

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

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Interviewee Surname:	Murray
Forename:	Gertraud
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	9 June 1924
Interviewee POB:	Vienna, Austria

Date of Interview:	11 April 2005
Location of Interview:	Lincoln
Name of Interviewer:	Dr. Anthony Grenville
Total Duration (HH:MM):	3 hours 10 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 99

NAME: GERTRAUD MURRAY

DATE: 11 APRIL 2005

LOCATION: LINCOLN

INTERVIEWER: ANTHONY GRENVILLE

TAPE 1

AG: First of all, Mrs Murray, I'd just like to say thank you very much indeed for agreeing to do the interview with us. And could I begin, please, by asking you to state your full name at birth?

GM: Gertraud Rudolfine Fasey.

AG: And where were you born?

GM: Vienna.

AG: And when?

GM: On the 9th of June 1924.

AG: Thank you. I'd like to ask you a little about your family background. What sort of family was it? What sort of family did, say, your father come from?

GM: My father was born in Silesia in a place called; it was called Teschen in those days. I believe it is now called Cieszyn. I believe it is also in Poland now, instead of what was Czechoslovakia in those days. I think it became after the world war, after World War I, it became Czechoslovakia, but it belonged to Austria when my father was born in 1891.

AG: When did he come to Vienna?

GM: My father when he was very young, very young.

AG: What was your father's name?

GM: Eugene.

AG: What sort of family did he come from?

Tape 1: 2 minutes 6 seconds

GM: He came ... His father worked in a relative's liqueur factory in Teschen/Cieszyn. And his mother, well they had about six children I think, one died, so there were five of them, five children, and they were a very close-knit family.

AG: Working in a liqueur factory doesn't sound like a traditionally Jewish thing to do. Were they observant at all, do you know?

GM: Well, not exactly, although my father always blessed us when he went away, in Hebrew, and certainly he was, he was... I would say he recognised the holidays and always fasted on Yom Kippur and so on. But we did not eat kosher food and my mother was not at all religious. She only, occasionally on a Friday, to please my father, she would provide him with you know, the Friday Shabbes meals and so on, but my mother was not religious.

AG: What sort of man was your father? How would you describe him?

GM: He was, well, I thought the world of him. We understood each other. In many ways we were very alike, I suppose, although the last time I saw him was when I was fourteen and a half. He was a very, well, it's difficult to describe him, but he was very, very conscientious and he has a beautiful baritone voice which was, it was schooled, it was actually trained, and I remember when I was little we had a pianist in two or three times a week to play and so he could sing Schubert songs and things like that and, but unfortunately I was a nuisance because first of all I was in the room with them, and I sang with them, that got on his nerves so he sent me out, so then I started to cry, which was worse, so he had to put up with the lesser of the two evils, and had me in with him. But he was, he was ... He worked in a bank when I was born and then of course the Crash came, and he became a sales manager for office materials and he travelled a lot.

Tape 1: 5 minutes 40 seconds

AG: What sort of firm was this that he worked for as a sales manager?

GM: Oh, it wasn't a big firm; it was just a small firm. But he carried a lot of So I was never short of fountain pens or things like that.

AG: Was it a Jewish-owned business, do you know?

GM: I don't, I don't think so, I'm not quite certain to be quite honest. I don't think so.

AG: What about your mother's side of the family? Where did they come from?

GM: My mother was born in Czestochowa in Poland and my mother came to Vienna after my uncle, her brother, came to Vienna, so I think it was at the turn of the century, I should imagine.

AG: What was your mother's name and her maiden name?

GM: Imich, I-M-I-C-H.

AG: And her first name?

GM: Sorry?

AG: Her first name?

GM: Her first name was Salomea, Salomea, Salome, Salomea. Anna, her second name.

AG: And what sort of a woman was your mother? Can you describe her?

GM: Yes, she was very tall, my mother. Sometimes she overpowered me, bless her, because she was tall and I not. But she was very, very, she was a very good mother in her way, she was very good and selfless, she would give everything, she would have given everything to anybody, she was so good. But...

AG: What sort of person was she?

GM: She was, she worked in a wholesale and retail fur business in Vienna and so she knew a lot about furs, of course, and when I was a few years old she gave up. I had a woman called Peppi to look after me and I loved her very much because we loved each other, in fact I was a substitute for her little boy, when he was a few months old she left him in the country with her parents and came to work for my parents and I suppose in a way she had that motherly sort of instinct with me.

Tape 1: 8 minutes 25 seconds

AG: So she was a sort of what they call Kindermädchen...

GM: That's right.

AG: Sort of.

GM: Yes, she was, well, but she was sort of a cum-housekeeper as well, yes she did all sorts of things but she was marvellous and even when I left Vienna at fourteen and a half, she said please, I was the first one to bath you when you were a baby here, can I do it tonight.

AG: Oh.

