

IMPORTANT

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AJR

Winston House, 2 Dollis Park

London N3 1HF

ajrrefugeevoices@ajr.org.uk

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
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Interviewee Surname:	Kugler
Forename:	Eve
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	12 January 1931
Interviewee POB:	Halle an der Saale, Germany

Date of Interview:	21 June 2016
Location of Interview:	London
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Bea Lewkowicz
Total Duration (HH:MM):	4 hours 33 minutes



REFUGEE VOICES

Interview No. RV178
NAME: Eve Kugler
DATE: 21 June 2016
LOCATION: London, UK
INTERVIEWER: Dr. Bea Lewkowicz

[Part One]

[0:00:00]

Today is the 21st of June 2016. We are conducting an interview with Mrs. Eve Kugler. My name is Bea Lewkowicz, and we are in London.

Can you please tell me your name?

My name is Eve Kugler.

And when were you born?

I was born on January 12th 1931.

And where were you born?

In Halle an der Saale in Germany.

Thank you very much. Thank you Mrs. Kugler for agreed to be interviewed for the Refugee Voices.

My pleasure.

Can you please tell me about your family background?

My family is Jewish. Although my mother was born in Poland, we're basically German Jews because she came when... she was just one year old. And I think we were considered a... relatively prosperous, normal Jewish family. And people used to say to my father you know, nothing has nothing to do with you. Nothing will happen to you. You're just a businessman. We were just a German family, but members of a... not very large Jewish community. The synagogue that we were members of was founded by my father's father. My grandfather, when he came to Germany from Poland in about 1893. And he continued to live with us and so much of the family life was probably around other members of our family and friends. Jewish people.

And how did they come to Halle? How did you- you said your grandfather came from Poland. Any reasons?

[0:02:02]

Oh, my grandfather was a peddler in Poland. He was already married with three children, and decided that he could have a better, more prosperous life to raise his family. And so he started peddling in Halle, and did well enough eventually to open up a – a retail store – general merchandise and clothing. And he- In Halle, he had three more children. And my father was the youngest, the last of six.

Yeah. So you said your father was one of six, he was the youngest.

Correct.

And what was the name of the shop?

To be perfectly honest, I'm not really sure. It was just known as 'Kanner's', really. And in fact what happened is that [short break] ...My grandfather closed his business... somewhere around the end of the First World War when the law came through that businesses had to be open on Saturday. He was an observant Jew. He would not have- work on Shabbat, so he

gave his store to his older son. Because the family was four daughters and two sons. And he subsequently gave a store to each of his children. To the daughters, actually, as part of their dowry. And so my dad also got a store from his father. The difference is that my father's was really the only very successful business. The others all struggled. And my father, although he was the youngest, ended up in many respects helping members of his family.

And did they all stay in Halle, his sisters and his brother?

[0:04:24]

They stayed in Halle certainly through the beginning of – of Hitler. The oldest, Tante Elke, might have gone. I think they all... now I'm going to back-track. One of his sisters as they say, 'married to Leipzig'. But the sisters and brother stayed in Germany until after the Nuremberg Laws. And then somewhere along the way, they started to try to go out. So the oldest one, Tante Elke and her family, I think was the first to leave. I'm not sure exactly when, but she had a daughter who had emigrated to Israel in 1924 and was a nurse in Israel. So she went first. Tante Lene, who was the next-youngest, the fifth child, left in 1938 with the help of my father, who provided the money and probably also the wherewithal for the family to get a false, phoney visa and they went to Israel. And the other four... would have been in Germany still on Kristallnacht. No- to the end of October 1939 and the Polish deportation.

Right. So they didn't take German citizenship? They had- they kept...?

Well, aunt Fanny did not take German citizenship, and was therefore deported. My grandfather, grandfather Markus never took out the German citizenship so he and Tante Fanny were deported along with their children, at the end of October 1938. As well, cousins of my father as well, with their families.

They were deported to the border, yes?

They were deported to the border. And in fact my aunt Fanny came back, because the Poles eventually said, "We don't want any more." But my cousin Rose... ran across the border and said, "I never want to set foot on Germany again." So Tante Fanny came back. My

grandfather did not. He went to stay with either a half-sister or a step-sister, I'm not sure, whom he had not seen for thirty years, who took him in in effect and looked after him. He was at that point seventy-eight years old.

We'll come back to that. Let's just go back. How, tell us a little bit about your mother's background and how did she meet your father?

[0:07:45]

My parents had a long-lasting and wonderful great love affair. My mother was twenty-four when she met my father. Had already turned down or been turned down by a number of men she had been introduced to. Was considered to be in danger of becoming an old maid. And then she met my father. I think there was some kind of introduction. He came to Leipzig. They went dancing some place, with my grandmother sitting discreetly aside, chaperoning. He went home and immediately wrote her a postcard, because there were no telephones in those days, and said he wanted to come again the following Sunday. They met I believe in April. They were married by October of 1929.

And where did they get married?

They got married in Leipzig, because that's where my mother came from. But as my father had his business in Halle, she then moved to Halle. Although...my grandfather and grandmother remained in Leipzig.

And what was- your maternal grandparents, what did they do? What was their profession?

My grandfather Moses was also a peddler. He used to go... out of Leipzig, and had customers in the countryside and in the form of bringing products and they would give him orders. My grandmother, on the other hand, was very advanced. She had a business. She was a, an active working partner in a retail shoe store. With a man by the name of Meyer Weinrauch who comes, appears again much later in my story. And she managed, basically managed the store while Meyer went and... secured the merchandise, and did those kinds of things. Until... in 1921, when her younger sister Edith, a very late child was born, and there

was a birth injury of some kind. My mother- my grandmother announced- no, I'm sorry, I've got that backwards. That's when she started, when my grandmother could no longer...

Work...

My grandmother decided that she had to stay home and look after baby Edith. And so my mother, who was programmed, and hoped to be a doctor, because all her cousins – mostly male - were doctors. And she had intended to be a doctor as well. And my grandmother took her out of school and said, “You have to run the business,” - because it was my grandmother's business - “because I have to stay home and take care of this baby.”

[0:10:50]

And your mother was not happy about that, or...?

No.

No.

No. But this is what she did. And my mother was - incidentally - very active in Jewish youth organisations.

Which ones, do you know which ones?

Off-hand, no. Off-hand, no, I don't remember. But she -she was, she was a Zionist, very much believed in Israel, and with other young people.

And so then she - she moved to Halle with your father.

Right.

How did she adapt, and how did their life develop?

Within nine months my sister Ruth was born. They got a non-Jewish nanny, a young teenage girl, to look after the baby because my mother, from the beginning, helped in the business. The business- the store occupied the ground floor, the entire ground floor, of an apartment house where we – where we lived. And so it was easy going up and going down. And she spent time with customers and, and otherwise helping. And one of the interesting stories is that about once a month they would leave early on a Sunday morning, and take the train and go to Berlin leaving my grandfather and the nanny to look after the children. And this was their time alone. They went to, they, they went to some of the... famous... clubs. There were concerts, theatre. They took walks along Unter der Linden. This was their free time, so-to-speak, because they worked very hard the other days.

[0:13:00]

Yeah. And when were you born?

I was born January of 1931.

And how old was your sister by then?

The- there was fourteen-and-a-half months' difference between us.

You were quite close.

Yes.

And then you had another sibling?

My younger sister Lea was born in 1936. At home, because Jews were no longer permitted to give birth in the city hospital.

So what are your first memories? Do you remember anything of Halle at all?

My memories of Halle are... very small, and very fleeting. I remember going with my grandfather to a farm in order to get milk, because he was very, very observant of kashrut and

the milk that you would buy locally was not suitable. I remember going with him when I was about four. I remember when my mother's younger sister got married in Leipzig because I must have been about three. I was a flower girl. She got home, got married in this big apartment. I was throwing flowers along the way. I think, looking back on what happened, what must have stayed in the back of my mind was the Nazis everywhere...

Yes.

... which I think greatly, hugely, hugely frightened me. Because, oh, and I do remember also going on a picnic by the river and lying in the grass looking at the trees with the sky. All beautiful, as you can see, happy, sylvan memories. And then I remember leaving Germany, in 1939. We flew out. And I remember looking down from the plane at the rows of the houses below. And that, on one hand, are basically my memories of Germany.

[0:15:24]

Yeah. What about the house where you had the shop? Do you remember anything of your flat? Your room?

There were some photographs of the children, my sister and me, playing. And we were dressed alike in some kind of plaid dresses. And there are several photographs - we're sitting with children's furniture. It all looked very nice. Do I remember that, or do I remember the photo? I don't know.

Yeah, and what was the address as well? What was the address?

Where I lived?

Yeah.

The address in Halle was number 18 Reilstraße, and it's worth noting that the apartment house was across the street from the local police station.

And was the synagogue in Halle?

There was the synagogue that my grandfather founded when he came in the 1890s, because the synagogues were not what he was used to. I suppose he was considered an *Ostjude* [*Eastern European Jew*] in those days. He established this Orthodox synagogue, that... we attended. I'm told that I attended some Hebrew classes when I was, I guess, six. I do recognise and know some letters of the Hebrew alphabet which I must have learned over there. But I basically do not have memories. I know... pretty much everything that happened to me and to my family. My sisters, my grandfather, cousins, aunts and uncles, because after the war...

Yeah.

...I more or less found out. I went around for years and years plagued by the fact that I really had very little memory of anything that happened to me before I stepped off the ship, when I was not quite eleven, and landed in New York and walked down this wooden pier. And that used to be my memory of when my life really started. And this plagued me. It really drove me crazy. And I was I think in my forties, when I finally, and I will say 'got the nerve', because I thought about this for a long time. And I asked my mother to tell me what happened. What happened to me, to my sisters? What was my life like? Tell me everything. And so that, about many, many things that I'm going to talk about, are because of what I learned from eventually my father, my older sister.

[0:18:46]

So you had to reconstruct your memory in some way...

Yes.

... to find out.

Yes. Yes, exactly. It's as I'm sure you know, not unusual for children to cope by wiping out what happened to them. And I was one of those.

Yeah...

It's the only way.

That's right. So the obvious question is, for example you said you again whether you remember the Nazis there, and Kristallnacht must have...you were in Halle at that point or where were you?

We were in Halle on Kristallnacht. I think the other thing that affected me greatly, was the destruction of the home, the loss or I would say, the disappearance, of family. And this actually, in the vaguest way, as I look back on it. We lost the nanny, who had been there from the time I was born until I was four-and-a-half when the Nuremberg Laws were passed in 1935 because she was not Jewish and she was not permitted to live in a Jewish household. At the same time, my father went to what was then called Palestine, the precursor of the State of Israel, to see... what it was like. Because they had decided that what was going on with the Nazis was not good, and really it was perhaps the thing to do, to leave. So...

He went by himself?

[0:20:38]

He went by himself. He was in... Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, I'm not sure which one. The Nuremberg Laws were passed. The news of that came to... Israel very quickly. My cousin, his niece, who- my oldest cousin, was living in Israel already and she said, "Don't go back. Don't go back." It's, you know, just, "Bring - bring your wife. Bring the girls." But he went back, because as he describes it, he found life very primitive. The streets weren't paved. There was no plumbing or electricity in any of the buildings. It was totally... different from the way he lived. And he said to my mother he said, "I don't want you to live like that. I'm not going to have you live in those circumstances." And what he then did- I'm really going back. You asked me about being there on Kristallnacht.

That's fine...

What he then did, he applied to the Jewish Agency in Berlin for an economic visa . I... will describe briefly what this is because I do think it's important. As my father told me,

explained it. There were three different ways that you could emigrate. You could go on a kibbutz and be a farmer. You could have- if you had skills - you were a plumber or an electrician. Very much needed. If you were prepared to work building highways, building roads, going on construction gangs. Or, you could go as an economic migrant. My father felt that he was not cut out for this heavy work whether it be on a farm or construction. And the economic visa was the other way to go. What you did is, you went and made a large- took a large sum of money, and put it on deposit with the Jewish Agency. You know about this. And... when the Jews needed urgently needed equipment to build up the country. Germany had all kinds of machinery. They used the money that the German Jews put on deposit to buy the equipment that they needed. When our name would reach the top of the list, our money would be used. We would get a visa . We would arrive in, in Palestine, we would get the money and we could then establish ourselves in some way. So that was the decision that my father made. His banker, when he said what he was doing, “I don’t understand why you’re leaving. You’re a pillar of the community. You’re a businessman; you’re very much wanted.” He said, “It’s not really so comfortable to be a Jew in Germany anymore.” And so we got on the list and we waited.

[0:24:06]

And do you think - because it was a small place – do you think, based on what your parents were saying, how did it compare to be Jewish and how did it compare to Leipzig, let’s say?

My- I’m not that sure about what happened in Leipzig either, but as I said, my father was a successful businessman. His customers were – many of them were non-Jewish. And he was known in the local community. And we as individuals, did not really have difficulties as other people did. But my, they heard about all the arrests of the – of the professors, of the socialist opposition people to Hitler, other professional people.

Yes.

They heard about people losing jobs in- as teachers and lawyers. They knew all this. And this is why, even though they personally were not affected in that way, they nevertheless- What affected them is, my mother talked about being in the street and Nazis parading. You had to raise your hand and salute ‘*Heil Hitler*’ and how she forced herself to raise her hand. Because

she knew that otherwise she would be arrested. They talked about how they were in the cinema at one point, and before the main feature the newsreel comes up. No television, you got your news there. And Hitler got on the screen and everybody stood up, and my father forced my mother to stand up and salute. And they decided not ever to go to the cinema again. And right after that, Jews were not allowed to go to the cinema; it didn't really matter.

Yeah.

So- but these were- They were not... prosecuted. Interestingly also my sister Ruth and I started school. And... I have a friend here who came from Halle, who talked about being bullied, verbally, physically in her school in Halle. For years I thought nothing happened to us, but quite recently my cousin Irene who lives in Jerusalem now, told me that she and my sister Ruth were in the same class. And that every morning the teacher would call Irene to the front of the class. Now Ruth and Irene were the only two Jewish girls in the class. I was the – as far as I know – the only Jewish girl in my class.

One down – you were...

[0:26:57]

One down: one year down. Irene would be called to the front of the class. The teacher would say, "Look at this Jewish pig." And he would give her what she called an '*Ohrfeige*' which is boxing in the ears, which is how the teachers and others would hit, abuse Jewish children. I was very shocked to hear this, because my sister Ruth never mentioned it.

And you can't remember anything from the school?

I - I remember nothing at all from the school, but except that we were not- there was no difficulty. And in fact, my mother said the day after Kristallnacht my teacher - she used to say 'the teacher' but after Irene told me the story, I realised it had to be my teacher – my teacher came to my mother as said, "Send the girls to school; I will look after them. Nothing will happen to them. I will take care of them." But my mother actually sent us for one day. And then she said, "I'm out of my mind, what am I doing?" And we didn't go anymore. So I myself had no problem in school. And for some reason Irene was the scapegoat and Ruth was

not. Who can explain these things? Irene said- told her mother, “I don’t understand. I know I’m Jewish, but I’m not a pig.” Seven years old. So. But personally, I must have been alright.

Yeah. And in the meantime, so you were on a list to emigrate?

We were on the list to emigrate, and we reached the top of the list. Great excitement. And then, notification: “There was a man who was on the verge of being arrested. We have received that news; we had to give him your visa . Nothing will happen to you. You are just a businessman.” And this became the pattern. We stayed on top of the list and one after the other there were always people who were in great danger, in imminent danger of arrest and our visa kept being given to Jews who were also on the list who... something would indeed have happened. And nothing will happen to you. Nothing will happen to you. You’re just a businessman. And so this went- my father’s business ...declined, because people either refused to trade in a Jewish store, or they didn’t want to be seen to be trading in a Jewish store. Which upset my mother more, for some reason. They whispered to her, “Afraid to be seen...” And then came the end of October 1939, when two Nazi policemen appeared at the store, and told my father “We’ve come for the old man”, which was my grandfather who - who was not there. He goes, used to spend his days visiting his daughters. I think Tante Lene had suggested my aunt Fanny and aunt Amalia and possibly his son, having lunch with different members of the family and then come back. So he wasn’t there. The Nazis said, “We’ll wait for him. We’ll wait.” And when he came home... he had bought a roll for his dinner. He ate- he was completely dairy vegetarian. He was so kashrut that he didn’t necessarily eat. Although our home was strictly kosher but not sufficient. And this was fine. He was- my mother didn’t mind. I have a feeling and everybody, he was highly respected. Greatly loved. And so... he reaches into his pocket and because my father had said, “You have to go with these men for a little while.” And he reaches into his pocket and hands the bread to my mother and says, “Keep this for me.” And the Nazi said, “You take it along. It might be a little bit longer.” And he went.

[0:31:19]

And this was when exactly?

Pardon?

When was this exactly?

October – I can tell you exactly – October 29th, 1938. It was my sister Ruth’s ninth birthday. Yeah. I remember it very specifically. When he didn’t come back my father went to his brother – brother’s house - uncle Moritz lived very near the main police station – to try to find out what happened. There were a lot of other Jewish people, men and women, all talking about arrests, and they figured out the common denominator was the Polish Jews. People who had not taken out German citizenship. And... just summarily arrested. One of the stories afterwards is that one of my - they’re actually second cousins who, the family was taken. And eventually the neighbours complained of the smell from the apartment because the fish, everything had just been left when they came. My father was told- he took a blanket, some warm clothes, also his tallit, tefillin, put everything in a box, went to the downtown police station and said, “Could you please give this to my father?” And they said, “It’s too late. They’re all gone. We’ve sent them on the train. We’ve sent them back to Poland. We don’t want Jews in Germany. We’re clearing the Jews out of Germany. *Judenrein [free from Jews].*” And there was nothing to do. You just went home in a state of great agitation. You know, this is... the stories that I heard from my parents. This is what they said. And then came Kristallnacht.

Yes. What about Kristallnacht? What happened?

Five Nazis and the local police chief, well known to us, burst into the apartment. Ordered my father to get dressed. While he got dressed, other rampaged through the apartment and what my mother particularly talked about was three memories of it. One is, she saw one of the Nazis get down on his knees and look under the bed. And she had heard stories of how in Leipzig, where her father lived, Nazis and come to Jewish homes, looked under the bed. “Aha. We found a gun!” Which of course was one that the Nazis themselves had. “You’re under arrest.” And my mother said, “There’s nothing there. There’s nothing else for you to have. You’ve already found the money.” Because she used to keep some fairly large sum, German marks cash, at the bottom of the laundry basket, which they had turned over and they took the money. But they went into my grandfather’s room... and desecrated everything. He had a small Sefer Torah which they tore up. They tore the pages of all of the Hebrew books that he had; he had a large library, out of the spines, trampled on them. And my father- And

then also apparently my sister Ruth and I were standing at the door watching all of this. And then the local police chief came by and shoved us back into our room, slammed the door and told my mother, “The girls don’t need to see this.” And eventually when they marched my father out of the apartment the local police chief said, “Take yourself and the girls out of Germany.” Just...somewhat surprising that he would say this. And... She sat the rest of the night, I don’t know, in shock, state of shock – you know, whatever. And around eight o’clock in the morning, the shop assistant rang the bell. She was in tears. “You have to come down.” And she came down and she found that the store windows had - had been smashed. All the merchandise was kept in glass counters, and all of those had also been smashed. Merchandise, out of the boxes, thrown all over the store. The glass littered the sidewalk. This was Kristallnacht. And they ordered my mother to sweep up the mess. Made derogatory remarks about ‘filthy Jews not knowing how to keep cleanliness and order’. And she swept for the morning; the Nazis watched. And when she was finally finished, when they agreed there wasn’t a splinter left on the sidewalk they said to her, “Replace the windows. A mess. Disgrace.” And she went upstairs. And eventually she actually went to a glazier - I’m not sure when - and started to say what needed to be done and he just said, “I know what happened. I’ll take care of it.” And the windows were replaced somewhere along the way but I don’t know just when. And then in the afternoon people started to come. My aunt Fanny who had- was one of the people who did not have a Germany citizenship who was arrested on the 29th of October at the same time as my grandfather, and other relatives of ours from our city- and she came back. She came to the- our home, and said that the synagogue had been burnt to the ground. The one that my grandfather had founded in the 1890s. The fire brigade and everybody watching, perhaps, who knows. Incidentally, back in October of 29th also arrested was my father’s sister, Tante Amalia and her husband and her two daughters. And... my cousin Irene and her family. Lots and lots of people. My uncle Moritz had taken out the German citizenship. So... the women – women came to our home. I - I guess because my grandfather had founded the synagogue somehow or other the family was considered perhaps leaders in the Community. But they all came, wringing their hands, “We don’t know what to do. The men have been arrested.” The husbands, sons, fathers. These were not just our relatives, but other members of the Jewish Community.

