 minutes. And so Marty and I were headed for downtown Berlin and we did not make it. We were late and so we went out on the highway and we put up our thumb to get a ride, dressed in the American Olympic uniform, we had no trouble being picked up. We were picked up by Germany um athletes in uniform, German army men actually, in uniform with a sidecar, a motorcycle with a sidecar and Marty and I got in the sidecar and he drove us we were almost through with the 12 miles. And I asked the question, I asked the driver of Boxinyaki Vilsen from Veronica Staaten, from North America right. Is Jackie Wilson from the United States of America going to be boxing tonight. Yako Wilson from the United States going to be boxing tonight. Huite, Heinte, I use the word Heinte, the Jewish word for tonight. Instead of Hoyte which is the German word for tonight. If I wanted to know are all of you going to the movies tonight, hoyte, are you all going tonight. So I didn't say it the right way.

(end second tape)

(Tape 3 of 3)

Q: From the Olympic village did you ever travel around or go into Berlin and have any unusual experiences?

A: Yes, there were opportunities to go from the Olympic village into the city of Berlin uh every 30 minutes. It was a special bus arranged for the athletes from different countries. I can recall one event when Marty Glickman a friend of mine from Syracuse University had an opportunity to go downtown together and we went on, we went out on the road ready to thumb a ride into, into the town and uh it the way it worked out was that a German jeep uh or a, or a with sidecar came by and saw our thumbs out waiting for a ride and so they stopped and they invited us in. We went in, into their vehicle and we moved along very rapidly and at one point in the ride, the German driver said to us um can I see your uh passport. Your (autograph?) And he said to me can I see your autograph also in German. And uh we had them with us but we didn't think it was their right to have them and so I went beyond that and I said um, uh tell me did will Yaquie Wilson from Veronichastaten from North America be boxen heint, I was really speaking Yiddish, the word heint meaning tonight and instead of saying hoyte which is tonight in German, I said heinte and so that aroused their concern somewhat and um they asked us to stay over on the side of the highway. They talked to us a little bit, much of which we couldn't understand but they asked for our autographs in spite of the fact that they were saying to themselves, these are two Jewish athletes. We were dressed in uniforms so they knew what, what we were doing there. Uh the uh opportunity for knowledge of other country would be helpful to them so they asked us for our autographs but being stopped on the road, driving along with him and then being stopped to be asked uh what, what your autograph, what your number was and then linking that to uh, a request for an autograph was unusual, that did happen yes. And it was frightening.

- Q: I going into Berlin did you notice any signs of Nazi Germany and anti-Semitism?
- A: There were, there were beginning signs going up, there were workmen, some men some women in ladders climbing 3,4,5 step ladders, taking down signs, putting up signs uh identifying where they did not want you to be where you were forbidden to go. Uh we saw those quite often.
- Q: Cause a Jew.
- A: That's right.
- Q: What did the sign say?
- A: Juden verboten, Jews forbidden to, to ride on this, on this road. Um.
- Q: I think I need you to restate this...say a complete...did you see indications of the anti-Semitism when you went into Berlin?
- A: Yes there, there were some.
- Q: There were what?
- A: There were two situations which were very frightening. Marty Glickman and I were uh on the highway we had just.
- Q: ...the signs.
- A: We were in the, in the, in the bus and uh we were um asked for our autographs. We wondered why and they were beginning to understand when they said, when they saw my autograph, Herman Goldberg, yiddishman, a Jewish man that it was something that they should have been more cautious about. At least they were very scary to us at the beginning and we did our very best to steer clear of them and we walked the last mile or 2 into, into town and I, I went to where I wanted to go to the uh music hall to hear the, the opera Die Fleidermaus and Marty went to some event that I can't recall what he went for.
- Q: In Berlin itself were there signs of the Nazi regime?
- A: Uh no there were, they were not, they were being very careful to uh keep those hidden from direct public view. There were uh some evidences where um news people news syndicated people, syndicate people wanted to see if there were troubles going on between Germany and the United States because of the existence of Hebrews on the American team. And uh it was clear to us that they wanted those signs down and so there were some ladders maybe 4 to 6 feet tall that I noticed very carefully and there were men and women on that ladder corps.