GM: And she did, I let her.

AG: And did you manage to keep in contact with her at all?

GM: It was difficult. When I moved to Holland, she wrote to me. I'm afraid I did not write to her. I didn't see her again. She left us when I was about six, started school. But she always came to visit. It was, well, a great bond we had.

AG: And I'm sure she was not Jewish...

GM: No, no.

AG:... She was Catholic, a good Catholic girl?

GM: Oh yes, she sometimes took me to church. That was all right.

AG: Did your parents not mind?

GM: No, they didn't mind. Well I didn't tell them everything, did I? No, but it was all right. It was usually something special like Easter or Christmas or something.

AG: This fur wholesaler and retail that your mother worked in, do you remember where it was in Vienna?

GM: It was, I think it was in the middle, it was in the city because they went to Demel's to get their capes and things...

AG: That sounds all right!

GM: ... and so it couldn't have been very far away from them.

AG: And where actually was your family home in Vienna?

GM: In the Eighth District, Josefstadt.

AG: Do you remember the address?

GM: Oh yes, Hamerlingplatz, number four and it was apartment 22. There was a park, it was, well a square, the Platz, and there was a park, Hamerlingpark, where we played and so on.

AG: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

GM: My brother was, yes I have a brother, Ernst, he later called himself Peter, but his name was Ernst.

AG: Was he older or younger than yourself?

GM: He was seven, over seven years older than myself.

AG: So when was he born?

GM: On the 4th of April 1917.

AG: Oh right. This is the First World War. Was your father called up, do you know?

GM: My father... He was my half-brother

AG: Ah, right.

GM: His father fell in the First World War.

AG: And what about your father? Did he...

GM: My father adopted... My father fought in the war, yes he did. He fought, yes.

AG: Do you know which front he fought on or anything about ...

Tape 1: 11 minutes 53 seconds

GM: Well he was going, towards, he was very, it was obviously East. East. I don't think it was... He went East from Cieszyn [this could also be 'Těšín', the Czech version, Cieszyn is Polish]. And of course he fought for the Austrians.

AG: Do you know if he had any decorations or promotions?

GM: I'm not quite certain but I think he was a corporal. He finished up as a corporal, I think.

AG: So he, so your mother had been married before?

GM: My mother had been married before. Yes.

AG: Going back to the family home. Could you describe your flat?

GM: Yes, we had three rooms and a bathroom. We were on the third floor. And I had a special window where I could sit and look out because there were iron bars. People waved to me, you know, as a little girl, and in fact there was a childless couple who invited me to tea one afternoon. And it was coffee and cake, of course. They lived opposite, you see, they took a liking to me because we always waved to each other. This was a lovely pastime for me, to look out of the window and be safe, because there were iron bars.

AG: How do you remember the furniture, the contents of the flat?

GM: Oh the furniture was all very, sort of, oh dear, big, big, big and there was a huge glass cabinet where my mother kept her precious things ... and I had an aunt, when she came to visit, my uncle's first wife, oh her chair would smell so beautiful afterwards, because she used such lovely perfume and I always used to sniff it, I used to love it.

Tape 1: 14 minutes 20 seconds

AG: Do you recall your family as being fairly prosperous, certainly, say...

GM: No, no, no, we were...

AG: ... certainly while your father was still at the bank?

GM: No, we were, I don't think we were very prosperous, in fact we were just what we would call, well middle or just... Yes, we had, we were fairly comfortable but certainly not prosperous, nothing like that. My greatest joy was to be taken to the Prater.

AG: Did you go on the big wheel?

GM: Oh, well, not so much the big wheel, it was the, what do you call it...

AG: Slide?

GM: It went up and down.

AG: Oh, big dippers.

GM: The big dipper. I absolutely adored the big dippers. I couldn't possibly tolerate now ... but I loved it and my father used to take me and the only way he could get me, there was a Liliputbahn, they called it, and the only way he could get me out of that Prater was to put me on that, because it went out of the Prater, and I always fell for it too, because I made a terrific noise, I didn't want to leave, I loved it. And when I was, the last time he took me.

AG: Just continuing after the break...

GM: Oh that was, yes we were all about the Prater weren't we. When I was 14 and my father took me to the Prater for the last time, there was a woman in charge of a little roundabout who recognised us because we'd been coming all these years, and she said I want to give you a free ride.

AG: Really.

GM: To me. Yes, which was rather nice.

AG: Very nice.

GM: Yes, which was very nice of her. She must have realised that it would be for the last time. And of course Calafatti, who was a big statue in the middle of that, of another roundabout and I was very much in awe of him and I used to tell him that I was a very good girl.

AG: Who was this?

GM: Calafatti? He was a man, well he was a Chinese supposed to be, and he had a long pigtail. In fact now the Prater looks so different, there is a statue of him, actually in the middle of the Prater. Because he was, I suppose, quite famous

AG: It sounds as if you had a very happy childhood.