[0:38:48]

Yeah. But your father, had he been arrested at that point?

Oh yes. Oh yes. My father was – yes, as I described. No, I’m talking about Kristallnacht.

Yes, Kristallnacht.

Yes, my father was arrested. The six men came...and, yeah.

They took him.

They trashed the apartment and they took him. And they smashed the store. I don’t know in what order. Whether it was different groups of Nazis who – who did that. So- no, my father was arrested. His brother, Moritz was arrested, the one who lived near downtown, as I mentioned. He had one son who was over eighteen, and he was also arrested. And other people. And so... my mother said, “I will go to the police station and find out.” It’s across the street. And she got dressed and I guess put back her shoulders, walked into the police station and said, “Please can you tell me, where is my husband?” And the answer was, “He’s in Buchenwald.” And, “If you can get him a visa , then he can come out.” “We want to get rid of the Jews; we don’t want Jews in Germany.” And so of course she was hugely bitter and hugely upset. Got in touch with the Jewish Agency and said, “Where’s my visa?!” She, evidently she lost her temper. Screaming. As a great aside, a few years ago I went to Berlin, and was in this small hotel, and they were telling stories about this building having been the headquarters of all of the Jewish organisations in Berlin. And I realised that this was where, where the Jewish Agency was. And I went upstairs because my mother described the whole thing. And I saw because she went up there and she- screaming away. She...Not her nature. But... and she then decided to do what my father... would not do. Because my father wanted to do everything exact. She decided to look for a forged visa . My father had already helped his sister Lene with a forged visa . And some other people. But he felt that wasn’t him. He felt everything had to be the right and the honest way.

So what did she do?

[0:41:31]

Hm?

What did she do?

She went about and tried to get a visa. Now, before she managed that, there was this other thing that happened all over Germany, where the Germans made a list of what my mother described – she uses the word ‘designated’, in English, ‘designated’ homes. The Nazis said, “Jews do not need to have, live in these beautiful, huge, wonderful homes. Here is a list where Jews can live. If your home is not on that list, you are evicted.” So, we were not on that list and my mother’s father, my grandfather in Leipzig was in fact on the list. So my mother took my sisters and me to stay with my grandfather in Leipzig. She went to live in a small apartment near Halle, because she felt that she needed to be there. She was very much aware of the fact that the Nazis knew exactly where you were, where you lived, what you did. That they knew everything. And she felt that for her to go to Leipzig was not a good, safe, sensible idea. So she stayed in Halle, came to see us frequently. Now the - the apartment according to my mother and my sister, was already full. I don’t know how many other Jews had already come. My grandfather took them in. He had a very large home. It was the same apartment that my mother grew up in. There were, my mother was the oldest of three, so it was her parents and the three of them. You know, large, comfortable- the usual living room, dining room, bedrooms, kitchen. But there was only one kitchen and there was only one bathroom.

Yeah.

And apparently my sister used to – the little one - used to call out... something about “Toilet” or “Time” or whatever it is. She was having a high old time in a way. Nobody controlling her. She was just about three years old. And so we were in Leipzig, and my mother tried to get a visa. And this took her ...probably a good six months. I’d like to mention one thing that happened, which again, is from my mother and my sister. We were still in Leipzig for Pesach. And while my grandfather made up a schedule of who would use the kitchen when. The people, they pooled all the food that they had, whatever they could get. No meat. Apparently you could still get chicken, but there was no *shochet*. And the home was kosher, so no beef, but there was some shortage of food. But not desperate, from what they say. And they cooked together and from what my mother said, got all my grandmother’s Pesach dishes and changed everything over. They emptied the dining room. Nobody- I don’t think anybody

had that much because they shifted their possessions. But how much did anybody bring, of the people who were there? And they had Pesach together.

And this is...19...

...39. 1939.

[0:45:24]

And my mother said, at the end, you know, the end of the Seder, “Next year *Yerushalaim*” And...Great, great hope from and fervour from everybody. By the way, in between, before she got the visa, she actually got a summons from the Nazis. Because anticipating that they were going to go to Palestine, they had packed things in a lift. And you had to account for everything. One of the things was, you were allowed to take - if you had silver, silverware - you were allowed to take in our case, five of everything. Five spoons, five forks, five knives. That’s it. Now- and you had to account for everything that was there. And my father was very meticulous, as you may have gathered from the way he wanted the visa. So he- at the very end, my mother looked at these three silver bracelets that he had brought back when he went to Palestine in 1935. My sisters- one for each of us, and they were in boxes. And my mother threw these in. And when they- the lift was ready to go and there were people who were checking it. And there were these silver bracelets, and they weren’t on the list. So she was summoned. and she went to a court in Magdeburg, where she explained that it was an oversight. You know, “It’s not- just for the children. I just I threw it in. It was a mistake.” Whatever. She said the right thing. She apologised. She was fined. And...that was very, very – very, very traumatic. Now my father was living in Paris.

[0:47:21]

The visa that- when you get a - a forged visa, pretty much forever. The visa she got for him was for France because her younger sister had, in about 1935, moved with her husband to France. Business reasons. Actually they lived in a suburb of Paris outside of Paris – Montmorency, as it’s called. And my father is now in Paris, pretty much destitute because you were only allowed to leave with ten marks per person. And he had- my relatives, my grandfather had a- grandfather Markus who was deported to Poland, had a cousin in Paris.

Now going back briefly, during the First World War my grandfather had helped this cousin's father in some way, financially and otherwise. And so my aunt, my mother's sister kept saying, "Why don't you go to Karfiol? You must go there." Because they, by now, had an elegant ladies-wear shop in Rue whatever-it-is. Whatever is the place where all the best stores are. And eventually, with great hesitation he went there. And gave his name and was immediately recognised. Welcomed with open arms: "Come to the back of the shop. Why, why didn't you come to us?" They took him home to an elegant apartment, gave him a wonderful meal. Tried to- offered him some sum of money every week which he refused to take. But he asked for their help getting my parents out- getting my sister and my mother out. One of the suggestions was that he was going to - we should walk across the border, and as soon as we crossed there would be a limousine. My father turned that down. Too risky. Eventually, they came up with a scheme whereby Monsieur Karfiol, would take- they were hugely wealthy, take a million francs, established a bank account in my mother's name. She now had a Paris bank account – one million. And my father told my mother, "Go to the consulate in Leipzig." And there was a message in the Consul's bag. And she did this. Took a minute for her to be admitted to the Consul, but he looked in the bag and found indeed there was a visa for her, and for the three of us, because she was a woman of wealth, of standing. She was not going to be any kind of problem to the French government. And this is how we got out. And my mother said that, "We might as well go out in style." You couldn't... As I said, you could go out with ten marks per person, which for us was forty marks. There was also limited amount of how she- of her access to the bank accounts. But she somehow kept managing to say, "The children need shoes. The children need this..." She bought us all new clothes. Before she left, she had to sign over all the assets, which is- they actually had, the Nazis had produced a man who was prepared to buy the business for 1,000 marks. Sign here. Which she did, without any choice. Obviously never saw that money. Whatever my father had in investments in the bank. And very particularly, he had taken out an insurance and life insurance policy where he paid premiums. And ...about ten years ago, whatever, there was a restitution program where the Nazis stole all these premiums and, 'if you can prove that you had such a policy, we will...' So... I in fact got some small amount of money, but what I also got is the policy. Not the policy, the document where my mother signed over, with the stamp on it, with the swastika. And she signs her middle name 'Amalia Sara' because they had said all Jewish women must take the middle name 'Sara', Jewish men must take the middle name 'Israel', and she signs her name 'Amalia Sara Kanner'. And we ran out- we flew out. Apparently at the border, because there was border control, you didn't-like today, you fly

from Leipzig to Paris, it's a flight. In those days flights were different. They weren't so very long. At the border the plane landed and we had to change planes, but apparently there was some kind of inspection by the Nazis. And we went into this room, and we all had to strip, my mother and the three girls to nothing, to make sure we weren't hiding anything. And we were passed and then we got on to the French plane, and we landed in Paris.

[0:53:05]

Before coming to Paris, just to go back a little, I want to find out a little bit more about your father and in Buchenwald. For how long was he in Buchenwald and did- was there contact with him in Buchenwald?

I don't think so. My mother never said that she had any contact with him. She- what actually happened, she presented the forgery and they looked at it and they tore it up. She got another one which was, either it was a better forgery or she had the presence of mind to slip some money underneath – a fifty or a hundred mark note and they took it . Now when he said, when he came back out of Buchenwald, it was five or six weeks. I'm not sure. Somewhere, I would guess, either the end of December or the beginning of January. My understanding is that this- Being able to get people out of concentration camps with a visa... did not last very long. I do know personally of some other people, my uncle Moritz and his son got out and went to Bolivia where Tante Rosa had some kind of connections. And I know some other people I heard stories subsequently, who got out that way. But what my father said about Buchenwald was that the first few days all they got was salted herring, which made you hugely thirsty and no water and no other food. Just... kind of a cruelty. And then he talked about the fact that three men tried to escape, were caught. All the inmates were lined up on some kind of parade ground. Scaffolding was there and the three men were- three Jews were hanged, and left hanging, and everybody had to stand there until it got dark.

[0:55:13]

...And do you remember your father coming back from Buchenwald?

No.

No. And you said the Kristallnacht, you also don't remember those things?

No. No. I'm telling you what I heard from my sister, my mother, father. No, I do not have those personal memories. My personal memories of Germany are- I count on one hand.

Yeah. And Buchenwald is actually not that far from Leipzig.

No...no, but because the Jews were, other Jews I know went to Dachau. There were probably other camps because Jews were arrested on Kristallnacht. Men between, I think, sixteen and sixty. Must have been- I'm not sure what the top age was, but whatever the top age was, it did not include my grandfather Moses, who was born I think in 1879 so 21 and 38, how much is that? That's kind of- he was over sixty.

Yeah. So he wasn't arrested.

And he was not arrested. So I- from that, I've always concluded that the top age was sixty.

And how long did your father stay when he came back? Did he stay with your mum?

It was a matter of no more than a week, because the- you had to leave. This was the understanding. And when he- two Nazis came and escorted him to the train station. And in fact he was ordered to buy three first class tickets because he was accompanied to the border and said, "Well this is just some Nazis who are getting a vacation on, on me." But...

[0:57:00]

So he had to pay for the...people accompanying him to the...?

Correct. Correct. He was taken from the train station to the border where he changed trains with this visa that he had. And from there he went to France. And it was...I don't know exactly, but the understanding when- probably when my mother presented this visa – she was told, "He is to leave by..." And I don't know; it was a very short time. So again, looking back, my father, shortly after my grandfather is gone, my father is gone. He's back! And then he's gone again.

Yes.

So, I think that my problem in not remembering is a combination of the presence of the Nazis. I, I say this, because I have a friend, a woman who lives in Netanya, who I spent some time with three or four years ago. And we started talking about our history. She went from Berlin to Belgium, I think. And... she talked about the Nazis everywhere, and her terror of the Nazis. And then she said, "And finally, we got on a ship and we came to England. And I was ten years old, and don't remember a thing about the trip. I don't remember being on a ship. Can you imagine not remembering?" And I speculate from there, that the presence, the Nazis, in the streets, everywhere, all the time, that my family talked about, probably affected me. I'm speculating, as I speculate that it was the disappearance of my father, my grandfather, that affected the problem with my memory.

It was a traumatic memory...

Totally traumatic.

In a classic way.

Now I should say, my sister Ruth, on the other hand, remembers absolutely everything. And she has- her reputation is for her memory. That you know, she always remembers all the details, all the facts. She remembers absolutely everything. She's the total opposite of me. And I didn't.

[0:59:21]

Different people deal differently with...

Yes. Exactly. Exactly.

So your father then managed with this forged visa to get into Paris.

Right. And he's living- I think he must have gotten some kind of help from a Jewish Agency in Paris. A minimum amount of money for him to eat, to live, and so on and so forth.

And then you fly out.

We fly out.

What was the date, please?

It was the end... it was probably June 30th, June 29th or June 30th of 1939. The end of June 1939. We'll take a break.

We can take a break. [break]

[1:00:08]

Shortly after my sister Lea was born, in November 1936, I'm not sure exactly when... No it must have been before. Somewhere around 1936, '37 - I'm not really sure - my father, they felt that she and we, we needed a break, we needed a rest. And so my mother and my sisters went to the Sudetenland for a holiday in the lakes. Bad whatever-it-is. And my mother and I were sitting on a bench, and along came a man in a Nazi uniform, cause the Sudetenland was part of Czechoslovakia but was, if not already taken over by Germany, very pro-German. And so here comes this man in a Nazi uniform and grabs me from the bench, and picks me up and starts swinging me about. And my mother doesn't know what to do, or what to say. She's just obviously totally horrified. And I can't tell you what was going on in my mind. But eventually he put me down and he turned to my mother, and here's what he said, "Dear Lady, you are to be congratulated. You have an absolutely perfect Aryan child." Aryan being the Nazi racial ideal. Because I was... fair-skinned, blue-eyed, light red hair. The epitome of a German child.

[1:02:15]

What did your mother reply to that?

Nothing, as far as I know. Nothing. What would she say? What would she say? She actually in a sense subsequently herself passed, because she made several journeys by train to Berlin. She's walking around the streets of Berlin, of Halle, of Leipzig. No one ever stopped her. Because her features happened not to be what the Nazis thought was notably Jewish. She was very attractive, auburn hair, dressed well. She...

She managed to...to travel.

Yeah. But I can't tell you what that may or may not have done to me. I don't know. Because again, this is the story my mother tells me.

Yeah. But it sounds as if your mother was determined to get out.

Oh yes. Yes.

But they had your father out anyway, from...

Well, more. They were determined to leave the country, to emigrate, as early as 1935. She then, you know to get my father out of Buchenwald, to get us out. The visa, for some reason the way it worked, could not include my grandfather. We left him behind. The- my mother's youngest sister whom I mentioned early on, who was brain damaged and had an age of no more than ten or eleven, had been sent by my grandfather to live with my Tante Hannah in Paris before Kristallnacht. Realising that things were totally unsafe, and the best thing was for her was to just be out of Germany. So she was already living with my aunt as well. We all- we felt yes, get out. There was a story my father had a supplier, who as early as 1934 said to my father, "Every time I go to Holland I leave some money there and don't bring it back. I've managed this with the trade. And I've got some extra cash. I am going to stuff the cash I have into the tyres of my car. You come with me, and we will be in Holland. And then your wife and your girls say they're going on vacation and come to Holland, and get out." And my father felt it was too risky. And it wasn't legal. So it wasn't that he didn't- he didn't say "Oh, no, no, no, everything is all right." He just felt this was not the right way.

[1:05:01]

Yeah. So when you arrived do you know, did your father pick you up from the airport, or did your mother...?

I believe that my that father was there, and I think my aunt was probably there, picked us up. He had found a room in a boarding house. One room for all five of us. With a common bathroom in the hall for the, the other people. We would take our meals with my aunt. Her mother-in-law, hugely resentful of us, you know, really got, “It’s your one sister there, and now all of these other people are there.” And she was quite, quite ...outspoken, let us say. But my father spent his time trying to find passage for us to go to Palestine. Half the ships were not seaworthy he felt. Others would not take children, because children can be troublesome, make noise. And he’s trying to get a visa, and we’re struggling. But the whole- I know that on July 14th, the great French holiday, everybody went to Paris for celebrations, fireworks, all kinds of excitement. I know that my father took us to see the Eiffel Tower. And that we couldn’t go up. He told us the elevator was broken, but of course didn’t have the money to pay for the thing... I know my mother took us to the Louvre, and my sister saw the Venus de Milo without arms, which she remembers, woman without arms. So we spent the two months somehow. And when war was declared, at the beginning of September 1939, French gendarmes came to the boarding house and arrested my father. Because- and he said, “I’m Jewish. I’ve been at Buchenwald.” He said, “You’re a German national.” And so he was interned in a camp on the coast of France called Dalmeny. Now my mother has three – three girls. No income. Had nothing to do, we were not going to school. And she learned about the OSE [*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*], which is a Jewish welfare organisation founded actually in 1912, which was now in France. And their mission was to look after Jewish children who were displaced by the war in some way. And they had bought up a number of homes and houses in and around Paris where they were in effect sheltering Jewish children. And my mother managed to get my sister Ruth and me admitted to this home. And it was called Montmorency. And that’s how we referred to it, by the name of the village as it was then. It’s now a suburb, thriving town. But it was a little village then.

[1:08:24]

How far is it from Paris?

I would say, I took the trip... No more than maybe an hour, a little under an hour. My uncle commuted to Paris for his business.

And that's where he stayed?

My uncle and aunt they lived in Montmorency. My uncle worked in Paris; he was a fur sorter. And- but it was commuting distance, certainly.

So you went to the orphanage, was it an orphanage?

You could call it an orphanage, many of the children were in fact orphans already. Not all. My sister Ruth and I – my older sister Ruth and I went into this home.

And what did your mother do?

She eventually applied for financial help from, from the Jewish Agency, which, when she gave, answered all the questions, gave all the facts, wrote her a cheque... forthwith, and it was not in her nature. She went into the toilet and she threw up, and she tore up the cheque. She was just so distressed over it. And she was selling- she had been selling- she had a fur wrap. She was selling things to try to maintain herself. Now what did happen, in January of 1940 there was a very bad weather and there was an ice storm. Now every Sunday was visiting day at the home for... for the family- would come to see the children. The day help in the home was from local villages. And the young women could not manage the roads from the local village because it was too icy, so before the women who were in the waiting room went to visit the children, the director of the home, she was known - Lene Papanek was her name. The home was run by Ernst and Lene Papanek, Viennese socialists, and Lene came to the waiting room and said, "We have a bit of a problem..." And everybody, "Oh, oh, oh." "The children are fine." And she explains the situation. And so, "Is there someone who would be prepared to come and help in the kitchen?" And my mother stood up and she was the only one. She said, "I will help you." And so she spent the afternoon- I don't know what she did. Washing, making sandwiches, I have no idea. And then she spent a half-hour with us. And two weeks later, the women were waiting again, and Lene called her into her office. And my mother said, "I'll help you again." And Lene said, "No, no, no it's not that. One of

our two cooks has got a visa to Mexico. I understand from your girls that you had a kosher home.” Because...