Uh directing whether or not those people were going to stay on that uh were going to move away from it. Uh. There was no smooth sailing. It was dreadful to think of what might be coming ahead. You couldn't quite tell everything. Um the preparations for athletic events, the preparation for musical events, et cetera were all things that were good things and you couldn't tell immediately that there uh anxiety over seeing what they could do to Americans could be completed.

Q: Did you have any other experiences where you were alarmed or felt that there was danger or that this anti-Semitism was rampant?

A: Yes, there was one series of events where I felt that the uh some news syndicates in America who were very anxious to get evidence that things were not going well for American athletes and that they would like to have me and then perhaps others spread the story through their syndicated news service, spread the word that uh things were not going to be good for American athletes of Jewish background. Um the, the possibility of manufacturing such events when they really didn't exist, was presented by one person from an American news syndicate. It was a kind of situation where um my, my greatest hope would have been the ability to just knock them out on the floor uh and get them off the boat. He followed the boat out into the river and then met the boat 80 miles from New York checking on where could he get where could he dig a good story.

Q: But there was no foundation for this.

A: But there was no foundation for that, that's correct.

Q: Speaking of the boat ride over, what was that like? was it exciting?

A: It was very exciting.

Q: Say the boat ride over.

A: Yes, the, the boat ride over was very exciting. People were thinking about um Eleanor Holmes Jarrett, wondering about the allegations that she was drinking, using alcohol, using tobacco, there were statements having to do with I think a reduction in the credibility of some of the American athletes was rampant. And uh it got cleared up I think after the thing was laid out on the table and was forcefully presented.

QW: What was special about this boat ride over? What was happening?

A: What was happening was the athletes were not sitting around, they were in training. I was surprised. Jesse Owens, Marty Glickman uh Marty Stoller a whole bunch of athletes, running, jumping.

Q: I need you to say that over because you said Marty Stoller instead of Sam Stoller. So what was going on on the boat?

A: Uh there was a great deal of activity going on, on the boat. They were practicing in their events. They were movement, there was, there was nobody sitting around reading a book. Uh they were trying hard to keep their weight down. They worked very hard in every aspect of uh self care. And it was important because these athletes needed to have that great uh spirit, the great ability, the great uh uh bodily condition in which to participate and I think the Americans had it.

Q: Was this an exciting opportunity for you?

A: It was an exciting opportunity for me for the first reason, Mickey Cochrane was aboard ship and one wondered why would the manager of the Detroit Tigers be on board ship. Well uh all the um anxiety about it ended for me when I got word that I was picked up by the Detroit Tigers to become a member of the Detroit Tigers as, baseball team and to become a member of that a rookie staff and then to play with that team. And to play with Buffalo in the International League. Uh they were all very excited to have major league managers talk to you and who knows how much they were watching and what notes they were taking, who knows. I don't know. But at any rate it was a great feeling that um having important people on board ship was present and they were taking um plenty of time to talk to athletes and to be with them and to try to assess what they were really like and uh I was lucky. I happened to hook on well with the Detroit Tigers.

Q: The games themselves, what was it like being there?

A: It was thrilling in so many ways because you looked out on the playing field and you saw room for 125,000 people. Not every event drew 125,000 people. Some drew fewer numbers than that but however it was a very exciting thing to see that size crowd. Also to see a group playing a game that they weren't used to. The foul lines were white ribbons four inches wide and they didn't put plaster of paris or yellow uh white dirt down on the field.

Q: ...move on...the atmosphere, the general ambience.

A: In the stands where I sat next to Marty Glickman for several weeks while events were going on there were some things happening that uh gave you some more idea of what was going on. Hitler did not stay in the visible area of his private balcony when a German athlete won an event. When a German athlete won an event he walked out on his little balcony. He raised his hand. There as a lot of applause and then uh he went back in. When a black athlete perhaps Jewish athletes too, there were very few of us. I couldn't count, there wasn't time to count uh the Jewish athletes and the black athletes especially caused Hitler to turn around and to walk out of his own private balcony. In other words he did not

want to be seen praising a black athlete even in his own track and field area. He just didn't want to be seen.