GM: Oh I did. Oh yes. I was, oh I had a very happy childhood. I went to school when I was six, of course.

AG: Oh yes, which school was this?

GM: It was a little, what they call a Volksschule, and in fact it closed later when the Socialists were defeated. It was a very, very nice school.

AG: Do you remember its name?

GM: It was in the Albertgasse, in Vienna. Albertgasse, which wasn't far from us, of course. And my brother was in the last form. And I was in the first form.

AG: Did you get on well with your brother?

Tape 1: 18 minutes 3 seconds

GM: He looked after me. He was, he teased me later but he was very, very, very responsible for me, somehow, and when I went to the park, he was around, looking after me. Yes, he was very good.

AG: And how do you remember your time at the Volksschule?

GM: Well, what got me was, it was, there was ... it was the preacher who obviously took religion in Vienna, of course the Jewish children had to leave the classroom then and I wanted to stay and he said to me, no, you have to go, but otherwise it was all right.

AG: Were there many Jewish children in your class?

GM: Not many, no, only about three or four.

AG: Out of how many?

GM: Out of about 26 children.

AG: And did you experience any anti-Semitism?

GM: Not until much later. I had a friend, she was very special friend, we used to, I knew she was a Nazi, I knew her parents were and the last day before Hitler came, it must have been the 10th of March, no, I think it probably was the 10th of March, we walked and then they were allowed to wear their little swastikas in their lapels and I wore red, white and red [Austrian national colours] and we walked together and she said, 'will you understand, if it happens as it probably will, that we won't be able to be friends like this but I shall always love you,' and it was true, obviously the moment Hitler marched in we couldn't see each other anyone except in the classroom, until I was kicked out of school of course and I could see her eyes sort of on me quite a lot and we looked at one another. Her name was Lotte...

AG: Do you remember her family name?

GM: No, I don't. But what - she had a sister a couple of years older than herself - but what I saw was in the shop window just after Hitler marched in, a photograph of herself and her sister with Hitler in the middle with his arm around them. I know.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 17 seconds

AG: We're just continuing after the break.

GM: So that was a bit of a shock. Yes, obviously she didn't tell me this, of course, so this must have happened the year before when they went [to Germany?].

AG: What about the teachers? Do you remember the teachers?

GM: Oh, the teachers were marvellous. When I was, when I had to leave, the teacher, she was a Doctor Cornelius, my class teacher was, my class mistress, and she shook me by the hand, the girls were really quite nasty then, I could hear one saying, oh she's crying, you know, and so I was, I was very upset really, and I could see tears in Dr Cornelius's eyes. I was supposed to go to a Jewish school but it was hopeless, we didn't learn anything, it was hopeless and in the end I gave up. It was useless.

AG: Going back to the time before the Anschluss, what sort of people did your parents mix with? Did they have a lot of friends? Or did they mainly mix with family?

GM: Oh, with friends. My mother was very gregarious. My father not so much so. He was pleased to see his brothers, sisters, mother and so on. He was an introvert, my father, and I am, to a certain extent, but my mother was the exact opposite, and she always had people around, which wasn't... The same happened here in England. She couldn't help herself.

AG: What sort of people do you remember? Do you remember what sort of people came? Were they mainly Jewish?

GM: No, no, no, the majority, I would say, were not. In this country, more Jewish I would think, yes, because after all she had language difficulties, she liked to mix with the other refugees.

AG: Yes.

GM: Although she had many English friends, in fact she retired at Folkestone, yes she did, and there she had hardly anybody who was not English and she used to play canasta and whist-drives she went to, lots, she had a lovely time, oh yes.

AG: Did your parents have interests, apart from seeing your friends did they go to...?

GM: Well, as I say, my father travelled a lot, it was always a joy to have him at home. He read a lot, my father, and we went for lots and lots of walks, my father and I. They had me walking through the Lainzer Tiergarten, I don't know whether you know it, but it's a seven-hour walk when I was quite young. I remember he picked me up, put me on his shoulders, and I fell asleep on his head because I was so tired, but it was

lovely and of course I love nature and so did he and I wasn't allowed to pick any flowers, any wildflowers, because he liked them and I feel very much like this too, I like to see my flowers in the garden and not, of course they last for much longer, but I see that the daffodils are now over. They must go...

Tape 1: 25 minutes 50 seconds

AG: Did you go up into the Vienna Woods as well?

GM: Oh yes, oh yes. We, and in the winter we went tobogganing, my father, brother and I. I sat in the middle, shielded by them, and we went up the, up the Kahlenberg and then down in the... I remember when I came home, my hands were, well they must have been very cold because the cold tap felt warm. Cold water.

AG: How do you remember Vienna? What are your feelings about Vienna, as the city where you grew up?