Cause it was a kosher- It was run...

It was kosher. And, “Would you like to take the job, the position as a cook?” And my mother was- immediately said yes. She was thrilled. Because it would give her status. It would give her some income, not a lot. Not a lot. She would be issued a small iden-identification card as of the village. The downside of it was that she then had to put Lea into the home as well. And Lea at that point was three-and-a-half years old, which was very difficult. What happened is, she started bed-wetting again. Further drama. But my mother cooked, and told my [her] sister’s mother-in-law who said, “I don’t know how you can stand doing this.” She said, “All I’m doing is multiplying my recipes.” And she did fine; she did fine. Well if you go back working, running a shoe store. Helping, you know, business with my father. She became a cook.

[1:12:45]

Versatile. And she was close to you as well. You were in the same place.

Yeah, we were in the same place. The rules were very strict. We were not allowed to go in the kitchen. And this... I think- No, I know that was true in Montintin. I’m not sure, but basically one, one didn’t quite. So... we were in this home. Now my sister Ruth, who was a year older than I was, went to the village school. There was obviously an age cut-off, and I didn’t go. And she - she loved school. She always did. And she’s got some notebooks and some mementos still to this day. Another friend of ours... who we’re still friendly with who went to the same school, had difficulties being Jewish. One of the problems was that French schools are open on Saturday. The Jewish children didn’t go to school on Shabbat, so every Monday they had to bring in a note of why they were absent. And the teacher made a large point of: “Look at this child,” you know, “missing school every Saturday.” To the point where she asked to be transferred to a different class. She was very outspoken. Which in fact did happen. She – she wanted to be in class with someone she knew who was a year below her. And...so they vilified her for that. Made fun of her. But it just varied. The children were issued- Towards the end, in the spring of 1940, the children were issued gas masks... to walk

to school, because the Nazis were approaching Paris. And as the... Nazis were almost there, we were evacuated. The OSE had foreseen what would happen, and had purchased homes around Limoges and around Vichy. They had a number of OSE homes, and we went by train... Ruth describes the- looking out the window and hundreds of people on the road, marching out. And she also says that we had some boxes with - with dishes and blankets, which we threw out the window so that there would be room for people to come in. And we went first to Chabannes... where we stayed for a very brief time. Now Ruth, was programmed, told by my mother, I think when we first went into the home, "You have to look after your sisters; you are the oldest." Which is what her mother had said to her. She always, always, was responsible for her sisters. So my mother made Ruth responsible for us. And Ruth wandered around the grounds there looking for Lea, and eventually found her sitting on the grass, alone and crying. Along with other three and four year olds. And just picked her up and said, "She's coming with me, and, and that's it." And just took her. We all ended up in Chateau Montintin. It was a little medieval castle, with turrets and everything. Our mother was not allowed to go. There was some issue of... She didn't have a ...a permit of any kind. This was the Papaneks' ... German mentality, I think, to say that this some staff members could not go because they didn't have the proper papers. And then they were left behind. My mother made her way to where my aunt was living and found that they had left. The village was deserted. She and these two other men made their way to the train station, and she managed to get on a train. People were pulling her up, like on top of a - of a freight train. And other people were trying to push her off. It was really like, 'No more room'. And some people were saying, "Let us take her." But she got on this- She got on to the train. They ran out of fuel at one point and they stopped overnight in some village where the people were housed by the local people, and wonderfully looked after. Well fed. Given bedsheets, whatever, and the next day they went to the train platform, got on another train. She eventually made her way to Limoges and made her way to Chateau Montintin. Well, Lena said, "Oh good. Good that you got here. We need you in the kitchen."

[1:18:18]

So she made her own way...crossing the...into...?

She made her own way from - from Paris to Limoges and to Montintin.

So at that point was that free?

No, this was Vichy France.

Yeah.

Vichy- The French had surrendered and France was divided, with northern France and the entire coastal strip along the Atlantic, was under direct Nazi control. And the rest of France became known as 'Vichy France' because the government of that section was in Vichy. And the- Essentially it was a collaborationist government. Collaborated all the way through with the Germans. Initially Marshal Petain who was the great hero of the First World War turned traitor, and then eventually a man called Pierre Laval became the minister. And they basically did the bidding of the Nazis. It was a puppet government. Probably similar to governments that the Nazis set up in other countries that they occupied.

Yeah. So your mother managed to cross the line anyway? The line from the occupied...?

She, she- she got on the train, which was Paris. You know, Paris had fallen.

Yeah.

Because it took her, you know- she didn't get on a bus and go to the train station. They walked from Montmorency to Paris, with hundreds of people walking along the road. With- with pushcarts, suitcases, strollers. They slept on the side of the road. Eventually made their way to Paris where she and her friends briefly split up, because they had different contacts that they thought might help them. None of which were, and they eventually met at the station. I don't remember whether both of the men got on the train. I don't know; it's probably in the book. I don't remember. But no, she got on the train, and the trains... early on, there weren't really any inspections in those days. Later on, there would always be officials who would demand papers, in occupied France, or Vichy France. But at that time the trains just went. And she went as far as Limoges because she knew where the place was. And she- there were several homes. She knew which home our group would be in. And she made her way there, and she went back to cooking. Now much more difficult, because by now, now, there's a serious shortage of food. Really serious, serious shortage of food. And one of

the things- there is a root vegetable called *topinambour* [Jerusalem artichoke], which was grown as food for pigs. And she and others in other homes tried to cook this. And she actually managed some kind of dressing that made it palatable in some way. And was asked to pass her recipe on – on to the other homes. But they struggled. And the men who worked at the home, spent their time foraging, begging, buying food for the children.

[1:21:45]

Yes. And did they still keep kashrut?

My parents?

No, that home, the home. You see what I mean...did they then have it vegetarian, because the meat...? How did they manage?

There was- there was Montintin which was the castle, and next to that there was a - a different house which was called La Chevette, and this housed the very Orthodox children. And I don't know that the rare times when there were chickens whether they didn't have them, or whether, somebody, perhaps the director's wife, the director's husband – the director was a woman called Madame Krakowski, very strict. Remembered by anybody who was ever in the home. She took over from the Papaneks before the evacuation because as I mentioned, the Papaneks were Viennese socialists.

So they didn't have papers either?

They- before Paris fell, there was a...a problem that they were on the verge of being picked up, and whatever organisation that was helping Jewish people got them out of France and to New York. And at that point Madame Krakowski took over and she became the director and she was then the director of Montintin as well. She was very, very strict. And she was the one who said that we were not, my sister and Lea and I, none of us were allowed in the kitchen. Although the other children were forever running into the kitchen trying to beg food, apple cores, anything. But she said, "Your mother is here. You are the only one who has a mother. The other children will be jealous; you will stay out of the kitchen." So that was how it was.

Because I heard- I heard that some children were allowed to eat goat cheese for example, but not cow's cheese for example, you know, because of kashrut.

I don't know anything about the details of kashrut. I do know that some of the children tried very hard to observe everything they had been taught, and other's just threw it aside. It was understandable, and this was true of nine-year-olds and fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds. But I do not know anything about the details and I never asked my mother a lot of questions.

No, but...there was enough food going around, or was there hunger? I mean, what does your sister, for example...?

No, there was hunger!

[1:24:27]

There was hunger.

Yes, yes, yes! I myself didn't feel it very much, or I don't remember it. But, when we went to America, and I'll come to that. I think I told you that I was in New York, that there are...some of us stayed in touch, and do to this day. And... the children talked about hunger. Absolutely hunger and also cold. Ruth talked about cold. The- Ruth's home was in one of the turrets, and apparently I must have been envious of her, because I was in there may have been like three or four girls in this exciting romantic whatever, and I was probably in a large room with cots. And she said, "You don't know how lucky you are because up there it's freezing cold, and you're much warmer." Because there was a shortage of – of fuel. There was also a shortage of furniture. Now in Montmorency, the boys were taught a trade. And the choice was either shoemaking or woodworking. My friend Norbert who's an engineer in, Naval engineer in California, to this day, knows how to make shoes. But the boys who had taught woodworking – had learned woodworking – when we got to Montintin, were building furniture. They were building tables and chairs. Things that were needed out of the wood that was available. Because this was not as well organised evidently, as the homes around Paris. This was much more of an emergency. So there was a shortage there. They hired ...several tailors, women tailors, to make clothes. The children were growing.

And what were the girls taught? You said the boys were taught...?

I don't know. I don't know. It's interesting. Perhaps we weren't taught anything because girls were not- didn't need to make money and have a profession. I don't think we were taught anything. I think that if we had been, Ruth would have said it. And the other girls, Frida and Irma, they would all have said, "We were taught this." No, Nothing. Just the boys.

Interesting. And how many children were there, roughly?

[1:26:50]

I could only say, over 100... in that particular home. But Mas-Jambost was a home not so far away, which is where the man I'm just talking about – engineer/shoe-maker was. And another home just outside of Paris that I went to visit where Felice was. There were a number of homes outside of Paris and there were other homes around... Limoges and Vichy.

Right.

So, shortage of food? positively. Definitely. And not just quality and quantity. You know, they would try to get eggs from the farmers. They would go to the farms. I can- maybe this is the time to talk about my father. ...When the armistice was signed, the French surrendered. The French opened the doors to the... internment camps. The German businessmen made their way to Paris, and the Jews walked south. And my father, basically with other Jews, walked down the coast. They stopped... at one point in a city which I think is below Bordeaux, where there were ships. I'm not sure of the city, but there were ships that were sailing to England across the channel. Huge crowds of people trying to get on these ships. And my father in this crowd, realising he could never get to the front. And that if he did, they wouldn't take him because he wasn't important enough. There was a rabbi in this town who housed Jewish people overnight, fed them, gave them some money. And he headed south and eventually got to Spain... to a crossing called Hendaye. There were three legal crossings from France into Spain. One was Hendaye, the second was Canfranc and the third I don't remember offhand.

Where was that one?

Hendaye was the furthest west. It was somewhat south of Pau - which is, but it's on the coast. It's on the- it's a border crossing.

Near Perpignan?

Hm?

Near Perpignan?

[1:29:32]

I don't know. I don't know. This is- I can- a little bit later we can get out a map. I can show you where all, all of these places are that I've talked about. But long, long lines, and eventually got to the border. Gave this little identification card that he had, and he's in Spain. And he walks into Spain. Beautiful weather, the sun is shining. He's- walked for several hours and sits down. As he describes it he's sitting down on the grass, skies are blue, the sun is shining and he feels free... for the first time since... 1938. It's... And then, he suddenly realises and this is the story he tells: "I said to myself, my wife and my girls are in France. What am I doing here? They are in France." And he walked back to the border, and he asked for his identification. And the border guard thought he was mad. He insisted, and eventually they found his scrap of paper. And he walked back into France... hoping to find my mother. I guess he had contact with the OSE in some way. And he - he was walking on the road with other people and a- some kind of a truck came along. Gendarmes hopped off: "Identification. Identification. Identification!" His ID was- did not pass muster, and so he was arrested and he was taken to the concentration camp of Gurs... where he spent probably two months. While he was wandering around, because my father always walked - looked to see the locale, what there was, where he was, finding out information. And while he was wandering around the camp, he came across my aunt Edith, my mother's younger sister who - the brain damaged one.

She was in Gurs?

She was in Gurs. She had... Evidently she had- she'd been arrested. My- back-track- my aunt and uncle, and the mother-in-law and their daughter Rachel who was the same age as Lea, they had all fled Paris and gone to a place near Villeneuve [-sur-Lot], where a lot of Jews from Paris were living. My aunt, uncle, mother-in-law and my cousin left Villeneuve and... tried to get out, which they eventually managed, via Dakar, Casablanca, Curacao and eventually they ended up in New York in 1942. But they didn't take Edith - for whatever reason. Couldn't, didn't – who knows. Probably just didn't.

[1:32:40]

How old was she at that time?

She was then...1940, she was eighteen, about eighteen or nineteen. And she said, " Oh, Salli!" - my father used to be called Salli. And she took him to the barracks where... she was staying, where, where he introduced himself, you know, "My sister-in-law." And they said, "We've been wondering about her." You know, "We didn't really know anything. She couldn't really say anything." And my father then kind of looked after her. She had a thyroid condition and she had a ravenous appetite, which was quite a physical illness. Which was, in wartime, desperately unfortunate because she was always hungry. He tried to help her with whatever food he had. In- somewhere around September in the fall, I'm not sure where, a rule came- odd things, different things happen in concentration camps. Gurs was the largest concentration camp in southern France, and one of the best known ones. But administrations change, various things change. In the fall of 1940, the Commandant of the camp said, "Any men who have family in France... can be discharged from the camp." My father had by then somehow made contact with my mother, and knew where she was. And also knew where ...Tante Hannah, his sister-in-law, was in Villeneuve. So he applied and took Edith and they left the camp and essentially, again, walked. There was no transport. You didn't have any money. Transport was disrupted; they walked. And she's dragging, you know, "You're going too fast. I have to rest." But eventually they made their way to Villeneuve where he knocked on a door, found someone he knew from Leipzig, who said, "Your sister is here." And he said to... Hannah, he said, "I've brought you Edith." Oh, no, I think actually maybe he didn't know where my parents were, he said, "And where - where is Mia?" And he then made his way to Montintin. One of the...I have more memories of France than I have of Germany, but not that many. There are a lot of things that I don't remember. What I do remember, is

standing at the entrance of the chateau and there was this long avenue - tree-lined avenue. And I remember my father walking down the road. And... I ran to the kitchen. And my mother immediately "You're not supposed to be here!" And I evidently dragged her, and I'm yelling "Papa! Papa!" And I run to him, and he came. And I- that is something that I do remember. I guess, again, you know the loss of the father - my father was back. And my father was then... accepted to stay at the home, totally unofficially. He had no documentation. And he then helped out doing whatever. Went out to try to get food, helped with the cleaning, whatever was asked of him he did. And he then lived- So, here we are now in the winter and spring of 1940, and the five of us are together - for the moment. And conditions are, as I said, difficult because of lack of food. And a lack of fuel, various shortages. And I imagine, although I don't remember this, the fact that we were living really under occupation. This was definitely a factor- it was a factor in the problem with food and everything else.

[1:37:14]

And what did your father say about his experience in Gurs? Did he talk about it at the time?

At the time, I have no idea. I mean, what I'm telling you now, again, of how he got- all of this I found out when I was forty-whatever.

Right...

No, I meant- I probably- some of that, I think I knew about that, because some of what happened they did talk about. But the details... Life in Gurs. Nothing, this would have been- This was his - his... He was arrested, but not interned, in Halle in 1938 for the first time when he was standing on line at the post office with a box of clothing and blankets and whatever for his father that he was sending to Poland. Because he knew my [his] father didn't have any of these things. He also knew that his- the aunt-in-law, whoever she was, this woman, was poor. And so he's standing with this huge box. And he gets to the front, and he's arrested. He's smuggling. And the local police chief happened to be by, and... said something. He said to my father, "Give the man some money, whatever." And told the man to let him go. That was his initial arrest which was before Kristallnacht.

Yes, and then Kristallnacht and then Buchenwald.

Then- Nothing, up to now, was anything like Buchenwald, where there was... the terror, the arrest, no food, the Nazis. Nothing... like that. He didn't talk that much about it. It wasn't great living or anything, but you know, he got by evidently. He didn't talk about it as far as I can remember. The main thing that I know about that camp is, how he found Edith, and how he got out. And so... the war is going on. And 1940, 1941. In the spring of 1941, the... wife of the President, Eleanor Roosevelt, along with a wealthy department store magnate in Chicago called Marshall Field, persuaded the State Department to issue a very limited visa for Jewish children who were in French concentration camps. And the French Resistance is working. And they are unable to get any children out of any of the camps. This happened subsequently. I personally know a man who lives up the road, on Regent's Park Road...

Yes?

[1:40:20]

Leo, who was one of the people who was smuggled out of Gurs in 1942. I know others personally and I've heard stories of children being smuggled out of French concentration camps. I heard just yesterday about someone who was smuggled out of Rivesaltes, which was one of the other notorious camps where children were held, as well as adults. But the Resistance couldn't manage it and they had this visa. 'The visa is gold' and 'you never waste a visa', and so the visa was given to the OSE. And...great excitement- the children who were chosen to go were those who were already orphaned, or where the whereabouts of the parents was problematical or unknown. Because there was not- It was very limited. There was one group that went at the end of May, and another group that was going at the end of June. Each time, not quite 100 people. And... in the last week of June, two of the children who were on the list to go, became ill, and now they lost their health clearance. And so now there are two visas, and the visas are- you don't waste visas under any circumstances. This happened no more than two days before the departure. I don't know- there were two days, a day-and-a-half. And the only people who can now use these visas are us, because our parents are both there. They can sign papers. Meticulous as they were, they somehow or other kept documents. My birth certificate was- Maybe my mother had given it to the home; I don't know... but we were able to go. And in fact, although there were only two visas, Lea could

go, because they said, “She is a sibling; we can get her on as well.” So the three of us are now - could now go to America. And my - my mother said, “No. It’s too far. All the way across the Atlantic.” And the story is, that she and my father fought the whole night. And in the morning, Ruth heard them arguing outside their room, and knocked on the door and said, “Why are you fighting? You never fight.” And they said, “Would you like to go to America?”

[1:42:48]

And the decision that they made- the compromise they reached is that Ruth and I would go, but Lea was too small. My mother would not let her go. And so totally unexpectedly, we were suddenly on our way to America with this group. A total change. I - I still have- Previously, the children all had little autograph books, which were signed by teachers, other students. We used to- we were veterate collectors of stamps, coins... and so we traded all of our American coins and stamps for European ones. And all of this went on, in this great rush. And suddenly... Ruth and I are going to America. Great excitement. Everyone is congratulating us. And... we’re off. We get on the train and go to Marseilles. And I don’t know how long it took, but it took a while, because train transport was already disrupted. In places the tracks were broken... fuel shortages. But we got to Marseilles. And in Marseilles, the Quakers were the ones who were supervising and managing this trip. And in fact I have voluminous documentation between the Quakers in America and the Quakers...their officials in France about things that were missing – signatures from - from Consuls...

Yeah.

Et cetera, et cetera. But the Quakers were there. They were the ones who were- And there were some other adults who – who were also travelling with us, although I have no memory of it. We- it was discovered that some of us had lice. I remember this... Because they used petroleum to wash our hair. I don’t remember how much our hair was cut to... get rid of this. And I don’t remember much else, but Ruth said that it was very boring, very impatient. Once they knew we were infected we couldn’t leave the compound, we were just stuck there. And this lasted for two weeks. And eventually... the news was that the ship could not come to Marseilles. My assumption was that something happened, that there was no passage through the Straits of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean. That’s, that’s my guess. When I talk about this it

has to be - why suddenly not? So we went back on the train... and it was rather lengthy. We went from – from Marseilles, and we made a stop at Gurs, very memorable. Because there was a siding at Gurs. And... I used to think for a long time, I said, I had no idea, there must have been some sort of mental telepathy, that people knew. But I guess maybe someone must have told the children that the train... was going to stop. We used to get – for the first time on this trip from Marseilles - we used to get our food in brown paper bags, which was a brand new experience for us, for me. And the children who had relatives in Gurs, saved their food – saved their bread from breakfast. And the train stopped, and the children were not permitted to get off the train, and the women were not permitted to get on – the mothers, the sisters, the aunts, whoever.