Q: So what you're saying is, explain this to me once more. You could see Hitler from where you were sitting?

A: From where I could see Hitler. I could see Hitler every single day. I could see him every day because his travels were mainly going from inside the balcony, outside. Some applause for the German athlete. His hand down when a black athlete won an event and his reverse and his walking out of his balcony when some the country became the winner of an event. He did not demonstrate the uh real feelings of uh Olympic history, Olympic meaning, Olympic strength. He did not demonstrate that at all. It was only what he could gain out of his own team's participation.

Q: And so he didn't even salute other white athletes basically just his own?

A: He did not salute white athletes, he stayed away from any opportunity to applaud an athlete who won an event who came from a country that he didn't like perhaps. I can't describe it another way but it, I would say it would be accurate to say that uh he removed himself from his own private balcony as often as he wanted to, to demonstrate his own feeling and uh that's what I saw all the time. Marty and I were very close to the balcony where, Hitler's balcony were not far away. We could see that happening, his walking back and forth.

Q: What was it like seeing Hitler up close like that?

A: Uh I was no more than five feet away from him in the swimming meets. I went to the swimming meets and I learned that Hitler went to many of the events without prior notice. For example wrestling. Swimming. Uh the kinds of events that didn't draw big crowds and without prior notice. In other words he didn't tell all on the phone the committee connected with a particular event. He would just arrive there I his car, get out, follow his entourage, get up in the stands, sit there for 3, 4, 5 minutes, get out, go to the next one. That we saw very often. Um there was nothing that I can report that indicates that some one in charge of an athletic event of such great importance would behave that way. I could, I could sense it yes.

Q: Was there something frightening about him? Something awesome about him?

A: Yes because.

Q: I need you to say the whole thought.

A: Yes, I, I think there was some frightening um characteristics of that type of behavior because it was evident that he did not wish to demonstrate fairness to uh



athletes from several different countries. Uh he avoided the opportunity to be even handed as often as possible which is one of the, one of the credos of the Olympiad to, to be fair to all the countries of the world.

Q: Was there anything just viscerally significant about his presence?

As: Uh, walking out onto the field, he did that at the beginning.

Q: Please say that again.

A: When Hitler was walking out onto the field and that happened several times, it was very, very difficult to understand uh how he could possibly behave one way in the stands, another on the field, another way to the press. Another way to perhaps his own political leadership. It was very difficult to understand that because um the uh work of the Olympiad is entirely different than, than being angry at other people. It's being friendly, it's being togetherness, trying to work together, trying to understand each other from different parts of the world.

Q: Did he have a commanding presence?

A: What is it?

Q: Did he have, did Hitler have a commanding presence?

A: Hitler had a very commanding presence. Never strong enough to present it solo but always second or third line with other protective units around him all the time. Never, never walking into a situation by himself but at least Goebbels and many of the others, 10, 12 people surrounding, walking uh in a way that would, would give you a fright.

Q: And the audience went wild for him. What happened?

A: When he entered the stadium, when Hitler entered the stadium there was great applause. There was tremendous attempt for his own citizens, his, his German participants, his German spectators to applaud uh the, his, his presence yes that's true and they felt that he was the producer of this grand spectacle, this grand spectacle to make it possible for the rest of the world to be waiting and watching uh what was going on in Hitler, in Germany at this place.

Q: I wanted to ask you a question again about your role over there because I know that in Berlin you played exhibition games and after that you did what?

A: After we played an exhibition game, we would assign a series of locations where the 28 of us on the Olympic baseball team were divided into squads and working with local uh physical education teachers and leaders uh to teach baseball to clubs, to teams, to, not to fight them against their great desire to play soccer but to

teach them that there was another sport and that the rest of the world was waiting for them to come into baseball.

Q: Did you play exhibition games in these locations?

A: We played exhibition games throughout Germany yes.

Q: Did you ever experience any anti Jewish sentiment while you were doing this?

A: None whatsoever on my, my part, none on my part. The only anti-Semitic feeling that I had slight touch for had to do with the um the newspaper syndicated people who wanted to meet a manufacturer's story.

Q: (change tape)

(end)