GM: It is a love. I have a terrific love for the beauty of Austria and Vienna, and it is very... My loyalty is in England and my gratitude and everything, and of course I like England, I love England. But there is something which I can't explain and it is like a magnet. Go to Vienna, go to Austria. I love it, because it's beautiful. I can't say that I'm in love with the people so much, although many Austrians are very, very nice and I have a pen friend who's Austrian. But I do love Austria, and whenever I could, I went to Austria.

AG: Any part of Austria or Vienna in particular?

GM: Well, it's nice to go to it all, so both, but Vienna obviously was, if I had to choose, it would be Vienna but I could go, really, I mean we went and had holidays in the Tirol and Carinthia, and all over the place

AG: Was this when you were already living here?

GM: Oh, I was already living here, but also before, of course

AG: What sort of places did you go on holiday with your parents?

GM: With my parents?

AG: Yes.

Tape 1: 28 minutes 12 seconds

GM: We went, the year before I left Vienna, left Austria, we went to the Salzkammergut, cold place, to the Attersee, and up on the hill, we went up, we were in a Pension up on a hill up there. But there again it was quite a job to get up there and down. I don't know how we did it, now that I'm old. But it was lovely and we went to Salzburg and Ischl, Bad Ischl and so on, good, really nice. But since then of course I've been, I've had holidays in Zell am See, Velden, my husband and I went to Velden for three weeks before our boy was born, and went to Kitzbühel, and we had,

when Jerry, my son, was eighteen, we went, and my husband was retired then, we went to, by car to, through Holland, Germany, into Austria, went to Vienna and to Graz, where my childhood friend, that's Erika, lived then, and stayed with them, for a fortnight, stayed in a hotel there for a fortnight, then we went to the Mondsee, stayed there for three nights, and then my son, to please him, he wanted to go to Holland, so we went to Holland to please him, for a week, to Scheveningen.

AG: You mentioned a childhood friend...

GM: Yes, Erika. Her father was a, was in the Vienna Philharmonic.

AG: Oh.

GM: They were neighbours, we lived at 22 and they lived at 25. And so we were, she was two years younger than myself but we always played together and she was, she was asked to join the Hitler, the Hitler Youth, but it was the girls' Hitler Youth, and she said, I'd sooner go to the opera, thank you very much, at which point she was sent to Germany to be brainwashed, and she was, they succeeded, and became quite a good Nazi. But we remained friends and after the war, much later, she, in fact we were friends until she died, she said now there's nothing I wouldn't give you, or do for you, she regretted her allegiance to Hitler, I think, but very sad. She came to see us when we lived in the Thames Valley. Can I have some water?

Tape 1: 31 minutes 50 seconds

AG: Yes, it's just there.

GM: So she died a very tragic death, it was very tragic. They didn't realise that she died until some days, and she had, she had very many problems with her son, divorced and so on, very sad really. But anyway, she had a few days with us. She was quite cantankerous in her old age. Oh dear. So I breathed a sigh of relief after we saw her off at the airport. I'm sorry to say that, but she was very difficult. And she was in her sixties, early sixties, I was about, how old was I, about 63 and she must have been just 61, but it wasn't easy.

AG: I just wanted to ask you, finish asking you about your schooling.

GM: Yes.

AG: You would have left the Bürgerschule, sorry, the Volksschule, but did you at all go on?

GM: Yes, I was not a good learner, in fact I was pretty hopeless. And funnily enough the penny dropped about a year before Hitler, Hitler and his merry men came into Austria. And which was a shame because I really then loved school, I was beginning to be very good and the teachers were absolutely delighted with me, and, funny isn't it, and I was very sad to leave.

AG: Which school did you go on to after the Volksschule?

GM: Oh it was a Hauptschule, because it was, what my father had, he wanted me after fourteen to go to a boarding school. I mean it was, a finishing school would have been a silly thing to say because it wouldn't have been a celebrity set, but he wanted me to be a boarder somewhere and to learn domestic science, also, shorthand and typing and lots of things, which was quite useful, because he wanted me, he was quite old-fashioned in his way, he said, you will let me pick your husband, won't you, I said oh yes, I mean in those days, sure, why not. I think it would have been very different later on. But, how was I to know? And so of course he saved for my dowry, bless him, which later started to get used up, you know, because capital had to be used up, whilst we were living like that in Vienna. And so it never came, it never came, never became a reality, I'm afraid. So I'm not domestically very good, because my mother never taught me how to do things. I cook, my husband taught me how to cook, he did, it was very nice, lovely of him, he was lovely.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 47 seconds

So there you are. But when I came to England, I went to night school later, when I had the chance, and I did a lot, and I read and I read and I read. I still read quite a lot when I have the time, but I did read all sorts of things, and I took psychology lectures and I went to learn Spanish, which was ridiculous because I forgot all about it now. But I did a lot of things where I just wanted to learn and learn and learn.