[1:46:30]

And so they leaned out the window, and couldn't quite reach and touch. And those of us who you know, had no one, we obviously didn't- and the stop was no more than ten of fifteen minutes. And then the train took off. And we got to Canfranc. Which... again, Ruth describes in great detail. The whole journey she describes in great detail. And Canfranc was one of the border crossings. Now the railroad tracks between France and Spain are of a different gauge. So that, always, passengers, goods, everything is unloaded, and you have to change trains. Now...the Spaniards were producing tungsten, and other materials which the Nazis needed. And they insisted on payment in gold. And so Canfranc was heavily patrolled by the Nazis. And but we were off the train, and we were waiting. Ruth remembers particularly- It's now July, or, the end of July by now. Cause we left in June. And the entire trip to New York took two months, so I don't know exactly at what point we were at the border crossing. But she remembers the snow-capped mountains. That's one of her very vivid memories. And after about three hours we got on to the Spanish trains. Very crowded. I'm not sure whether it was in France or in Spain, but the boys slept on luggage racks, because there were not enough seats. And we slept, sat on the floor. We spent the night in Madrid. We were told that it was very dangerous in Madrid, and that we were ...not to make any sound. Not to call any attention to ourselves. We spent the night in the train station, and the next morning we went to Lisbon. In Lisbon we were housed in a boys' boarding school which was empty for the summer. And the memory I have about Lisbon, is... for... the first time in many, many months, we had- we sat down to a meal. And the table was laden with food: meats, sauces, rich creamy desserts. My memory is particularly of tasting pineapple for the first time. But

the result of all of this plenty of food and the children, hungry – we all gorged ourselves - and half of us became ill. And for years I used to say it was the pineapple that made me sick, but Ruth – and I’m sure she’s right – she said it was the butter. It was the bread and butter, because we always for some reason, in Montintin we used to play house, and we craved bread and butter and chocolate. And she said it was undoubtedly the butter. But basically, our bodies were not used to rich foods. We were not used to quantity of foods. And so that was...kind of a lesson. Also we had... wonderful beds with sheets and whatever. And we spent some time there. And eventually the ship came which was a passenger ship called the *Mouzinho*, which sailed for New York. And it was a rather long voyage. I have since deduced that the- because it took over two weeks. And even though ships may have been slower, the captain of the ship must have taken the southern route because the North Atlantic by then... was patrolled by Nazi U-boats, which were downing, not just military but civilian shipping. And in September - September 1st 1941 - we arrived in New York City. It was Labour Day which is a holiday in America, so we could not disembark from the ship until the next day. But... we got off the ship the next day, and we were taken to a place... as it turns out, called the ‘Hebrew Orphan’s Asylum’, somehow, which was this large hall. It’s on 137 Amsterdam Avenue. I know exactly where it is; I’ve passed it many times subsequently. Where we were cleaned, deloused, whatever...and apparently, according to our friend Frida, some of the toys that we brought with us were taken from us because they were thought to be contaminated. Which was a very cruel thing, for mementos to be taken. But Ruth, I know, she had a little pocketbook that she got for her sixth birthday, which is one of the things that she took. The famous thing that they ask children, “What would you take in your suitcase, if you suddenly had to leave?” She had this memento, this little pocketbook, that she’d brought all the way from Halle.

[1:51:56]

What about you, did you take anything?

The only- I’ve been- things that I brought from France, which is- I have – and I can show it to you – I have the autograph book. And I used to collect flowers, and pressed flowers. And I have a book... with pressed flowers. And I found two four-leaf clovers which I also have. But what I brought otherwise, I have no memory. No.

But you could keep that?

Evidently, because I still have it. I don't know whether I hid it or they missed it. And we were rapidly dispersed, as quickly as possible. The children went to... Some had relatives. Some went to orphanages, when no homes could be found for them. Coincidentally those- and they were all boys who went to orphanages. They said later on, they were much happier than others because it was a continuation of the life they were used to.

That's very interesting.

Yeah. I... I'll tell you where we went, and then it's up to you.

Then we can have a break.

Or we can leave it there, and I can tell you.

Shall we maybe leave it there and then we'll talk about America. I think that's a good idea.

Cause I think it's part of family history that I want to talk about.

OK. So now we are in America.

[1:53:24]

What happened is, from the ship we were taken to this home which it's called - it happened to be called. It used to be an orphanage, not any longer. And from there the children were sent to orphanages, or different homes. Now, my grandmother, she who was the businesswoman, had this large apartment in Leipzig, and all kinds of people used to come and stay with her: young people on travels, students, family, friends, whoever. And among the people who came... was a family – they were five brothers, all of whom had come to America in the 1920s and early 30s. When we left France, my mother gave Ruth, the one who was in charge of everything, a list of names and addresses of everybody they had information about in America. And the people who were contacted were... these brothers. And two of the brothers each decided to take in one of us as foster children. So Ruth went to Brooklyn, to a childless

couple. And I went to a family in Mount Vernon, New York, which is a suburb, where there are – were – three children: Lila who was a year older. A boy Noel, I thought that was a strange name for a Jewish boy, Noel, who was a year younger, and then a small boy, Danny, who was about four. The first night that I was there they had roast beef, very rare, juices all over everything. I looked at the plate and it looked to me that there was blood on the plate, and I started to cry and I ran to my room. So... The woman, Miriam, spoke some Yiddish, which I didn't know. She spoke no English. He went to work during the day, obviously. The girl didn't want me to be there, which didn't help. The most interesting thing that happened in Mount Vernon is that Miriam Graubart took me to the elementary school. Now what happened in New York city where there were many, many Jewish refugee children, was that, was the policy: "These children don't speak English so even though they might be ten years old we better put them with eight-year-olds because they're behind." So almost all Jewish children in New York City, who came as refugees, were behind. Now- and there were no other Jewish refugee children that this school Principal - or school Head, as they say here – had ever met. And he didn't really know what to do with me. And finally he gave me a, a maths book and said, "Here." And I'm adding whatever, doing everything. Now, in France, whatever I was taught, or in Germany, whatever, learned for myself, one of the things that I did not recognise was fractions, because France is on the decimal system and they don't bother to teach about fractions. So when we got fractions, with fractions I was stymied. And as a result of that, I was placed in Year 5, which is just about where I should have been. I was actually, because the year – school year – was divided in half, I was like six months behind. I was basically with children in my age which was... a huge advantage. I have no idea who this man was, but I've been forever grateful for him. I sat in the class. Looked at the alphabet on the board. Looked out the window. I remember they used to have music and they sang, "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton". It's a tune I remember. I don't know what I did, or what I absorbed. I obviously did learn English. Three months later, the- you remember my mother was in the shoe business?

Yeah...

She was a partner with Leo Weinrauch, the Weinrauchs arrived in new York... via, as Jews did, complicated routes via Africa. And I don't quite know who, or how this happened, but they agreed to take both of us. So that after three months in separate foster homes, Ruth and I were reunited. And we lived with the Weinrauchs. They- now, when it came to school, I – I

got there and I was placed in- Evidently got a very good report. Because the schools are, in New York were streamed... according to ability. And I went into the top class. How this happened, I have no idea... what I did in that school. But there I was; in the top class. A day or two later Ruth came. And the Principal there also had some sense and he said, "Well she's a year older. If this one is in Year 5, this one can't also be in Year 5." So she, who had been placed in Year 5 in Brooklyn, as I explained to you she doesn't speak any English. Behind. She was then immediately upped a year, which was very good for her. And so we were- I went to school. I, I was a reasonably good student. We were with the Weinrauchs .

[1:59:07]

How did they find you? How come- who organised this...

I don't know.

...at that point? Because it couldn't have been your parents. They were not...

I don't know. I don't know. Maybe because- I – I just don't know. Maybe the Graubarts, you see, everybody was in the fur trade. So maybe the Graubarts knew... the Weinrauchs from Leipzig, and knew them, knew the connection with my grandmother. Rosa Weinrauch was my mother's best friend.

The family who took you in?

Yes. She used to tell the story that she was there when I was born, and she put a blue ribbon in my hair because I had hair and I was a red-head with a lot of hair already. So she- they took us.

But again, when you arrived, how did they find the people?

I do not know. I do not know. I - I think, you know, actually no one's ever asked. It must have been... must have been the Graubarts. I - I really don't know.

And were you unhappy that you had to stay by yourself, when your sister went to a different...?

Oh, yes, of course I was miserable. I, I was- I- Ruth and I were not intimate sisters. But nevertheless she was my sister. And she was way over there in Brooklyn. I didn't know anybody. I- I was- I was very - very lonely. I felt very much alone. It was clear – I don't need to go into it – but the older girl resented me, which also didn't help. So and... and the woman didn't speak any English, so no.

It must have been very difficult.

So it was very difficult. So it was much better in - in New York City.

Can I ask you, because that's a topic we didn't discuss - languages. By then, did you speak French? Were you French speaking? What languages did you speak?

My French was not very good because I never went to a French school. I don't know why or how I knew a little bit of French. But German was much more my - my language.

But the question is, in OSE homes, you see? It must have been in French, the...the...

Well unfortunately Bea, I don't know.

OK.

This is one of the things that...

Yeah. It's absolutely fine. I just – have to ask you, yeah.

It's in- there are always questions which are asked. I will ask my good friend Frida who lives in... Nevada about this, to see what the languages were, whether we were taught in French or in German. Or what we were taught...

And what policy they had, they must have had a policy saying...you know...

[2:01:37]

I don't know. All I know is that I learned English very quickly. Children do. It was essential. I knew that I would survive better if I learned English in school, with these other siblings, with the foster mother who – you know - tried her best. You know, her husband came and said, “We're taking this child. We owe it.” I think that's probably what it was, because he owed it to my grandmother. This is how people- but he was, he was a nice man. I have no...no ill feeling, no problem, whatsoever. Nothing.

And you stayed there for three months?

We stayed there for about three months and now we were in Manhattan. Now two things of interest that happened, is that by then the Americans were in the war. And one of my very clear memories is that... first of all we had air raid drills and we used to hide under our desks. And secondly, there was the time when the teacher said, “We are war now. We all, we are fighting for our country. We are all very patriotic. How many of you have fathers who are in, in the service? Raise your hands. How many of you have brothers? How many of you have uncles?” And I'm sitting there, and I'm the only one who can't raise her hand. And I know I've lived through it already. I've already been there. And I always remember that, I found that... I couldn't say anything. I wouldn't... but I found that very, very distressing. It's one of the memories that I have from school. The subject was very dull. We learned about the geography of New York State, and all the different products. I just you know, I went ahead- I went- found the public library. Went to the public library a lot. I think that helped me with my English. I read a lot. I didn't really make friends. It was not in - in my nature. There was a girl in my class who lived in the same apartment building, and every so often I'd go up to her house. There was another girl who was a... German Jewish girl who had come in 1934, and I occasionally went to her house, but I don't feel that I had any real friends. I was very lonely. Now the... the Weinrauchs had two children. Meta was a couple of years- she was a teenager. And their son was at that point seventeen or eighteen. And he used to tease me merciless – mercilessly, and managed to make me cry practically every day about some of the things that he said. The jokes that he made, the names that he called me – I have no idea. But he made my life a misery. Absolutely misery. I can- because they were family friends and we stayed in touch with them for many years. When his mother died... many, many,

many years later. My, you know, the woman who cared for me. I went to make a Shiva call. And I walked in. And the first thing he said, "I'm so sorry. I want to apologise to you. I treated you so badly. It was really horrible." And when my mother died, Joe was already quite unwell. Came to my sister's home- my sister Lea's home where we were sitting Shiva. Came into the hall – I opened the door, I came to the door. Again, "I'm sorry for what I did to you." It preyed on his mind for the rest of his life. Didn't stay very long, and then went home. But... we did alright. We did well. At the end of... Year 6, there was a kind of an examination for the middle school... which I passed, and I went into the top class. As did Ruth. And we'd by then been in the country for a year, and we did well enough to in the English the IQ or whatever to go right to the top.

[2:05:37]

And you said, for example, that instance where you felt- were there other instances where you felt foreign, or that you...?

This is- That, those incidents- I remember people who had men in the service. They would have a flag with a star on it and they were Gold Star mothers, if they had lost someone. So, you know, I was aware of that. There was rationing. And we used to collect tin foil and - and fat and take that to the butcher. But as far as- no, I think that was- that was the main, main thing about feeling European. Because you see, even though Washington Heights was a German Jewish neighbourhood, I didn't talk about this. You know, it was not mentioned that I was a refugee. Certainly I never mentioned through my entire school career in elementary school, middle school or high school that I was a foster child. That I lived in a foster home.

OK, they thought that those were your parents.

To the extent that – yeah - I didn't really. I didn't talk about it. I wasn't a child who brought kids home. I don't think that they would have been unwelcome; I just didn't. It was not something I did. I was very much of a loner. I was much of a loner. What happened in the summer of 1942, no, let's backtrack. When we first came to New York we had letters from my parents, and we wrote letters back. Long, long letters. And I still have copies of the letters because Ruth and I kept copies of the letters they sent us. Leah used to write on the bottom; very precocious, she already wrote. She was, what, not even five. And they kept our letters.

I'll tell you eventually how it is that they kept all of this; we'll get to that part of the story. I've got copies of those letters.

[2:07:49]

And then the letters stopped. My guess is somewhere in February or March. I don't remember. And at that point, I thought the worst. I figured that – that they had, they had died. Ruth was very insistent. She said, "Remember Mama said after the war we will all be together again." This was the mantra. But I didn't believe it. And so... I was doubly unhappy. I missed my parents. I missed them, living with strangers. Even in the home, I didn't feel that I ever had friends. And Ruth, later, when she finally began to talk about what had happened, because for a long time she didn't, she used to say, "But everybody loved you." ... You know. "Everybody was your friend; everybody loved you. Everybody fussed over you." Which... And it- it made her angry. They fussed over my beautiful red hair. And I guess the fact that I was very sweet. That I never argued with anybody. And... everybody just loved me. And Ruth was a much more sensible child, who had opinions, spoke up. And... as many are. And so she had resentment about the fact that everyone always. And yet, you know here she was tasked with looking after me because that was her responsibility.

Yeah...

So...

And how did – sorry to interrupt you - how did it compare the sort of communal living, with suddenly now being in a family? That must have been also quite... a shock, or quite different?

[2:09:34]

It's really difficult to say. When I was in the foster homes, except for the first few months, my mother was always there. If I didn't have long conversations with her, she was always there. And eventually, for the last few months in Montintin my father was there as well. So- But they were there. And now my parents were no longer there. That was the big, big thing for me. I did- I was living essentially with strangers. Even though the Weinrauchs knew me and I think I remembered them from Germany in some way or they reminded me. And the

daughter was very sweet, and very kind to us, and the parents as well. They- they by the way, they had a kosher home, which the first family didn't. But I didn't much care. But my Jewish education essentially stopped on Kristallnacht. Whatever I was taught in the few months that I went to some kind of Hebrew school, I remember the alphabet but not much else. I know about Jewish holidays because they're there. The first foster family was not observant. The second family, the Weinrauchs, were like my parents.

And was it, do you remember, was it a problem for you?

Pardon?

Was that a problem for you? [?...]

Initially, the food was a problem, but I got over it. I got over it. You know. Whatever there was I ate, not because I was hungry – I never was a child with a big appetite - but because I didn't want to make trouble by not eating. So- Now in the summer of 1942, Rosa Weinrauch, as- she was working- she was doing, like a lot of people, she was doing some kind of piecework. She was making ribbons for combs or something. And she- she was not well, and she had to stop working. And she couldn't keep us any longer. And we had to move. I found out years and years and years later, like only maybe fifteen years ago, that the social worker- we had a social worker assigned to us. So I found out that the social worker told my sister Ruth that there were two homes that were willing to take two children. Which was rather unusual; this was a difficulty. One of the homes- in one of the homes there were other children, and in the second home there weren't. And, "What do you want to do?" And she said, "My sister Eva would not be happy with other children, I don't think. So we had better go to the one where there [were] no children." And... My only reaction to that when I heard the story, is, "Nobody ever asked my opinion. Nobody ever asked me anything." I remember the social worker coming. And I remember sitting on a sofa with her, and she sat opposite me. But... there was never any real – real communication. Clothing for us, as foster children, was in some kind of a factory. We were taken I think twice a year to this huge place where there were, I don't know, some kind of metal shelves, and they picked out underwear our size, skirts, shoes - everything was... gotten from- from this place.

[2:13:27]

So did you go to that family without children?

So we went to the family without children; they were called Kurtz. They had... five children, the youngest of whom, Aaron, went into the service. And so they had the room and they decided they would foster.

So they were older? Older?

They- I want to- the foster- the social worker- these people lived two blocks from the foster home we were in, which was a big advantage because we didn't have to change school. And this I think- I don't know where the other family was, but to me that was certainly, I think that any sensible social worker that would be an important factor. So we could stay in the same school.

So sorry, so you went to a foster home in between? You didn't go from one family to the next family?

No, the fo- the Weinrauchs were foster families as well.

Yes, but then when that finished....

We went...The social worker picked us up from the Weinrauchs, and we were...walked us to the other home. And we got half a block and we got to Broadway at 162nd Street. And the foster- The social worker said, "Oh there she is." And she pointed to this old woman. White haired. Her hair was kind of as women did then, rolled up. And she was wearing a house dress. And I said, "That's not a mother. She can't be my mother." That was not the image of a mother. Just like that. I remember that extremely, extremely well. "She cannot be a mother." It was the wrong image altogether. But, we went to this home; we shared Aaron's room. The two of us shared – shared the room. I cried myself to sleep every night. I remember that very early on I developed bronchitis. Now, we were just moving from the lower school to the middle school and I know I missed the first three weeks of class there. And I particularly remember- everything I remember about that school almost, were the non-academic subjects. We had sewing, and they had been taught how to use a sewing machine

which I didn't know how to do. And I sat there, just not knowing, petrified. And this girl sitting next to me. Her name was Barbara Howarth; I still remember her name. And we were making half-aprons, and I asked her whether she could please just run mine up for me, which she did. And this is how I managed to get through sewing, by getting people to help me because I didn't know how to do this stuff. So... We- I- I was in Junior High School. I think I can talk a little bit briefly about the fact that I don't remember really anything particularly that I learned. But I remember that we had shop, and I remember we carved soap. We did something out of copper. We did all kinds of interesting artwork. I loved it all. In the last year, we all had to make our own graduation dresses. It was sewing again; there was no way I could manage. There were two of us who- and there was going to be an Assembly where all the girls paraded their clothes. And there were two of us, Lila and I who could not participate because our dresses just, no way were going to fit us. So they would have all these rehearsals, and we would sit with the boys, whatever, because I essentially was going to feel silly. That was junior high school. Now the foster home- I think we could talk a little bit about that. I was unhappy. Absolutely no question. As I said, cried myself to sleep.