AG: I'd like to ask you about your memories of the Anschluss.

GM: Oh yes.

AG: The period leading up to it. I mean, were your family at all expecting anything like this to happen?

GM: My father was in Lithuania at the time.

AG: Good heavens.

GM: He was on business in Lithuania. My mother and my brother, and my brother wasn't living with us at the time, he was somewhere, he had his own room in Vienna, his own place.

AG: What did he do? I didn't ask.

GM: My brother was on the stage, he wanted to be an actor and he was in a chorus then, you know, and he, we were listening to the radio and then suddenly we heard the Austrian national anthem, and then Schuschnigg, who was the Chancellor, spoke and said that God bless Austria etc. etc. and the whole night through there were variations of the Austrian anthem, which of course it was by Haydn, and the Germans have it, played differently, but the Austrians had different words and of course it was played far more softly. But the whole night through we had the Austrian, well it was, you know, the Austrian anthem played in various variations, I mean you know, and then of course the following morning, that was on a Friday, Friday the 11th of March, '38, and my mother and I went, Saturday morning, we went shopping and we couldn't recognise the Josefstädterstrasse, the main street from our district, because there were

flags, great big flags all over place, people were greeting themselves with Heil Hitler and every time they did that, my mother and I ducked, because we thought we were going to be hit. I went to my, had my hair done, I was booked and the hairdresser said to me, oh what terrible, she was quite young, terrible things happening and she was obviously anti-Nazi and I still wore my little red white and red badge under my cardigan, I know, because I was very patriotic you know, yes.

Tape 1: 39 minutes 40 seconds

AG: And did you immediately feel the change in...

GM: Oh yes, it was so, it was so rapid, and I believe Germany, it took far longer in Germany than it did in Austria. Oh it was so quick. I mean, one felt like a second-class citizen almost immediately. And then I think a few days after the Anschluss we heard our door, our father was back, because obviously he, he might have saved himself, mightn't he, but he came back to his family. He, yes. And we were nine months, we were trying to, for nine months, my father and I trotted around Vienna, going from one consulate to another one. He wrote, my mother was able, well she was, she knew she would be able to go to England as a cook, and you know, and what they were trying to do was to get me coming, going to be a helper, you know, without getting paid, well anything to get out, you see, but unfortunately I was too young. I wasn't allowed to do that. And but my mother could do it, so there was a permit pending, a work permit for that.

AG: So she went to the British consulate and got a permit as domestic servant?

GM: I don't know how it happened, but it took some time of course because she had this guarantor, this woman, who wanted her in a farm Chipping Sodbury, in Gloucestershire, and my father and I went to try and get out in some way. And of course she could have come, though obviously she had then if we had, if we were able to get a visa to somewhere, my mother would have come too, you know, this question of... And my brother in the summer, then he came to live with us again, and in the summer one evening he gave me a very special hug, and I thought, well what's the matter with him. And the following morning he was gone. He left a note to say that he, he has gone, that he's going to try and get to Switzerland and that he would get in touch with us when he could. Without saying goodbye. And he managed it. He went through, over the mountains and then into Switzerland, where he got, where he was interned. But he got out and he sent us a picture postcard from Switzerland. Yes.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 2 seconds

AG: What were conditions like for you as Jewish family in Vienna after the Anschluss?

GM: Not nice. My father had blue eyes, my mother had blue eyes and I had blue eyes, you know, we didn't particularly, you know what I mean, they didn't sort of say aha, unfortunately some people, I don't know. My father got away with it very well, in fact it was very embarrassing because he couldn't very well say Heil Hitler, not that he wanted to anyway, but. But it was bad enough because lots of people knew us, and before my mother, my father came back from Lithuania, my mother and I were

walking past the cinema, and we saw lots of people, they were laughing and having a lovely time, and we looked, and there were people scrubbing the pavement and my mother, quick, come on, quick and we quickly went home. We did not put the light on. We had a kitchen which belonged to the landing of the actual house and there was enough light there. We sat in the kitchen until it was time to get to bed. And we did not put the light on anywhere. That was quite clever of my mother. And the bell rang from downstairs but we didn't answer it. So we were safe from that. But the Austrians were, I'm afraid, very cruel, they were not, there were a few, I mean, as I say Erika's parents, they were marvellous really, and there were people in that house who were absolutely lovely, I must say. But you know... In fact when I was with the American, well I was a member of the American army then, a full uniform, and I was a, you know, civilian and I had a 24 hour pass to go to Vienna from, from... it was very difficult. Salzburg I could go to as often as I liked, because it was in the American Zone [of occupation] but Vienna was different, you had to go through the Russian Zone to get there. And well, I got my 24 hour pass, they picked a hotel for me, they also picked a hotel for me to go and eat, and I decided I'd ring Erika's parents and I spent a night with them, and I wanted to find my brother and he wasn't in Vienna at that time. I'd still hoped to find my father, that's why my mother let me go to Germany, you see but then of course we had notification from the Red Cross that the last that was heard of him was in Auschwitz and nothing since.