[2:17:12]

I remember for the first time in my life, we had cold cereal, which we didn't have in Europe. And I still to this day don't eat cornflakes because it's just mushy, melty stuff. And occasionally there was hot cereal which we, I think, did have in Europe which I didn't like. I used to come home from school, for lunch. And I called, called her- I was taught to call her 'Auntie', this is what I did. She used to play radio serials, fifteen minutes at a time; they went on all day. And I used to have lunch and listen to the, the radio and then I would go back to school. Ruth, by then was in the junior high school, which was a little bit further, so she didn't come home. But somehow or other- no, that was an elementary school. I somehow or other I remember - I remember that. They had a dog. Now, German Jewish people to the best of my knowledge, the kind of family that we were, never had pets. But they had this baby Pomeranian... that I loved, and I used to take the dog out for walks. This is one of the things that I don't know whether I said I could, or they said I should, but that became part of my job. And I also remember that Sunday morning you used to go to the bakery and buy bagels. And then you'd have bagels and smoked salmon - or 'lox' as we called it - with cream cheese. And I remember those two things, going to the bakery on Sunday morning and walking the dog, I felt like a normal American girl. Like everybody else. I was, in my mind, doing things

that other people did. I wasn't a - a foster child without parents not knowing what happened to her family. My grandfather, if I thought about him, somehow, I - I just- everybody was gone. So- and I was very good. I was a very good child, whereas Ruth was rather rebellious. She had earned some babysitting money. She wanted horn-rimmed glasses; it was her own money. She wanted to wear lipstick. The foster mother objected, and they fought. I was good. I was an angel. And people- she used to tell people the story that, Auntie, she would introduce me and say, "This little girl is living with us. And... they came- we wanted to take a boy, because- for our son. But then the foster worker- the social worker came and said, 'Oh, we have these two little girls who need a home and, you know, if you would only take them.' So we took them. And you know, here she's so sweet, she's - she's wonderful. She's well-behaved, she's brilliant and you know, now we have her." But of course I interpreted this as, 'They didn't really want us', 'She really wanted a boy', 'They didn't want us at all.' And she told this story over and over. And she meant well!

Yeah.

[2:20:20]

But I didn't read it that way. So, so I also remember that. And I will also add one- I got to be about thirteen, we got a clothing allowance. And I remember for graduation, for middle school, there...- Two of the- I mention Aaron - I'm interrupting myself - who was the adult son. He was the youngest of five or six. Two of the daughters were still living at home. Miriam took me shopping. And I remember very well, she took me shopping twice. At one point, there was a dress... that I liked, and she thought I should have another one. And in the end she bought both, which I think came out of her pocket. And when we graduated, we were all told to have pastel dresses. And they chose a chartreuse green for me, which I hated. Everybody else was wearing these soft blues and all. But you know, they said, , "You're red haired; this is beautiful. This is perfect for you." So - so that was graduation. I will only mention that at the, in the middle of the last year, there were examinations for high schools. Because you either went to - assigned to the community school, or there were certain specialty schools. There was a school for music and art particularly, and there were several academic schools. And... I... Everyone, because I was in the... Oh, I didn't mention, I was again in the top class. And everyone in the class pretty much, I think, went to take tests here or there. And I passed the entrance examination for what I said I wanted to mention which is

Hunter College High School. Only one other girl passed. She was the German Jewish girl who lived down the road from me. And this was a school that is not under the general high school Board of Education, but was established in the 19th century and it essentially is operated by Hunter College. And it started as a teachers' school. And it's a school for gifted girls. And they come from all over the city, because everybody wants - wants to get into that, so, from Brooklyn or whatever. And I passed this examination and I went to that school. Ruth also took the examination; did exceedingly well in, in math. It was partly math and partly English. She failed- she just failed the English. She was one year less in New York, and she didn't quite make it. But... I passed this exam, and everybody was very proud. Certainly the foster parents were very proud of me. And what it meant... was that the school was out of the neighbourhood. I got on- you could go by bus, or you could go by subway. The bus cost ten cents and was direct. Subway was less direct, but it only cost five cents. I used often to go- And I was given money- I was given carfare money. And I used to take the subway, so that I would have the extra five cents. Because this was another problem. Money. I had no money. And one of the things I very much remember, when I was in high school still, I used to steal change from the pocketbook of the two single foster daughters. Because I just had- you know, I had no money. And girls used to- it was an all-girls school, and after school you'd go out to this ice-cream parlour and everybody would sit and have a soda. And... you know.

[2:24:24]

They didn't give you an allowance?

If they gave me an allowance, it wasn't sufficient. I don't think I even had an allowance, as far as I remember. So, that, that, that was sort of- you know, little things. I didn't have, you know, my life, considering, as a survivor, I mean I used to not even want to talk about it. I used to say, "I'm not a survivor." You know, I looked over my shoulder, I said, "My parents are survivors. These friends are survivors. I didn't even suffer that much in Europe." I didn't tell you but, yes, before Paris fell we- there was overnight bombing. I remember that very well. You know, there was the sound of the bombs. I was hungry. There were bombs, so I had to flee. It wasn't any big deal! You know. Who am I? I didn't even look at myself. But I was- nevertheless I was a very unhappy child. There's no question. Now Hunter High School enabled me to bloom, because nobody knew who I was, where I came from. You know. If, if there was an intimation. Somehow or another I made- my best friend came from some place

in Brooklyn and was a - was a life-long friend until she – she died very early in her late forties. And I made friends there. I remember I joined some clubs. A lot of after-school activity which was perfect for me because then I didn't get home until six o'clock. I had dinner, I did my homework, I went back to school. So the first- the- we continued to have a social worker. Also, there was money given by the City of New York to the foster parents. They were paid a stipend. The first summer that I was with the Kurtz's, the third foster home - I was fourteen-and-a-half – and I, I got a job. A married foster daughter, Rose, was working for FAO Schwartz which is the famous toy store. And I got a job there working, filing index cards alphabetically. And I earned twenty-two dollars a week, fifteen dollars of which I had to give to the, effectively, to the foster family. Because once I earned money, the stipend that the city paid was reduced. So it ended up just about with car fare and not much else. But I did- It was my first job. Now Aaron, the son, came home from the service, and he needed his room. So the decision was made that one of us, at least, had to go. And it was clearly going to be Ruth, who had been fighting with our foster mother anyway. And she was moved to a different foster home outside of the city in Westchester County, in Pelham. And I got a – like a cart which, and I shared a room with the two foster daughters. But as I said, I – I went to school, and you know, this was basically my life. Now in- some time in 1945 we got a postcard from my father. He had gotten in touch with the International Red Cross, who tracked us down, and so could correspond: 'Your parents are alive.'

[2:28:05]

Do you remember when - how did the card arrive? Who told you?

I didn't even remember that it was a postcard. I just remembered that we heard. Much later someone told me that... this postcard came, which, went first I think to one of the other foster parents and then came to us. I just- I don't remember anything specific. I just you know, suddenly realised, you know, my life was going to change. And... we started writing. And they... came to America in the summer of 1946. At that point... I was fifteen-and-a-half years old. They lived initially with my aunt. She of Montmorency. [half-laughs] And the mother-in-law still there. And by now, another child. So... eventually they found an apartment, and we moved to Brooklyn and the family got together. Much, much later, if not then, I don't remember whether it came up then. But afterwards, when I was grown up, I said to myself, "Why didn't Tante Hannah take us?" If anything - by then I had my own children

– I said, if anything- and we weren't financially my husband and I were struggling. I said, "If anything ever happened to my sister, I would take Janet and Carol into my home. They are my nieces." Why did she let us go to strangers?

And was she there? She was there the whole time?

Oh, yes. Yes, she was- I found out, I recently- about a year-and-a-half ago I got the records of the foster home bureau, which had the reports, all the reports, from the beginning.

Correspondence between the various social workers, amongst themselves. Their reports of when they went to see me... Different things. And one of the things that was in there is that they had actually contacted my aunt, when she came. And she said she couldn't possibly take us. And there was an argument because they asked her for money, for a stipend to help us. And there was a discussion of - of the amount. And it was eventually reduced I think from twenty-five pounds to twenty pounds, or something like that, that she was prepared to – to give for us. And I'm hugely happy that I didn't see this until just a few years ago. Her daughter, Rachel, as adults we're very close. And she, my cousin, once raised this discussion with me. She said, "I don't understand why my mother never took you in." So it's just... Again, these are the kinds of things that happened as a foster child. When we finally moved to Brooklyn, I went into the school office and said, "I've moved." And they gave me an address to fill out, and I filled in my new address. And I was very conscious of the fact that for the first time in five years I didn't say 'Care of'. That it was just us. On the other hand, it was a very difficult adjustment... for me. I'm not sure about Ruth, because we don't talk about these things. But it was a very difficult adjustment for me because initially I'd forgotten all my - my German. Most of us did. We made a wilful effort. We didn't want to have anything to do with German, we didn't want to admit we were German, so we remembered nothing. And so I had to re-learn my German. My mother's English was sparse. But she was a linguist; they learnt French very quickly, they learnt English. So there was a language barrier, but the greater barrier was the fact that my mother felt that she wanted to pick up where we left off. But I was ten when we left, or if you like, more realistically, I was eight when everything fell apart. I was just eight. Actually, Kristallnacht I wasn't even quite eight. By the time my father left I was eight years old. Now we're getting back together. Six, eight years later. I'd had a childhood. I was a teenager. And so there were conflicts in a way. I found this – found this difficult to adjust. And it – it took quite a long time.

Can you just tell us what had happened to your parents... before they got to America?

[2:32:57]

Right. ...Not long after we left in the summer, I think in the fall, the OSE decided that this home was too near the railroad station, the villages and whatever. And they abandoned that home, and bought another home very deep into the- in mountains of the area, Le Couret. And both my parents went there. In the end life became increasingly difficult because of shortages. In the summer of 1942, there was a *action* – a major round-up of French Jews. The OSE had been working very closely with the French Resistance, almost from the beginning, and came to the home, and said that ...we were on the list... and the first thing we have to do is save the child. Lea was- In 1942 she was five-and-a-half years old. And my mother took her and said, “You’re going on holiday; you’re going on a vacation.” And she was a very well-behaved child, but she threw a tantrum. She said, “It’s not true. I don’t believe you.” And finally my mother calmed her down and said, “You’re right, it’s not true. It’s Hitler and it’s the war. You have to go to be safe. You’re, you’re a big girl; when the war is over we will all be together again.” Which is what she told Ruth. Same thing. And she went. My mother decided she had to see her one more time. Persuaded the underground, that she could go to Limoges to see her one more time. And, you know, my mother came in, and Lea’s, she was drinking hot chocolate, this lovely home, “Can I go home now?” And my mother said, “No.” Because the procedure was, the way the children were hidden by the French, they went to Family ‘A’, and then they were taken some place else, and the first family did not know who the second family was. To the third, to the fourth, so that if ever anything came up they generally, literally could not give away where the children are. Lea ended up in a convent, in a Catholic convent. And there was another girl there. Her name was Liselotte. She was about eight; she recognised Lea from the home, in some way. And she took her aside, and she taught her how to make the sign of the cross. And she said, “We have prayers a few times a day. You kneel when everybody else does. You stand when I stand.” “Your name is now pronounced ‘Canner’ and it’s spelled with a ‘C’. That is your name; remember that. Don’t ever tell anyone you are Jewish, but remember that you are a Jewish child.” And so she is in the convent; she told- she remembers some stories about the nuns. How she had- she stepped on a nail and her foot was infected. Certain lessons; they had sewing lessons. So she - she there were certain things that she remembered.

And where was the convent?

[2:36:12]

I don't know. It was in the general area. I have tried to track it down. I went to a – an academic conference in Limousin, about the fate of Jewish children during the war. And I asked someone who was researching there. And they said a number of convents took people. There's no way of knowing. After about a year... suspicions arose. And she had to be moved, along with Liesel and I don't know whether there were any- Because... her life was endangered. The Catholic girls were endangered, the nuns were endangered. So she was moved to a farm... way out in the countryside. And what happened there is, the French, and I'm sure other countries of Europe, there was a strict registration of everybody. So this was a family of– I don't know the exact number - but let's say a – a family of six. Somebody comes in the house, and you know, everybody's there. Seven: who is this extra person? So... the family decided whatever they could have said, or made up, 'This is our niece' - people told different stories. They said, "Every time somebody comes, you have to go outside." So every time the doorbell rang, she ran out. And she's hiding behind a tree, in an open field. And there was a cave opposite her at the other end of the field. And she saw a group of men and women coming to this field, being marched into this cave and then the entrance was boarded. And she knew that they would die there. And then she saw...

[2:38:00]

We were talking about your little sister, and what happened to her.

Yes. Yes. My parents. The French Resistance had no place where they could hide my parents so they said, "The best thing for you to do, is to hide in the hills or the mountains behind the home." Which is what they did. They took some blankets, a couple of cubes of sugar, very precious. And they went to live up in the mountains. The arrangement that was made is that twice a week, some young girls from the home, nine and ten years old would come skipping down the road, singing French ditties, '*Sur le Pont d'Avignon*' or whatever. And my parents would have come close to the edge of the road and this was the sign. And the girls would bring them a little bit of food, and terrible news about this one arrested and that one was taken and another one was arrested. And they lived like this probably... I – I think something

like two months. And then my mother said, "It's no good. You know, it's cold. We're not going to get through the winter." And so they decided to go to Limoges. They are by now, they speak fluent French, tell people they're from Alsace, that explains the accent. And they are walking down the road towards Limoges, and a French farmer offers them a lift, which they accept. And when they got to a checkpoint, the people manning the checkpoint were mates of the – of the farmer, and he just waved everybody through. They went to Limoges, where- and this is something which I don't understand. A man by the name of Rabbi Deutsch, in Limoges, 1942, and he hasn't been arrested. He's still there. And he actually has students from Strasbourg, and when they came it was Sukkot. And they got there. And they knew where the house was because the Rabbi, again, was in touch with - with OSE. It was a network. And they knew that if they got to Limoges, they would go to Rabbi Deutsch. And he came out briefly and said, "When the service is over." And they told him the situation. He gave them some money. He said, "Here are cafes where you can go and sit during part of the day. Don't ever go to the same place twice. You don't want to be conspicuous. And at night you have to sleep rough; there's really nothing that can be done." One night in desperation they rented a room, and in the middle of the night there was awful banging. They got dressed and ran out of the house and realised it was the shutters of – of the windows. My mo- there were signs: '*Workers needed in Germany.*' My mother is saying she's going. My father is dragging her, "You don't know what you're doing." And, "This, this - this is the end." And so they went back to the home. And after - I don't know the exact time but - in due course they were arrested, and they were taken to the transit camp of Drancy. The conditions in Drancy were like all the Polish camps. Like Auschwitz. The food was similar, you know, a crust of bread, watery soup in the middle of the day. There was a faucet outside the barracks, and there were no sanitary facilities whatsoever. You had to relieve yourself in the... forest a quarter of a mile away, whatever it is. The- my mother got a bed near the door. Interestingly, there were actually- the women had beds, the men slept on the floor. Men and women of course separated. And she was near the door which was the coldest place; the newcomer was always near the door. Most of the women she said some of them were ill. Some of them had gone mad. They were demoralised. They'd been there for some time. It was... totally discouraging, demoralising. Not long after she was there, a Red Cross nurse came into the barracks and... said that she's the only nurse for 6,000 Jews. "I don't have very much - just a few bandages. But I do make the rounds, and I need someone to help me. Is there someone who will work with me and carry my supplies?" And it was the same story again, as in France; my mother was the only one who stood up. As she said, you know, some of the

women they used to talk about, 'In Germany I did this...'. They were – they were worn out, they were demoralised plus they were starving and some of them were ill. She said, "I will help you." And so she proceeded to walk around carrying stuff for this woman. She also washed her - her linens. Very heavy sheets she said. This woman had some ersatz coffee, and she permitted my mother to have the grounds of the coffee, which she would take back to the barracks and my father would come and meet her in the evening. And they would have a drink together... and... have a little conversation. And they waited. There was a - actually in my mother's barracks there was a rabbi's wife, a Rebbetzin, and she said, the Rabbi used to come and hold a... towel in front, you know in back of her, while she would wash at this faucet. And this woman was also- she was performing *taharah*, which is the washing the dead. And she asked my mother to help her. And my mother did try it, and she used to get nauseous and threw up. And she said to the Rebbetzin, "I can't do this. I'm of no use to you. It's the only thing I can't do." But she worked with the nurse, who actually said to her, when my mother introduced herself, that she had been looking for my mother. That the OSE had been in touch with her.

So who was the nurse? Was it a Jewish lady or...?

No. Her name was Meder. She was a Swiss nurse. She was not Jewish, she was Swiss. But- she was- she was a nurse! She was a human being. She was- if you're going to look after all these desperate Jews, you know, to do this job you have to be a person of some kind of humanity, which she was.

[2:44:43]

Yes.

So... And, no, the slightly unusual aspect of Nexon, is that they were in this transit camp for three months. My mother's father, Moses Azderbal, left Leipzig, and made his way to Holland probably walking clear across Germany, because that's all that people did. And he managed safely in Holland... for two years, and then he was arrested. He was in Westerbork which is another. He was there for about a month – [aunt Edith] and then Auschwitz. Aunt Edith, my mother's sister, was... arrested, because again, when they went - my aunt went - to America or whatever they didn't take her along for whatever reason. And she was eventually

arrested. She stayed with a friend, and she was arrested. I have found her records from the time she was arrested, until she was murdered in Auschwitz was ten days. So the three months was highly, highly unusual, for whatever reason. But you know- the transit to the camps, everything was well organised. So many people could come at any one time. You know. There was one track in Auschwitz, one track in Treblinka or wherever and just so many. So, three months. And then they're lined up, finally, and it's time to go. And the Red Cross nurse interceded with the Commandant of the camp and said, "You cannot have these people; they are under my... command. They are – they are with the Red Cross. You have no right, you have no authority over them. You cannot take them." And this argument went on for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then the Commandant gave in. There were 5,000 Jews that went on the trains, because in the three months 1,000 had died. Cold, starvation, disease.

Yeah.

Twenty-three stayed behind. The others were... Hungarian Jews. Horthy's Jews. Hungary was at that point still pro-Nazi. And he had a deal: 'I will deal with my own Jews.' So there were the twenty-three. My mother, one of the moving stories that she recounts is that when they were marching to the trains, the Rabbi had a small Torah which he held high up, and he started chanting some prayers. And she thought the Nazis were muttering, "Oh, the Rabbi he's keeping order for us." But as she looks at it, for a very brief time, they were – they were part of a congregation - very briefly. Very sad, very moving story.

So who was kept behind of that group? So your parents were not- they didn't go on the train?

They did not go on the train. They- twelve, fifteen, eighteen Hungarians and I don't know who all else. Twenty-three people were sent to Gurs... in, where my father had already been once.

From Drancy?

[2:48:04]

From Nexon. From the- the transit camp was called Nexon. It was in central France slightly towards the east or towards the Swiss, but in central France. The trains went presumably to Drancy, where there was again, everything was very organised, and from there to the camps.

Yeah.

And these twenty-three Jews were somehow or other transported – I don't know by train or by bus, I have no idea - to Gurs. My mother, according to what I hear, she - she was immobile. She was, she was spent. She didn't get up for two weeks. My father is urging her to get up. Someone handed her a mirror so that she could comb her hair and she looked at herself. She turned white... in the three months. It was the, it was the worst time of anything. It was totally – totally, absolutely dreadful. Gurs, from what I've heard from other people, as I said before there were different commandants. At the time that my parent were there, things were not ultra-terrible. The commandant at the time, decided that he would, to some extent, let the Jews run things for themselves. There used to be a ration of soap. Like a spoon of soap a week. And there were so many arguments that finally he picked somebody or had somebody choose and said, "Here's the soap, you distribute it." And basically, there was this Doctor Leder or something, who was in charge. He offered my mother a job because she said, "Give me something to do. Give me something to do." They had a laundry, and they said, "You could- you could manage the laundry. You know, accept the bundles of clothes from different people", and whatever. So- and with this, it meant that she, instead of living in a barracks, there was a small hut. And so she and my dad had the little house for themselves. And she's running this laundry. And it was- actually there was- at one point they actually were able to go to the local village. And... she made some friend there. And at one time her clothes were... she had nothing left to wear; everything was ragged. And one of her friends said, "Come with me." And took her to a hall, room, whatever, where there were thousands upon thousands of suitcases that people had left behind who had already been... And... this other lady - Lola was her name – is walking around and said, "Oh here's someone who was your size." And they opened up the suitcase, and there were all these beautiful, elegant clothes. And my mother finally- I think she took, she took some underwear, because she had literally nothing that was at all wearable anymore. But couldn't bring herself to take the clothes of this other woman. She eventually... through the gypsies found some blankets. And she herself, and she shouts some other women, she sewed them up at the shoulders and made holes in them, and they kind of had shifts. Then, the time came where people were

desperately needed in a factory in Bordeaux... which is Nazi controlled, to work there. I think it was a chemical factory but I'm not sure. But they desperately needed workers. And so the head of the camp said, "Any man who is prepared to go..." He could have just said, "You go." But he didn't, you know, he was the guy who was letting the people run... "Any man who will go, I will agree that his female relatives," which would be mothers, wives, daughters, "can go to a free camp." And so my father said, "Right, I will do this." Cause a free camp... You... get there you sign in. You have to sleep there. You can leave in the morning, you have to sign out, you have to sign in again at night. So he went to Bordeaux, and my mother went to a free camp which was near Limoges. And again, why did people go there – I mean, why did they stay there? Again, because they could be picked up. My mother went to the office of the French Resistance during the day, after she was there a short time. And she said, she - she was quite hysterical. She was crying and screaming, "You have to get me a job; you have to get me...so I don't have to be back in the camp!" And there was a man standing there who said, "I think I can help you." He turned out to be a... man, highly connected, working for the French Underground. A very strange set-up. In 1937 already he and his wife had bought a home deep in the middle of nowhere in the countryside. And the wife... started stocking this place with all kinds of food. Canned food of all kinds. This Captain Dreyfus said, "If you like, you can be a housekeeper for me. Because I have a wife, and a young daughter and my father-in-law. And if you would come, and look after the family in the house you could come and live there." And my mother said, "Fantastic, I'll go."

[2:53:37]

And so she went to stay with Monsieur Meyer. And she's suddenly see- she's seeing tinned meats, real coffee, things that... amazing. The young lady, the wife of this Captain Dreyfus, she was very beautiful, which is probably what he saw. But she had no- she seemed to be totally unaware of what was going on, what her husband was doing, that there was a war. She was, you know, a very demanding, very selfish woman. At one point- my mother, again, she had nothing else to wear. Oh - in between, this wasn't immediate... She had actually, initially ...She had worked in a couple of OSE homes. They, you know, asked her initially, "Do you want to go?" She was in one OSE home; she worked there for – for about a week. Someone was suspicious; she had to leave. There were two, but in one of them, she had left clothes. And she said, "I will go back there and get my clothes." Because... And this was... way back when. I don't remember... she had clothing there. So she - she left. She got as far as the

Limoges railway station to go to Vichy. And the Nazis are parading back and forth at eleven o'clock at night while she's waiting for the train. And she suddenly said, "this is madness", and she turned around and she went back. And by then the house was locked and she climbed in through a window. And she actually hurt her back, which is a pain- some, she had some pain for the rest of her life. And when Monsieur Meyer saw, you know, realised the next morning what had happened, he called a doctor to look after her. And he either informed the young lady, or actually went to her closet and just got some clothes for my mother so that she would have something to wear. And this is how she spent the rest of the war. And my father was in this factory. They asked him what he did, and he said, "I'm a cook." – because that's what my mother did. And so he ended up working in this kitchen rather than doing whatever. And they're working, you know, seven days, whatever, producing whatever. And on Yom Kippur they got time off. Everybody- and all the Jews assembled; they start *davening*. And it goes on for half an hour, and the Nazis burst in and they arrest everybody.

[2:56:17]

And... he managed to get to my mother- word to my mother. And she actually, they were going through Limoges. And... she- the idea was that there was someone with her from the Underground, that he should try to get off the train. But it wasn't doable because there was too much security - the windows were too small. And he went to Drancy, where there was a division. You either went east to Poland, or they needed workers in Calais. Because – the famous story - a double spy had persuaded the Nazis that the Allied invasion, which by now the Nazis realised was going to happen, was going to be in Calais, rather than Normandy where it actually happened. And so the Nazis were...ex- strengthening the existing sea wall, and extending it. And... my father, by then knew - how he knew I don't know, but he knew that - if he went to Poland... that was the end. Somehow they knew about the camps. So he told this Nazi that he wanted to go- Didn't want to go to Poland. And he said, "My wife isn't Jewish." And the guy said, "How come so many of you have wives who aren't Jewish?" And he says, "It's love." But he got away with it, and he went to Calais. And he, they slept in the forest about half a mile away from - from the beach. And... at sunrise, their- They get up and they're counted and they're marched to the beach, where they're kept an eye on. And my father said he was carrying fifty pound bags of cement powder from here to there, from the time he got there until it got dark, when you were marched back. And then you slept. And he was with a man – this is very interesting always. The man was from Greece, and only my

father referred to him as ‘the Greek’. I think in my book I gave him a name, which maybe I shouldn’t have done. When I was writing the book I did those things; I think today I wouldn’t take these liberties. But I gave him a name in the book. And... he and this man were kind of lying next to each other, and saying, “I’m not, not going to survive this.” Because as soon as you couldn’t work, as soon as you stopped or you dropped, whether it was on the way to work or at work - they shot you. And they had seen this day after day after day. And my father said, “I’m not going to make it.” And this man, this Greek said, “I feel the same.” And they said, “We have to escape.” Now, my father had some money. And this Greek man, for some reason, had railroad timetables. How people have things, who knows? You know?

Yeah.

[2:59:24]

Resourceful. And they picked a day. And while they were being marched they dropped out of the line and made their way to the local train station, because they knew there was a train imminent. It was a very local kind of train, used by local people. They got on this train and the people on the train immediately realised who they were. They were not wearing striped uniforms. They had normal clothing, but here were obvious, gaunt strangers, exhausted looking men. And they realised who these people were and they decided to shelter these people. And... my father said that this- in the beginning they were hiding in the bathroom at one end of the train or the other. But at every stop there was an inspection for papers. Because there was a lot of sabotage going on. You’re near the coast, near British coast. You know, you’ve read all of...

Yeah. Where were they going? Where was that train going?

This train was going to- as far as a station, the name of which I don’t know, which is a larger station from where the trains go to Paris, Lyon, wherever. And so this woman said to my father, she got up and she said, “You sit near the window.” She took her coat and covered him. And when the you know, inspector came, you know, “ID, ID”, or whatever the word is, she’d say, “My husband he’s sleeping it off. He’s drunk again; he’s hopeless.” Things like that. And the other guy, the Greek was similarly sheltered. Until they got to this larger station. The Greek’s idea was that they would persuade the train engineer... to ride with

them. But that didn't work out. And eventually they boarded a freight train of beets, vegetables. And they covered themselves with beets, and they rode to the outskirts of Paris. They decided it wouldn't be safe to get out in Paris itself. Now the Greek again - he had a contact in Paris, where a man ran a small boarding house, a hotel. They could sleep there at night, but they had to leave before six in the morning, because the register was inspected and they couldn't come back until seven, seven-thirty at night. So my father is wandering the streets of Paris during the day.

[3:01:47]

Which years? When are we talking about now?

Right. We're now... the arrest was in '42...1943. It's exactly – it's 1943. I know exactly why. And it's towards the winter. It's towards the winter. There was a Jewish, I wish, I should have looked this up for the proper name... There was a group of Jewish tailors, who were working, repairing Nazi uniforms and other clothes. And these Jewish workers' organisations under Nazis existed in various places. And my father went there one day, and... looking for help and, and, and they were horrified: "You'll get us all in trouble. We'll all be killed." They threw some change at him and said, "Never come back." There were- actions where- you know, men had to lower their trousers. He saw those. And the Greek was supposed to somehow or other arrange for passage and it didn't happen, it didn't happen. And finally, New Year's Eve of 1943-44, December 31st 1943 came, and my father said, "I know the Nazis. We have to take our chance. They're all going to be drunk. They're not going to pay any attention to anybody. This is the day for us to go. . We have to leave; we can't wait for your contact any longer." And this is what they did. They got on the train. My father was right. They were singing, shouting, the Nazis on the train. No one paid any attention to them. He wrote to Limoges, said goodbye to the Greek who went to Spain and I don't know where else afterwards. Italy? And he... contacted the French Resistance, the French Underground which he already knew. They gave him false papers, and they gave him a job on the railroad. He actually worked in the local train station in the kitchen.... And that's it. I just want to say a couple of other things.

So your father joined the, not joined the Resistance, but they organized- they got him a job?

Yeah! They got him a job. He's working at the railroad. He actually made contact with my mother. He used to bring her her laundry. You know, because- he'd you know, civilised. He had time off. He'd go to this- to this farm. And one day he - he dropped something, and at the checkpoint they're calling after him, he's terrified and they said, "You've dropped your socks." So...

And he had a false name?

Oh yes.

What was his name?

I've got some papers. I don't know. I don't know. I don't remember.

And how long did they pass like that? How long...?

[3:04:53]

Until Liberation which was in the summer of- August 1944. And then... the first thing was to get Lea. It took them a month to find her; she was that well-hidden. And what I particularly want to say is, what I told you that happened in the convent and on the farm was not something that Lea specifically remembered. She would be with my mother and she would say, "You know Mama, when I was in the convent there was this girl." And she would tell her about the prayers. The same thing, "When I was at the farm one day I saw the soldiers." And - and she, literally gave her memories to our mother. To this day she does not, not, not remember any of it. And in fact recently when she was asked to write a brief biography of her life, and she sent it to me. And I said, "Lea, you forgot about the farm. You didn't talk at all about being on the farm." She just... And it's something that she has no- it is so deeply embedded. The only thing she remembers is eventually Monsieur Meyer decided to return to Limoges and my mother and Lea are riding on some kind of cart. And there was a dog at the farm that Lea used to play with. And all of a sudden the dog was gone. And Lea said, "But the dog! The dog. Why isn't the dog coming?" And my mother said, "The dog has to stay behind to go to school here." Actually the dog was run over. And this is the one thing she - she remembers. When she was sixteen she sat up one day and she said, "The dog was run

over.” Just like that. But she has- nothing, nothing, nothing. Her only memory is, “I wanted to go to America with my sisters.” It’s all she remembers.

Now that she does remember.

“I wanted to go to America with my sisters.” Nothing else. Nothing of anything that happened. It is a total, absolute blank. And it doesn’t seem to bother her the way it- the way my blanks bothered me. People have totally different- totally different reactions. So...

Yeah. And does she remember when she got back together with her parents? I mean with your parents?

She’s you know – she doesn’t- She only talks about she’s living- The farm she knows is, you know, she was on this farm, she remembers that. But talking with my mother about things that happened? No. She knows she was on this farm. She remembered there was a dog there. You know, generally speaking, the countryside on a farm: that’s it.

Yeah.

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

But your parents found her then connected to – in the monastery? No...

No, she was by then on the farm.

Oh, she was by then on the farm.

She was taken from the, from the convent. I don’t know whether a Resistance worker brought her or whether they went to this farm. I have no idea. You know. They got her back. This is really– this is, this is the story. It took us a month to get her back because she was so well hidden. She was actually limping. And she explained when my mother asked her, and she said, “Oh, it’s because I got this nail...” But...

And where was the farm, again?

Somewhere in - in Limousin, way out of Limoges, in the middle of nowhere. Literally in the middle of nowhere. I don't know. This house with no surroundings, nothing. A safe place. My mother and Monsieur Meyer used to go to the attic. They had a radio, and they used to hear the BBC. And they- They heard about the invasion. You know, the speech Eisenhower made before the- Before D-Day they heard it. Or on D-Day. So... but they...

Yeah. So they collected her, and then where did they go?

[3:09:13]

And eventually they went to Limoges. My father went to the... employer, and said that he, he was moving, and I don't remember whether he was going to leave or what. But he said, he said "Well actually I wanted to say that I was married." "I suppose you're going to tell me you have children too?" He said, "Yes, I have three daughters." And the whole thing came out. They were very sympathetic. I don't quite remember what my father did. I don't think he continued to work on the railroad. I don't remember what he did in Limoges, but after, there was contact with us. And then also with my aunt. With cousins who were also living in New York, cousins of my mother. And... everybody would send them packages. The doctor sent vitamins for my daughter...

For your sister?

My sister, my sister, their daughter. And the... They used to- every package had a pound of coffee, which my mother sold. They sold the wrapping paper. They sold the string that the paper came in. There was a shortage of everything, and they sold a - a lot of stuff. And this way they saved up enough money for the passage. My uncle gave them the affidavits that they needed. The interesting thing is that they were number four, five and six on the ...on the quota list. Because there was a quota of how many people could go from which country. And they were on the German quota, and nobody was going from Germany. So when they applied to go, there was not any kind of problem. I know people who were in concentration camps, who had Polish citizens and didn't get out of Poland to Canada or England or wherever until 1947 or '48. But my parents, they were ready to go... and they went. And so... the family survived, the nuclear family. But of course the grandfathers... were murdered. The aunts

who- my father's sisters, were murdered. The ones who went to Poland, Tante Fanny who went back was eventually arrested in Berlin... and she was taken to Minsk, where they had a- there's a not well-known camp where they started by killing the people by gas in coaches, before they had even set up. But I found this out about my Aunt Fanny. I looked it up in Klarsfeld's records. I said, "Why is she going to Minsk?" And then I spoke to someone. Again, it came up, and she said, "Oh, Minsk that's where Troty Tistina [Maly Trostenets?] – that's where that camp was." So I did, I lost a lot of family, and some family survived.

What happened to that sister, who...of your – was it your mother? The one who had a problem?

Edith?

Yeah.

[3:12:28]

Edith was arrested in the- in the round-up in 1942. She- I don't know. They must have somehow or other recognised that there was something wrong with her, because she was murdered on arrival. She was a woman in her early twenties, and should normally... or maybe it was just a quirk.

She was killed.

She - she was killed on arrival. She was killed on arrival. My father's father actually died in 1940. We don't know- there is... unproven talk that he was beaten in Poland. Or maybe he just died of... old age, hunger. My father got the notice from his... aunt, the woman in Poland, on the day that France fell. He was sitting in the camp waiting to leave when he got the notice that his father had died. [It's only the aunts.] A lot of - not first cousins. Some first cousins too, but many - because the families were large. In my father's family there was this great spread. His oldest sister was more than twenty years older, so they're like second cousins and a lot of people – a lot of people didn't survive.

So you said by the time you were reunited, it was not easy?

No.

Because you hadn't seen your parents for quite a while.

Right.

But did you sort of adapt? Did they? What were they like, coming to America and starting again?

They, unlike other people, felt the first thing is, it was important for them to learn English. They had actually talked about going to Palestine. But decided that it would mean uprooting Ruth and me yet again. Uprooting us, another language, so they decided that wasn't right. So they chose New York. They decided that they must learn English. Financial constraints were very difficult. My mother went to work in a factory; she was sewing button-holes on sweaters. My father got work bundling furs... which was again very heavy work, but eventually got a job from Karfiol's son, the man who got the visa for us to go to France. His son was now running a specialty shop in New York rather than Paris, and my father worked there. He wanted- he had a dream of establishing his own business again. Would talk about this periodically, but... he never quite had the nerve to make the investment. Because if the business fails then he's back to nowhere again. So it was one of the disappointments. There was a restitution program from the Germans in the 1960s, where, once you proved certain losses - in his case the business, the family, you know, his father - you could get \$10,000 outright, which was a lot of money in the 1960s, or you could opt for an annuity.

Yeah.

And my father opted for the annuity. Which- and he lived into his upper nineties. So between that and other things, in the - in the end he was able to retire, and they were reasonably comfortable.

[3:16:04]

And how was it- what was it like for you to adapt? You had a little sister? How old was she when she came to America?

Lea was- Lea was ten. Interestingly, she - she was about the same age as I was when I came. She also started you know, in year five. She was... I always knew that I, you know, had this sister. There was no question, and you know, I was - I was happy to have her. She was- there was no kind of competition with us, if that's what you're thinking about. We had a one-bedroom apartment, but it was a very large apartment. My sisters and I comfortably shared the bedroom and my parents slept in the living room on...kind of, sofas. And it was a very - very good apartment. My father was looking for apartments by himself, and came up with several. He found places where he could have worked, had an apartment if he was going to be the superintendent. My aunt objected to everything. Eventually, heard about this apartment, paid money under the table, which is what you did because it was very difficult. Nothing had been built for five years. And about ten years later, this guy was caught and the money was repaid, of the money under the table. It was a very- In a very good section of Brooklyn, on Ocean Parkway. In Midwood. Very nice. And... No, it was all- it was fine. I remember there were certain things that Lea got involved with as a teenager with a group of people known as the Ditmas Gang - something or other. And it - it sounded very unsavoury to me and I spoke to my parents and to her. "This is not where you should be hanging out." And they stopped that. And the other thing I remember about her really and the growing up. I wanted her to take the examination for Hunter. And my father was very much against it. They had a special programme at Midwood High School for... people who were gifted. And he said she should go to that, which she did. And then she wanted to go away to college. And my father said, "You don't have to work the way I..." Because Ruth said, when she finished high school she said, "It's enough," she told our mother, "you have to stop working. I will go to work, and I will contribute." And when I graduated I did the same thing. I went to work and I contributed, so that mother would stop working. And then Lea wanted to go to- away. And my father said, "You can go to Brooklyn College, it doesn't cost anything. You'll have a Regent Scholarship-" Because there were certain scholarships if you passed an exam, which, you know, she did no problem, which...that... "you'll have that." I also passed that exam, by the way, but I didn't get the money because I wasn't a citizen and they wouldn't give it to me. That's one of the things that I quite remember. I didn't get my citizenship until I was twenty-one. So...

Oh, OK...

[3:19:31]

Yes, because I was applying on my own. Lea applied with my parents...

Ah, I see.

... and so she got it...earlier. And she actually. And she had applied, among other places, she had applied to Brandeis. And they offered her a half-scholarship. And my father said, "Money, you know, it's not possible." And one day she came home and she said, some other girl who had also- went up to Brandeis with her father, and talked to the Deans there. And she came home with a full scholarship. And so I remember I went up to Brandeis with her. And it was one of the worst, worst, worst interviews that I had ever had. Because this man kept saying, "Well it says here... your father has savings of \$5,000." Now we're in 1954, so in eight years, by each of them putting away two dollars a week they had saved. And, you know, but you know. They talked about me. It went on and on and on as they were saying we really didn't qualify because there's money somehow or other. And finally he said, "Well, if you're interested in science, there is some money in the science department." She said, "I'm going to major in science." And she got the full scholarship. And my father said, "But it's only for one year." I said to my father, I said, "Let her go. She will get it back. Stop worrying." And in fact she did. She was a scholarship student... the... I think part of the board as well was paid for, which was very nice.