Tape 1: 46 minutes 38 seconds

And of course her, my mother's brother and sister were sent to Lodz, was it Lodz? Yes, to the ghetto there and I don't know what happened to them afterwards, but I know they left their flat and had to share with other people. Ghastly, I think, dreadful.

AG: Did you go back to your own home when you went back to Vienna?

GM: Well only because I, I stayed the night with...

AG: Oh yes, they were your neighbours.

GM: With our neighbours, you see, and she said, come and have a look at the flat, come on. And so she rang the bell, Erika's mother, and the owner of that flat, she looked very scared, and I said to her, don't worry, I'm not coming back. But she was, she looked a little bit frightened.

AG: Were you, were your family ever mistreated, I mean before you left, let's say on the Kristallnacht.

GM: No, I wouldn't say so, no. But there again my mother made friends with a very common Nazi. I mean, it was awful the way we had to, really, almost eat dirt and she did things for her, all sorts of things, and her husband was a very high-ranking Nazi in Vienna, you know. I mean my mother was doing, I mean she was really, I don't know.

AG: What was this person's name?

GM: I forget, I forget.

AG: Yes.

GM: But I know she, you know. I mean, but, terrible rough lot of people, but there you are.

AG: Do you remember the Kristallnacht at all, the Kristallnacht on the 9th of November?

GM: Of course I do. I spent that evening in, with Erika, strangely enough. They must have known about it. They wanted me in their flat, somehow. My father was all right... But I do remember Kristallnacht.

AG: What do you remember about it?

GM: Well I remember that it happened, you know and I remember what, the morning after, it was awful, you know. I mean, there weren't any Jewish shops left. But I also remember that we could not go to a park, we couldn't go to various shops, we couldn't go to a coffeehouse, we couldn't go to the cinemas. I do remember that very vividly. It was awful.

Tape 1: 49 minutes 51 seconds

And I had a distant cousin who worked in a place, it was called the Gildemeijster, that of course sounds Dutch, and they were trying to get people out of Vienna and one day I visited his office and he said, you could go to England or Holland with other children. Where would you like to go? And I said Holland please, because it's nearer. And it was in three weeks.

AG: So when was this? Was this, what date was this?

GM: Oh, that was sometime in November.

AG: Oh, so after...

GM: It must have been on the first, that was on the tenth of December I left.

AG: A very early Kindertransport.

GM: I think I must have been the first one.

AG: Yes.

GM: And my father, I looked at my father and he said, look it's your decision, I'm not going to stand in your way, you must, it's your decision. And I decided I'd go, one more, one less mouth to feed, and so I went. I went to Holland.

AG: Can you describe your departure from Vienna?

GM: My mother couldn't go to the station. It was a minor station, I think it was Hütteldorf or somewhere, I'm not quite certain because one did not have, could not

show one's emotions, apparently, so my mother stayed with some friends nearby, whilst my father went to see me off. He tried, I started to cry, I was already in the train, at the window and I started to cry, and he said, in German, well, Kopf hoch, and that's the last thing he said to me.

AG: Keep your head up, in English.

GM: I cried, I remember crying, and as it happened, my distant cousin was on that train. People looking after the children. He went as far as the Dutch border and then he had to go back, and of course he perished too. But so that, the journey was quite pleasant ...

AG: Yes, sorry, I was just going to ask you what time was it you left?

GM: It was in the evening, yes, it was in the evening.

AG: It was all done rather out of the general public's sight?

GM: Yes.

AG: Sorry, go on about the journey, I interrupted you.

TAPE 2

AG: Gertraud Murray, tape two. You were just telling us about getting on the train to go to Holland. Could you describe the journey that you had?

GM: Yes, it was obviously quite, well, it was fear of the unknown in a way, one didn't know what one came to, lots of children. I was in a carriage with a girl of 17 and a girl of 18, they didn't want to know, I just, as far as they were concerned I was just a kid. And then suddenly I saw my distant cousin who was taking us as far as the Dutch border. The poor man had to go back again. And so I cheered up a bit, to see a familiar face. And then when we got to, well I said goodbye to him at the German-Dutch, and I was upset and when we got to Holland, to The Hague we were taken to a place to have a shower and that was very frightening in a way, because it was so odd, to immediately have to have a shower somewhere or other and then eventually we got to our destination, which was an old school building and there we were looked after by Red Cross nurses. The youngest was two, and the oldest was eighteen.

AG: How many of you were there?