[3:21:25]

And what did you do, you said, after you graduated you started working?

I worked as a file clerk, then I did that for six months. Then I quit, and I took a course in stenography, a six-week course. And I got a job as a secretary, which was a little bit more palatable. And I enrolled in Brooklyn College at night, and started taking university courses at night.

Which subjects or what were you taking?

History and English. History and English, and I was doing- and you went two nights a week. So you took like two courses, Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday. And you could actually go four, and I was doing well enough. I went to the – to the Dean and I said, “I want to go four nights.” And he looked at my record and he says, “You can go four nights.” So I started going. I did that, and I worked and I graduated. And then I went to graduate school. I by then had met my first husband, and we got married when I was in the middle of graduate school.

And where did you settle?

In New York. We settled- we lived in Queens because my parents lived in Brooklyn, and his parents lived in the Bronx and we figured we should go elsewhere. So - so we lived in Queens. My Aunt Hannah, who didn't take us in, she found me, she got me in, effectively, in the building next to hers. And we lived in Kew Gardens [Queens] for a while, and moved in different parts of Queens. Eventually I had – had the kids. When I graduated, I – I became a civil servant. That seemed to be by then, the easiest thing to do. Whatever ambitions I had, I was now married and it was a choice I made. In those days, women – except really exceptional, exceptional women - did not have the options for whatever that I did. And in fact the famous word from one of my Hunter High School students was, “Mostly girls graduate from high school, they get married and have children. With us, we graduate from high school, we go to university, we get a degree, *then* we get married and have children.” So...it... I made the choice to get married and, yeah, and in effect, you know, kind of contributed to the house, household for, you know,- considerably, until I became pregnant. And... here I am.

And you had children, and at that point when you raised your children, what sort of identity did you want to transmit to them or what...? At that point how did you feel yourself? Do you remember?

[3:24:20]

I would say, yes, I am an American first. I would not- yes, obviously I was Jewish and I knew that I was Jewish. My second husband was Orthodox, and so I as a result of that I have a much greater Jewish identity. But I – I was always Jewish and I always knew my history.

And I always knew that I was born in Germany, and then I was in France, and that I was a survivor. I always knew this. But I considered myself American. And so did Ruth. And her daughter Janet was eight when something was said in school, and Janet suddenly learned that her mother was not born in New York like all the other children in her class. But I was- I didn't particularly hide it. I just- I didn't really talk about it. And in fact when I- I had this one friend from high school whose mother was killed in an accident early on, shortly after I met her. And she was the last child. Her father was seventy-something years old. And she sort of practically lived in our house. She became part of our family. She would come home from school. Sometimes she would stay over, and... and she was really part of the family. And so she knew. But otherwise they didn't. When I- what I eventually did, because I couldn't remember everything, is, I sat my mother down, I said, "You have to tell me." I think I said this at the beginning. "I don't want to live like this." And I taped her. And I had actually started taking some writing courses. And I was taking a course at the New School. And writing the book, and finished it. And the instructor liked it enough actually to refer me to a literary agent who asked for rewrites which I didn't want to do because I wasn't smart enough to realise that if I have a literary agent you do what you are told. But... eventually I revised the book. It was actually my husband Simon who suggested that I try a Jewish publisher. It hadn't occurred to me. And, that, that was successful. And I then had to market the book. And I sent letters to all my high school classmates, because as I indicated, it was a class of 120. And it was a very close relationship. It was a very different kind of school, as I described. And so we kept- we had an alumni association, so there was a list. And so I wrote a letter to everybody and told them that I had published this book and gave them a paragraph about the history. And they all came up: "We didn't know." "But we didn't know." "But we didn't know. You never told us." And I just certainly at university at Brooklyn College, I never told anybody.

[3:27:27]

By then could you pass as American? You spoke...?

Oh, yes, absolutely. Absolutely!

Nobody would say, "Where do you come from?"

Here people say, “Oh, I hear an accent.” And they ask me. Nobody ever said I had an accent in those days. No, I just- I passed. I you know- like I passed for a Nazi child. I passed for an American. I absolutely passed. Nobody knew. Nobody knew where I worked. I never told anybody. It was just not something that - that you talked about. This is very common among survivors as you well know.

Yes. What- what do you think in yourself changed, that at some point... you sat your mother down and said, “Now I want to know”? Was there a trigger?

No, I always wanted to know. I always wanted to know because it was an empty part of my life. It was the- the first title for my book was ‘I Never Had a Childhood’. Because I had no memory of half of it. And then the second part, living in - in foster homes, and the emotional difficulty that I found living in foster homes was such that... I did not have a normal growing-up situation at all. But I really wanted to know what happened. I think that’s- I- my interest was always in writing. I became a journalist.

Yeah.

Somewhat late in life. After- as I said I was a civil servant. It was...and then I stopped working for a bit when I had the children. And when I went back to work, I went into journalism. But it’s my nature to ask questions, and to want to know. Even though, you know, I kept to myself. I just really wanted to know. And when I decided by the time I had children, certainly, I said I have to ask them. I used to go- the children were in school, and I would drive out to Brooklyn to visit my mother and father. You know, have – have lunch and be back by three o’clock when the kids came home. And I said, I have to ask. And for weeks and weeks: I’m going to do it today. I’m going to do it today. I didn’t know how they would react.

And did they talk about it or did they also- just thought, ‘better to get on with it’?

[3:29:39]

When they first came my father told everything that had happened to him, and people were very interested. But after a while they got tired of hearing it. And some of their friends

were... from the survivor and refugee community. And others who might- I think mostly, and well, you know, my aunt, the second foster parents, various relatives. Our neighbours I think didn't particularly know. You know you have neighbours in an apartment house. You chat with them but you don't- now, they had some kind of an accent, but lots of people have accents in New York. You don't – you don't, you don't really go into it.

Yeah.

And I just- I wanted to know for myself. But I didn't- and when I was in high school and certainly in elementary school, when I was in school, I wanted to be like everybody else. All children do; you don't want to be different. So, for that reason I didn't talk about it. And then later on, when I was- it didn't particularly ...marry- matter how I grew up. I had... you know, I'd gone to University. I was a - a 'functioning American'. I became involved in... my first husband was very interested in politics. I became- I started working in - in local politics. I, you know, became a member of different organisations and things that interested me. I was living the life of – of a young American. An American parent. But I did - once I had all this information from my mother, it was clear that I was going to write a book. You know, this is what I was going to do with it. And then, as a result of the book, then - then it all came out. Because being a small- having a small publisher, you have to do your own marketing. And so I sold the book. And a reasonable amount of success. It was- I was- when the book was published, I was already living in London. The book is in... some number of libraries, particularly in London, but also outside of London. In Oldham, some places in Ireland.

How do you find, has it changed you, the writing of it and... the dealing with that history? Now you go to schools and you talk about it as well. How has it...?

[3:32:26]

What it's done, telling this history of my family over and over again, and answering questions from people. "How do you feel about the Nazis now?" "Are you still Jewish?" "Will you forgive people?" All these different things plus very specific questions about what happened that the students make, because it's mainly students, I'd say. Certainly ninety percent of the talks that I give are - are to students. It... Well even writing the book, and certainly giving all of these talks now, which I think is very important, and... it's made me

...appreciate... my parents, which I have to say, certainly as a teenager, and even into married life, I – I did not appreciate the... importance of family. The steps. The importance of living, the importance of – of saving your children. That your children have to survive. All of the things that they did for their own survival. And also, the nature of the things. My mother always there, helping other people. And my father as well in things that he, that he did. Certain things that happened in Gurs that I didn't go into. I can't go into everything. But always... trying to help. When he found his sister-in-law to whom he wasn't particularly close. And I mean, here was his wife's sister who was disabled and he immediately took her under his wing. It was and also their honesty. The fact that my father... refused to do things which were not legal, which were against the law. I did not- I did not value them. And also I'm finding more and more the ...influence, in a way. How many lives they touched. As I said just yesterday, I was introduced by a mutual friend to a woman who, through the book, learned about the OSE home that my parents were in right after I left for America, where this woman's aunt was, as a child. And oh, after the friend met me, called her aunt, was hugely excited. Had never realised that anybody knew about this, and would I come and see her. And just- I keep, through the book, hearing. And also I get- it's very gratifying. I get emails from people all over the world saying that they have read the book and they say nice things about it. And my mother, who was in 1997 she was 93 years old. That was when the book was published. And she used to say, "How's it going? How is the book doing?" Now, she wasn't looking for being famous. She wanted everybody to know. She said, "Everybody has to know what happened during the war. What happened to us. People have to learn." And so I- it sounds grandiose, but I feel now along with other survivors I have a duty to my parents, and to the survivor community, to share this story. I think it's...it's a way of people having to learn. And I find that no matter what programs there are, the reaction to someone who tells a story and says, "I was there and this is what happened to me" always has the most – most immediacy, the most influence.

[3:36:54]

And how do you think your experiences have impacted you in your later life? Your wartime experiences?

Pardon?

The wartime experiences?

...I am now ...very much involved in the survivor community through the talks that I do, through work I do Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. And I serve on the Advisory Committee of the Holocaust Survivor Centre. And this is really- many of my friends are in the survivor community and I'm- actually look for people who are not in the survivor community because I don't want my life to be limited. But going back earlier. I had a lot of difficulties during my twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, whatever. And... I was in therapy for a number of years. And... at that time, trained people did not understand or know how to deal with Holocaust survivors. And the therapist had all kinds of possible for what my problems were and trying to get me together and eventually she actually discharged me and said I'm alright. And it was not...And this would have been – I can tell you exactly - about 1980. And I mean at one point she said I have to confront my mother and tell her I'm, you know, unhappy. And actually I did this terrible thing to my mother, I once- I screamed at her. And when I told the therapist she said, "Well you didn't have to do that, you know, just as long as you recognised it, you know." But as I think of it now she really, she knew about my history. But I myself came to the conclusion that many of my problems were due to the fact that I did not have a normal childhood. I really did not have a childhood at all. There was a...huge insecurity. My sister Ruth said at one point - she told me this quite late in life when she started to talk occasionally - she said, "I never made any friends, because what was the point of making a friend because I knew I was going to be moved again before I turned around, and the friendship developed?" So, all of those things, you know. There was the insecurity of being moved. There was the fear, really, of being anything other than a model child. Because if you were going to complain, who knew what was going to happen? You know. They were going to get rid of you, in a way. And certainly Ruth, who protested and got into great difficulties with our foster mother. You know, the normal relationship that a thirteen or fourteen year old girl has with, with, with her mother was going there. And I saw all this, and I wished that she would stop. I worried for us because I knew we didn't have parents anymore. What was going to happen to us? And it was not until the whole insecurity of... a child being torn away from her family, and then the constant hints. "Oh, your father's back", "No he's gone again". You're back with your mother in Paris and then you're finally taken to a place where, well your sister's there but there's no grandfather. There's nothing. So- all this impacted greatly on my life. And I feel also, although my daughter excuses it, I don't think I was a very good mother. Particularly to the first one who was my daughter. And the reason for this is, not

having had any kind of real parenting myself, I had no idea of how to be a parent. And... the whole interaction, and I think that it's very unfortunate. And I once tried to tell her this. And she said, "I really didn't have it so bad; a lot of my friends had it a lot worse." You know, and that may be true. But my own feeling is that I was not a very good mother. She had a very difficult childhood. In fact I went into therapy because she was having outbursts in school and I was called to school. And so... therapy was suggested for her, and I was called in for an interview. And the psychologist said, "Tell me about your childhood." And I burst into tears. I said, "I didn't have a childhood." And so I went into therapy.

[3:42:08]

But the - the real problem, there were problems with the marriage, there always are. But the real problem of the... the separation and the loss, was never really addressed. And I understand this now. I think I, I understood it certainly before my mother died. Because she was ninety-six when she died. My father was almost ninety-eight. And I - I always felt that I was extremely, extremely fortunate that I had them for so long because I could... make up. I could have a relationship with my mother. I think a - a good relationship. A loving relationship, which I didn't have for a long time. I didn't love this woman; she was a stranger. You know. Here am I, sixteen years old, and yes, this is my mother. But what is a mother? I'd gone through three people who weren't mothers. I didn't have a mother for two years in France. I didn't understand any of this, but through just living, having my own children, thinking about it, maybe even to some extent through the therapy, I... got to a point where I could value her, and - and have a good relationship with her which was very fortunate. Because one, I had a mother who survived, and two, she lived long enough. She lived so that I could tell her that.

Yeah.

So I consider myself... one of the really, really fortunate ones. I had more - more good fortune than any one person should have. But I think the - the impact in the early years, again it's not something that I ever specifically talked about. And I did do all the right things. I went to university, I got a very good degree. I married, I had children... had a career. But nevertheless, the... your, your childhood is always with you. And it- I think it's almost possible - you haven't asked me and I haven't said but - my first marriage actually ended in

divorce after thirty years. And I think it was after that, that I really began to be myself, think for myself. Think all these things through. And so, as I said, I'm pleased that I managed a better relationship, good relationship with my parents. And I appreciated, in a more specific sense, having survived. And... I actually joined the Holocaust Survivor Centre because I made a friend here... through the Finchley Synagogue, where I'm a member. Her husband sat next to her, and she lived around the corner. And she said, "You need to come to the Centre. They do Tai Chi there. They need people to do Tai Chi because there aren't enough of us. You have to come. You have to come." So I joined the Centre, the Holocaust Centre, to do Tai Chi and then gradually became more involved.

And you didn't tell us. What made you come to England?

Simon!

And how did you meet?

[3:45:49]

Well it's a nice story. We were, Ruth and Lea and I were planning a big party, a sixtieth wedding anniversary celebration for my parents. And I said to my mother, "You have to invite everybody. And you have to send invitations to... people in Israel, here, everywhere." And she said, "You can't do that; they'll – they'll think I'm asking for money." I said, "This is a fantastic occasion. Everybody is thrilled and happy that you got to this point." Now... My mother had a - a cousin that she was very close to, who had two sons and one of them lived in Toronto, which is not that far from New York. So we had a relationship with this cousin. And as we're going through this list I said to my mother, "Doesn't Michael have a brother?" And indeed... he has this brother in England. So... he was invited. Simon went to spend time with his brother in Canada, and then they all came down for the big party, and this is how we met. He's my second cousin. And... it was just one of those things. I wasn't- I was- I wasn't looking- I was dating a little bit, but I wasn't, I wasn't thinking about getting married again. I certainly wasn't thinking about picking myself up and moving half-way across the world. But... it, it was one of those things. And I had a wonderful second marriage, you know, looking back. Because my- although there were good things in the first

marriage, it ended not in the best way. And so the - the second marriage I was very fortunate, because that was altogether terrific.

And you also then, I mean you've moved before, from Germany to France and from France to America. And so you moved again...

[3:47:46]

I moved again, and... a high school friend who had a boyfriend in London, and used to commute back and forth - Mary. And when I told her what I was doing she said, "I couldn't do it." She broke up with the guy eventually. She said, "I couldn't do it. I couldn't pick myself up." But... I - I was in love! Very simple. And so I... I was actually going to, I was looking to change jobs in any event, so that was easy. It wasn't wrenching. I was looking to make a change. So I just retired from work altogether. But I... essentially I - I gave up my apartment and gave away everything, my furniture is scattered... you know, here and there. My sister has some, my kids have some. I have a friend that has some bowls of mine that I see occasionally. And I gave up... really a life over there. I was ...involved in various organisations. I'd become President of my high school Alumnae Association. I was teaching at night; I was teaching writing to foreign-born students in an adult education programme. I enjoyed that very much. I'd always wanted to - to try that, and I found a teaching job not too far from home which I did after my regular work. And I - I decided just to give it all up. I came- I was actually in London. I didn't get married right away. I came here and we were living in Guilford, initially. And I realised that this was just going to end in not getting married. So in effect we became engaged. We got married the year after I came. And when he died, I just stayed. Because people ask me about this all the time, you know: "How come you didn't go back?" But they don't realise that that was twenty years, and you cannot pick up twenty years later. Not only would I have to... find a home, because I - I sold the apartment I had there. And I just, I have a life here now. I just commute to America. I go back a lot.

Yeah. And where do you consider your home today?

[3:50:15]

Well, I mean, obviously I'm living here. And incidentally, with all the moving that I did, because during my marriage I moved quite a few times. And when... I lived in Philadelphia when I did graduate school, so I've lived a lot, a lot of different places. And this apartment in Finchley, is the place where I've lived the longest in my entire life. I've never lived any place else. I consider myself an American, rather than British. And I'm not going to vote on Thursday in the big referendum because I've never taken out the dual citizenship. When I first came here, I think at the time they said it cost £200, and I said, "Why would I bother?" I have an American passport; it takes me every place I want. And so I just never did it. And so I - I certainly consider myself American rather than British. But... I live in London now. You know, my home is here. People are forever asking which I like better which I don't like to answer because you can't. You know, there's good in - in each.

Yeah. And have you been back to Halle or Leipzig?

Yes, and yes. [pause]

[3:51:40]

In 1997, Simon got an invitation to go back to Leipzig because many German cities, towns, villages invite back the Jews who... were forced to leave, all expenses paid. And so he went and... I went with him. I actually- I wrote a letter to the authorities saying to them that my mother comes from Leipzig and I had actually spent six months in Leipzig living with my grandfather after Kristallnacht, and- until I was able to get away. And under the circumstances I felt that they should... And "*Gnädige Frau [Dear lady]...*" And they didn't pay 100%; they paid about 80%. But while I was in Leipzig, first of all I went- my mother was alive, and she wanted me to go to Nordstraße. You didn't ask me where she was,

No...

...but it was the Nordstraße. And she described to me what she remembers from growing up. And there were certain shops. There was a sweet shop. Those weren't there, but she described the street, and at the end of the street there was a large circle, and there's a church in the middle, and quite elegant apartment houses. I went into some of them, all marble with the marble cracked. But so I was in Leipzig. And from there, I took the train one day to go to

Halle. And I went to, back to the house. Like a lot of what was going on in many German cities, it was being... what's the word? ...they were redoing it.

Yeah...

Gentrifying! Gentrifying the buildings. So... what was clear is that what had been my father's store had been broken up into three or four different stores. But everything was closed because the building was closed; you couldn't go in. My mother used to describe the street as a wide street, and it didn't look like a very wide street to me. The police station, the building was there exactly. It's now headquarters for a social services department. So I also went back to Halle. Now subsequently, I went to Berlin. Kinloss organised a trip. And I specifically went because my mother used to talk about her trips... to Berlin. And at that point I was telling people what I wanted to do, the people on the trip with me. And they said, "You're following your mother's footsteps." Which in fact I was doing. And actually we went to the Jewish Quarter. One of the things that happened: my parents were in Berlin the weekend that Hitler took power. And...because it happened to be their wedding anniversary. And they had-they were walking Unter den Linden, and two Chassids were coming along the street, and my mother said, "I've never been to the Jewish Quarter; I want to go." So they got on the... what-do-you-call-it? *Bahn...*

[3:55:14]

U-Bahn.

Hm?

U-Bahn.

Yeah, on the U-Bahn. And got to the station, and as they were climbing up the stairs, a huge noise... carrying on, shouting. And there are two policemen at the top of the steps. And they're seeing Chasidim being chased by a batch of hoodlums. And a policeman said to my father, "Take your wife away from here. She doesn't want to see this. It's the Jews who are creating all the problems." You know, Jewish? You are a well-dressed couple. And they had tickets. But so I went- I wanted to go specifically to that area. It didn't quite work but the bus

was driving in that section. And I said, "That's probably where the station was." And they took us to a workshop... run by ...I think a German, who had partially sighted and blind Jewish workers, who were... had these machines, I don't know whether it was clothing or some other things. These wooden desks, and they were sitting there and working. And this was during the war. This is what we were told. There were also in that same building in the back of where this workshop was, there was a wall, and there were Jews who were hiding there. But when I saw that workshop, I thought of the workshop that my father went to in Paris in 1940... It just said, this must have been what it was like. Somehow or other, what he described. So- And then they went to the theatre, because they had tickets for... a performance by either a Romanian diva, and that was cancelled. And the consensus was, it's because she was Jewish and she wasn't going to perform anymore. But I did- so I went to that part of the Jewish section and walked down.. And then as I mentioned earlier, we went on Shabbat, on Saturday we went for a walk, and then we went to this little hotel paid for ahead of time because you know - and you could have either tea or a cold drink. And then... a guide started to talk to us about this building being the headquarters of all the Jewish organisations. And I then realised that this was where the Jewish Agency was that gave out the visas. So- yeah, I did get back to all of those.

And did you feel any connection at all, or was it...? Because you can't remember it...

Pardon?

When you went to Germany, did you feel you are connected to the places at all? I mean, do you speak still some German?

Enough that you can get by. Went on a cruise, along the...you know, from Cologne. That's where the cruise started.

[3:58:22]

Rhine.

Pardon?

Along the Rhine.

Along the Rhine, and then the...

Main...

No.

No, the Rhine goes into...I don't know.

It'll come back. So- and when we're there we get off the ship and... I was with, actually my friend from Halle. And we went into different stores. We had perfectly good German conversations. I can manage. I can manage. Did I own it? How did I feel? I felt, yeah, I felt really- it was very good to be there and see, particularly in, in, in Berlin. Not so much in Halle because I couldn't go into the building. I couldn't see the apartment. The store wasn't there anymore. The street didn't look right, from the way my mother- So that didn't really mean anything. My sister Lea took her daughter to Halle, and said, "Anne, this is where I was born. I want you to see where I was born." But, because you know we had told her about it. She was by herself. But in Berlin, and I think to some extent in Leipzig, I felt that... this is all, you know, that my mother experienced. And I could feel it as well. I also went in 2012 was the 100th anniversary of OSE, in Paris. And there had been a - a French videographer and filmmaker who lived in Montmorency. And he was making films and he was teaching at one of the Paris universities. And he suddenly found out, that Montmorency had this history of these Jewish homes, that he knew nothing about. And he - he made a- he went about interviewing people. Actually I met him because he came to New York when I was there.

Right...

And he came to Lea's house. And Ruth and Lea and I were there. And we're part of this film.

Oh, wonderful! What is it called?

'*Enfants...*' - I've got it inside. '*Les Enfants...*' - I don't remember the name, but I'll show it to you. So then, I - I had- I got to know him. We met him there, and he offered to take me to

Montmorency, which I accepted immediately. And the, the home I was in, is now the town police station.

[4:01:12]

Ah...

But- and we, “No,” you know, “you can’t go in. You can’t go in.” And then - his name will come to me - talked to some people he knew and, in we went. And there was a - a room, on what’s, you know, the first floor. And I kind of said that – that must have been where we, where we ate and you know, I kind of could picture this is where things were. The unfortunate thing of it was, they had a lot of ground - grounds - and that was sold off. So, and I had wanted kind of to go because I have some memory of playing around this huge tree there. But I couldn’t get to see that. But that was good. And then, in- before that, there was this conference of ...investigating the fate of the Jewish children in Limousin. And those of us who, through OSE, who had been there during the war were invited. And I went, as did a couple who are friends of mine who are living in Los Angeles. The shoemaker engineer and his wife. We met there. And part of it was meetings and these people presented their papers all of how it was. And then...I didn’t say much, but Norbert and another woman who was there, Hannah, and a woman I didn’t know before, raised their hands and said, “But...” and this woman I didn’t know said, “You know, a lot of the children who went to private farms, they were, they were abused. And we were assaulted. The women were assaulted or raped, and I was one of them.” And that had not come up in any of the papers. I remember. And Norbert gave them also some less startling, but other information of, you know, this is how it was. Then the different, the man, the man who organised it, Michel – can’t remember his last name – arranged for us, who had been with OSE, which were probably you know, seven or eight of us who had come - to go to the different homes. And so I did go to- Montintin is now owned by a man with fascist leanings. Got a fence around it, and nobody can go there. But the other one, Chevrette, that I mentioned, where the Orthodox children were. We could go up to the steps. And there’s a photo that I have- it’s on my website. It’s a photo of my parents standing at the top of the stairs. And... Norbert and I went to that same spot and his wife took a photo. We went there, and I had them drive me to Couret, which is where my mother subsequently worked. But again we couldn’t go into the building because the owner was

away on holiday and it was closed. But I did- I wanted to see all those places. I really- it was important to me.

Why?

Why? Perhaps to make it real. I don't know, you know. This was, this was part of the childhood that I didn't remember. And- although I remembered some things from Montintin and a few things from Montmorency as well. I just- I wanted to make a connection. I wanted to make a connection and it, just as when I was in Canfranc... at this commemoration, the people there offered to take me to Gurs which is the camp where my – my, my parents were. And it was a little bit dodgy whether we were going to make it because there were so many activities during the day. They thought it was going to be dark, and we couldn't make it the next day. And then finally he said, "Let's just get in the car." And we did get there, and it was light out. And... I – I walked in the camp. They have one barracks standing, which is probably a reconstruction. Just the one. But nevertheless you can get a feeling of - of what it was like there, so... Yeah. I just...I- it's interesting why. I just really felt that it's, it's part of my life. And I think actually being there, just had important meaning. It... is it ...I don't know, propping you up? Proving your - your identity? I don't know. It's just something that you wanted to see, you know, see again in some cases, for what I did or didn't remember. Yeah.

[4:06:34]

You speak to many pupils or are involved. I'm sure you've been asked that question, whether you have a message, based on your experiences, for anyone who might watch this interview?

I think it's ultra-important for everyone to understand the Holocaust or if you will, the Shoah, and the effort to annihilate the Jewish people. One of the important differences between the Holocaust and other genocides, is that the Holocaust was across borders, not just Germany but into Holland, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary. And it was felt even by Jews in North Africa. Unlike - I'm not minimising anything that happened in Bosnia or Cambodia, or... - but it's one group of people against another group in the same country. So I think that's important. Now the other important thing is that people... look down on, and eventually want to get rid of and kill people who are different. And... you cannot- it's morally

wrong. It's ethically wrong. I think that part of being Jewish is, there is a Jewish ethics about respect... for other people. And that we have to, people have to accept other people. And you the students or people who are going to watch this video, have to realise that you have to accept the differences. And that learning what happened to - to the Jewish people, how, how terrible it was, and you know, how six million people, including over a million children, perished. That this is something which should not be repeated. And if you understand it and take in what happened, hopefully, that you will do what you can in whatever small way even if it's just speaking to other people, and telling them about what you've seen, and telling them, sharing even just this experience to try and make people see that they should... stop killing each other.

[4:09:37]

Just another almost last question... Shall we stop?

Since you came from quite a religious household. How has religion- your experience, has it shaped the religion or do you see it at all in context for yourself?

I...came from definitely from a religious background, on both sides of my family. During the war, that went by the wayside. And... in America, eventually spending the majority of the time in a non-observant home, and being a precocious teenager and questioning the existence of God when the world was created hundreds of millions of years ago. So all of that rather went by the wayside. And I don't know if I mentioned that the social worker- did I tell you that the social worker asked me whether I wanted to go to Hebrew school?

Go on...

And the grandson of my foster parents was studying for his Bar Mitzvah. And every day at three o'clock, he went from school to his Hebrew classes. And I said, no way. So I said, "No thank you." And that was the end of that. And I was not- my- when the family was reunited, we had a, obviously we maintained a kosher home. We went to services certainly on Rosh Hashanah. We had Seders. All of those- all of those things. But my first husband, neither my first husband nor I kept very much of anything, although he too came from an Orthodox family. And in fact when our son was about ten-and-a-half, I said, "We have to enrol him in

Hebrew school so he can have a Bar Mitzvah.” And my husband said, “What does he need to have a Bar Mitzvah for? He can decide what he wants to do when he’s twenty-one.” And I said, “He has to have a basis for making a decision. He - he is a Jewish child; he will have a Bar Mitzvah.” It was one of the few arguments that I won. I think that I was... timid in many respects. I think I probably blossomed and came more out of myself, well, no, actually when I went back to work. When I went into journalism. And had to start, you know, really... And I loved it, you know. I loved meeting people, talking to people, asking questions.

[4:12:55]

And what did you work for? Which magazine?

I worked for a – a weekly newspaper in New York, which- a family newspaper which, unlike a lot of throwaways, was a very serious effort. They actually won a Pulitzer Prize for the... for their editorial work. So it was a very good newspaper. And I was very lucky to be hired with, you know you make up a resume. Because I was always writing, you know, whatever organisation I belonged to, I was making up the literature and the campaigns, and the bulletins, and I was doing- I’d been doing some freelance journalism anyway. But they hired me and it was very good. But we’re getting away from it.

Yeah...religion, yeah.

[4:13:52]

The boy had his- also I knew, if for nothing else, the grandparents would have been hugely, hugely distressed. Mark, by the way, was the first male birth in my side of the family in, well, since Uncle Moritz had his Salli, his son who was like- that man, my father’s nephew, was maybe a year older than my father. And my gran-, my son is named after the grandfather who was deported to Poland in...as a non-German citizen. And I’m- I wanted- there was never any question but that he was going to be named- my grandfather was Markus, and he was named after my grandfather. Because I - I remembered my grandfather and by then I knew about him and valued him and felt that he must have someone named after him. And it was a very good name. So he was named after my grandfather. And he had had a Bris of course. And my husband’s uncle, who was rather poor, travelled for two hours on a bus from the

Bronx to Queens. Came to the house to be present at this Bris. Said he had never seen a house with so many toys. But we did not really particularly observe anything and I had no strong belief or any belief really, whatsoever. But I, I kept everything. In a sense we used to always go to my- well we alternated the Seder between his parents and mine until his parents became a little frail and then all the Seders were at my parents' house. We went out to my parents for Rosh Hashanah, you know, went to synagogue, went home. Had a big family meal; the family was together. On all of these. All the holidays - Hanukkah, we celebrated, and you know, the children got Hanukkah gelt from my father. And all those things. But I think that as far as being Jewish is, is concerned, that really came very much to the fore when I married Simon, because he was observant. And my mother's favourite line was, "At least I know you're marrying into a good family." But, because he, he was observant, I knew how to keep a kosher home because of my parents. And I did everything that he wanted and I – actually started going to synagogue in, in a kind of a regular way, because he – he was ill before he died. And it got to a point where he couldn't go by himself and eventually was actually in a wheelchair. And so I just went to services every Saturday and I, you know, got more involved in the Jewish community here. But I've always believed, all my life, in being if you will, a cultural Jew. But I'm - I'm much more involved now in... in the religion than I had been. Being here, being first of all marrying Simon, and now also because I move around in Jewish circles very much. I think ...almost all my friends are Jewish. You somehow or other can't help it because I don't work or I'm involved in really activities which are not somehow unrelated. I do meet non-Jewish people, but I don't have any close friends who are not Jewish, so... I'm more into it.

My almost very last question is about your name, because I know you are called 'Eva', or 'Eve'. Tell us a little bit about that.

My first husband had an Aunt Eva, whom everybody despised. And he said, "I cannot marry someone with the name of 'Eva'." So I became 'Eve'. And as- more or less stuck with that, certainly in New York my by-line is, my professional by-line is 'Eve'. It was always 'Eve'. But somehow or other when I came here, and particularly when you get involved in the Jewish, in the survivor community, Jewish people are 'Eva'-s. So, they call me 'Eva' and I go both ways. Whatever. But I tend to, you know, my book is 'Eve'.

It's nothing to do with France? Because that's what I thought.

Pardon?

It's nothing to do with your French...wartime experience?

No. Not at all, because I – I was actually really kind of sheltered from being French. Because I was- spent my time always in the home, and didn't even have the opportunity of going to school. Which Lea actually did. Lea went to school in Limoges. And she initially went to school in – in the little village, where they wouldn't take her because she was barely five. And my mother said, "Let her just stay for a day." Because she already knew how to read. And then everybody said, "Look at this child who isn't even French, and she speaks perfect French." [laughing]

You were 'Eva' - you were 'Eva' in France?

Yeah. I was Eva- really I was Eva in high school as well. You know. And I think I met Joseph... somewhere casually in the middle of my time in Brooklyn College. No, really about the time when I graduated, because I went to live in Philadelphia. And he was in the Army stationed in New Jersey, which was sort of there, and so, you know, we kind of got together, started dating and there we were... But that's a very peculiar thing, just because of his Aunt Eva. And my sisters still call me Eva.

[4:20:18]

Aha. Mrs. Kugler, is there anything we haven't discussed which you want to add? Anything?

I'll probably think of it tomorrow. I... I think that... I'm surprised in a way, that I've become very much involved in the survivor community. And I alluded to it, but I know initially I kept saying, "I am not a survivor." But I feel now, and it goes back to your question a minute ago, in my own experiences, even though I did not spend my time in Auschwitz, or even hidden in the ghetto or hidden like my sister Lea. Nevertheless, I am a...a survivor, although there are differences. And I accept the title mainly because I think that... education and spreading the knowledge is just so ultra- very important. And... I hope that people will continue to learn. I

can't think of anything else at the moment. I could tell you briefly the story of- shall I tell you one brief story?

Go on.

I take part in the March of the Living which takes, the British contingent is about 200-230/40 people. And there are educators and a group of survivors go along. And I'm one of the survivors. And again, I said to Scott Saunders, I said, "You don't want me." And he said, no, he was very insistent. And by the way, it was your friend Rochelle... who introduced me to the man who runs the march and said, "Here's a person who should go." And... so I went. And I think it was two years ago, we're on - on the march now, and we're walking from Auschwitz to Birkenau. And we're on this road that kind of goes uphill before you get into Birkenau. And a - a white-haired lady comes over to me, and said, "Excuse me, someone pointed you out and said you're a survivor." I said, "Yes." "Will you talk to me? Could I ask you a question?" I said, "Yes, you can ask me. What would you like to ask me?" She said, "Will you forgive me?" So...I said, "Well, how old are you?" She said, "I was born in 1946." I said, "Well. There's nothing that you did. It has nothing to do with you, really, you..." And she said, "But my father..." And it didn't have to go any further. It was very clear that her father was a high Nazi official. She had come with a church group, and it's- she was going through this probably for a good part of her life. You know, there are all kinds of... all kinds of aspects.

And will you go again on the March of the Living?

You don't not go, because Scott Saunders who runs the programme is very persuasive. I think, between the third and the fourth year I said- he lives near here; he's a member of Kinloss so I see him quite often. I said, "Scott you haven't asked me about going. You haven't asked me to come on the march." He said, "Well, I've already bought you a ticket." So, no, I will go as long as I can. I don't- It's interesting. I don't understand how it works, but somehow or other, I seem to reach people. And I, I can see that now, in - in the March of the Living, in the work that I do. I don't know where it comes from but... somehow or other it's there. And I'm- I do it partly for my mother. I do it because it's important, but I also do it because that's - yeah - I do it for her.

Mrs Kugler, thank you very much for this interview and sharing your story. We are going to look now at some of your photographs.

All right.

[4:25:06]

[End of interview]

[Photographs and documents]

[4:25:29]

This is my mother's father, my grandfather Moses Azderbal, and this photo was taken in the 1930s, in Leipzig.

This photo, this is a family – a photo taken at a photographer's studio, in Halle Germany, early in 1937. And from left to right, my father Sal Kanner, I'm next to him, in the middle is my sister Ruth, and on the right is my mother Mia Kanner holding my baby sister Lea.

This is a photo of our family taken in Paris, France just before the outbreak of World War II. In the back first are my mother, then next to her is Ruth, and obviously on the right is my dad. I'm standing in front of Ruth. And the little one next to me in front on the right is little Lea, my little sister, my baby sister.

This is a photograph taken on June 30th 1941, when I, my sister and a small number of other children left the OSE home in Montintin, the first leg of our way to America. And in the photo, there are the children who are going but on the right, in the front, is my sister Lea, who snuck into the photo even though she could not go. Immediately in back of Lea is myself in the coat with a white collar. In back of me is my mother. Next to me with the glasses is my sister Ruth. And next to her, is Frieda Rosenblum, who came with us, and who is our friend today. And also on the photo in the back row is her brother. It's a marvellous photo because it shows us ready to go. By the way on the extreme left with the beret, partial face not shown, is my father.

This is an affidavit in lieu of passport, which was issued to me in 1941, when I was on my way to America. The document was- is dated the 8th of August 1941. Shows me as four foot three, weighing thirty-seven pounds. Amazing.

This photograph was taken on I believe September 3rd 1941. When our ship that took us from Lisbon to New York, the *Mouzinho*, docked in New York, a ship's photographer came to take photographs for the press, which was very common in those days. And two photographs appeared in one of the daily papers in New York. The World Telegram, as a matter of fact. One of them was of the entire group, and the second photo was of the two smallest children on the group. And so you see here, "Eva Kanner on the right" holding two dolls. The dolls were given to us; I don't know why I have two. And I'm with a seven year-old girl. I was actually almost eleven, but I was very small. It's interesting to see the luggage tags that we were all wearing. We all got numbers and I was number 24 – a very important number.

This is a photo of Ruth on the right, and me on the left, taken outside the house where we lived with our foster family on Riverside Drive. My guess is that I was perhaps thirteen and Ruth was fourteen on that photo.

This is a photo taken in 1988, at the Passover Seder at my parents' home on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. On the photo, on the left first of all is- the woman is my mother, and behind my mother stands my son Mark. Next to her is my dad, and in back of him is our cousin Hanni Kappel, who was single and is the only survivor of her family. She spent time in England, she came over as a servant, and after the war she came to America because we were her family. Next to Hanni, seated, is my niece Janet. In the plaid shirt is her father Hank Rosen. And in back of them is my sister Ruth. The last seated person on the right is my sister Lea, and in back of Lea, me, with the light hair, and my daughter Vicky.

This photograph was taken in my sister Lea's house in New York, on the occasion of my mother's 90th birthday party. And the entire family, my parents, my sisters, and all the grandchildren are in this photo, because obviously we were all at this wonderful celebration. So immediately on the left is Lea, next to her [on the front] is my mother, I'm next to my mother. And then comes Ruth's daughter Janet, in the dark hair, and in the longer hair, the other red-head in the family my niece Carol, Ruth's younger daughter. And on the far right is Ruth. In the back of us, is first of all my dad in back of my mother. In back of me is my niece

Ann, who is Lea's sister. And as I said, next to her is Janet and Carol. And way in the back are my two children. With the glasses, my daughter Vicky. And the only male member of the family aside from my father, my son Mark. Because everybody always had girls. There was a huge celebration when Mark was born.

And finally, at- taken at the same occasion of my mother's 90th birthday party, this is a photo of me with my wonderful husband Simon.

Mrs Kugler thank you very much again for this interview and for sharing your photographs with us.

It was my great pleasure. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

[End of photographs]

[4:33:46]