GM: Quite a few. And the rest went to England, because that carried on to England, well as far as the Hook of Holland and eventually I became quite ill there, I had bronchitis. We went for an outing in Scheveningen, I'd never seen the sea before and I was mesmerised by it, and after all, it was winter and I suppose I must have caught a chill or something and the upset of leaving my parents, it was the first time without either of my parents. I'd always been with at least one of them and it was a bit traumatic for me. And I remember saying to a nurse, I have a sore throat and I don't feel very well, one morning, and she took my temperature and ran to get the matron, well the equivalent of the matron, they called her Oberschwester, and she said I've got

to stay in bed and the doctor came and I was there, and it was nearly New Year's Eve, and on New Year's Eve I said, please let me get up, she said no, I begged her, let me get up on New Year's Eve, and she wouldn't. She said no, no, you're still quite ill. And then eventually we were moved and I was still convalescing and so they looked after me quite well, I must say, they were very kind to me.

Tape 2: 3 minutes 51 seconds

And we went to a place outside The Hague, it was a beautiful country house. We were divided then, the boys were, went somewhere else, and we were the girls, in our teens, we were sort of put together, not too many of us, there were only about, I don't suppose, under twenty, so it was quite nice. So we took English lessons and we did the washing and so on, it was quite nice. The food was not very marvellous. And eventually I heard that my mother was going to come, and was going to come and see me on her way to England. So one of my colleagues, Liesl, well colleagues, I suppose, one of my, her mother was there a couple of weeks before and took her back with her, to England. And my mother came and we went to the station, I went with two of the nurses, my mother wasn't on the train, the first train, and one of the nurses said, well come on, let's go, your mother wasn't here and that's it. I said please, please, let's wait for the next train, please. And she was on that train. And I jumped, I virtually jumped over the barrier because I was so thrilled to see her and that night I could stay with her, at the little guesthouse she booked, with German people, German refugees, and we stayed, I stayed, well, I slept in the bath actually, but it was marvellous. My mother bought some, a duck, which I wouldn't eat now because I love ducks, so I wouldn't dream of eating it, but she brought cold duck and salami and goodness knows what, and I ate and ate and ate, it was terrible. My mother sat there with tears running down her cheeks seeing me eat. And then my mother said, I've got a visa and I think you can come with me. Because I was on her passport but... And we went to the British Embassy in The Hague the following morning, and they said yes, you can go with your mum. So two days later I came with her.

AG: What date is this?

GM: Well it was the end of February '39. We arrived in England on the first of March.

AG: Sorry, go on, I just wanted to get the date of your arrival.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 5 seconds

GM: But that British consul in Vienna saved my life, probably.

AG: By putting you on your...

GM: By putting, by including me in that visa. He must have done the same with Liesl, obviously, who lives near Stroud in Gloucestershire. A little place called Fox, right up the hill. We are in touch occasionally. We've known one another a long time.

AG: Could you describe your first impressions of England? Where did you land?

GM: We landed in Harwich, of course, Hook of Holland to Harwich, then we went to Liverpool Street, where a friend of, the sister of a friend of my parents came to meet us.

AG: Did you have any difficulty getting into England?

GM: Not at all, because we had the visa you see.

AG: You had the visa. Sorry. Go on.

GM: And there was also a man who was talking Yiddish to us. It is very much like German but it was a bit difficult to understand, but we managed and we went to register somewhere. We were taken to register, I think it was, and so I was able to register. They got me on there, which helped me no end later on, to register our arrival. I think it's Bloomsbury or something.

AG: Bloomsbury House.

GM: And then we went to that friend's flat and she put us, she took us to Paddington, where we started our journey to Bristol, to go to Chipping Sodbury. We arrived in Bristol, oh we met quite a nice lady who spoke a little German on the train, who took us to the bus station, which was very kind of her. And to the bus stop or whatever it was. And then we caught the bus, with our luggage, and arrived in Chipping Sodbury. By that time it was evening and dark.

AG: You were saying, you'd arrived in Chipping Sodbury.

GM: It was dark, and we saw a car, a very crotchety old car, and a young man said, can I help you? Of course we must have looked very, even in the dark we must have looked very odd and lost, and I said, we want to get to Liliput Farm, in my broken English, because it was hopeless, my school English and what I'd learnt in Holland and he said, do come in. I sat in the back, my mother was in the front with him. It was a very tiny car and suddenly I thought, oh god, I wonder if he's safe, he might, he might, he might take us somewhere. Oh dear. Because I felt so insecure. All sorts of things. Insecurity really hasn't left me all my life, in a way I feel very insecure at what happened. Anyway we got to Liliput Farm and that nice young man gave us this lift and it was very, very nice.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 57 seconds

And suddenly, the lady of the house did not expect me, because she thought it was forbidden to have me, and suddenly I appeared, you see, but she took it in her stride.

AG: What was her name?

GM: Holman, Holman. H-O-L-M-A-N. I don't think they are around anymore.

AG: They were farmers? They ran a farm?

GM: Well, gentleman farmers. Her husband worked in Bristol in the city, might have been a solicitor or something, I don't know. It was all, you know, it was really, they were, they weren't. And so we were there for some months and we weren't terribly happy there, we weren't really.

AG: Why not?

GM: They were, they were, there was a lot of drinking going on, and so on and it was really. We just didn't, you know sometimes they were sober, sometimes they weren't sober. And it wasn't, it wasn't really to our liking and...

AG: Did they treat you badly?

GM: It's difficult to say. We had enough to eat, wherever we went we had enough to eat, I must say. It was just a question of moodiness and... It was odd, you know, I suppose we didn't please them either, six of one, half a dozen of the other I should imagine.

AG: How did your mother take to being a domestic servant?

GM: Well, she had to put up with it. I mean, she was perfectly happy when we went to Bristol with those, lovely family, they really were lovely.

AG: Let's just finish with the people in Chipping Sodbury. How long were you there in Chipping Sodbury?

GM: From, oh I can easily tell you. The war had started by then. It was already, it was in the late autumn. Yes, it was in the late autumn we moved. We were there six or seven, oh six or eight months, yes, and then we went to, I would say it was about November when we went to Bristol.

AG: And who did you move, with what sort of family or household did you move to in Bristol? Who were they?

GM: Well I went for a week to a rabbi and his family.

AG: Where was this? What part of Bristol?

GM: Well, quite near the centre. It wasn't far away. But you see, I'd never eaten kosher food, and I didn't know how to divide anything, you know and all this sort of... I'm afraid, you know, all the milky foods and the meat stuff, you know... We Austrians were very naughty really, because we... so I'm afraid, you know, it was all very difficult for me. And I was too young to look after small children too. The whole thing was pretty grim and I wanted to be with my mum.

AG: Where was she?

Tape 2: 14 minutes 23 seconds

GM: She was, she went, she went to a parson and his family. He was the headmaster of the Cathedral School. He had a church in Park Street in Bristol. And they were lovely. And so my mother asked, could I come. And they said yes. And they were charming. It was great.

AG: What were their names? Do you remember?

GM: Watts. W-A-T-T-S.

AG: And he was a pastor? A Church of England pastor? Cathedral School, yes.

GM: Yes. Oh yes. He didn't ram it down our throat.

AG: How were you treated there?

GM: Beautifully. Beautifully. It was a joy. But they couldn't afford to keep us much longer, you see, so we went the following year, in 1940, in the late spring, we found a place in Frenchay. My mother was cook and I, I was maid, I suppose, and they were very nice, they were very, very rich. They owned I would say, they owned most of Fishponds.

AG: North-East Bristol, yes.

GM: In Bristol. They were very, very rich but they were very nice. And at that time, I heard that my father went to Belgium, on business, sort of, which of course he didn't because he didn't go back to Austria. And that was just sort of ...

AG: So he was allowed out.

GM: So he could get out. And I heard that Belgium was invaded. And I was terribly upset, terribly, terribly worried about my father. Because my mother found a guarantor. If the war hadn't started he could have come to England. We were very close to it, you see, she found a guarantor for him.

AG: Couldn't he come from Belgium to Britain?

GM: No, it was war. It was war. So instead of going, and he could have perhaps gone that way, but he went to the south of France, instead. To Vichy. And it wasn't a very good idea. And I was terribly worried at the time. And I was so upset and then I heard of people getting interned and all that sort of thing because that was in the news and I was afraid of being interned and what else.

AG: Had you and your mother, or your mother at least, been called before one of these tribunals?

Tape 2: 17 minutes 15 seconds

GM: Oh yes. But I did when I was 16, at Cheltenham, because it was from Dursley which we would go on to later, and I was crying. Terrible. But my mother was

Category C and so was I, you know, so that meant that we were refugees from Nazi oppression. No question.

AG: Do you remember the tribunal at all, how they treated you?

GM: They were all right. I remember they asked me if I liked Hitler! I said no! But, no. But then at Frenchay, you see we were quite happy there, and I still visited the Watts family, which was then, oh yes, they came to see us in Gloucester too, they were very nice and ...

[Phone rings]

AG: You were just telling us about going from Fishponds on to Dursley...

GM: Yes, and it became a protected area.

AG: Bristol, yes.

GM: And so there were quite a lot of refugees rounded up, because there were quite a lot of refugees in Bristol and surroundings and we went to Dursley, which I presume is about, well, it's about 17 miles from Gloucester, I do know that. And we went to Dursley, a pretty little place it was, and we went to what was called the refugee institute. But it was, until very recently, a workhouse. And in fact the locals still referred to it as the workhouse, and there was a master and matron there.

AG: So this was almost, I mean, I won't quite say internment, but refugees were put there?

GM: Well no, well yes, but we could move around freely, we were... Bristol became a protected area, you see. 30 miles from the sea we had to be, you know, not within 30 miles of the sea, of the coast, which is fair enough. And quite understandable, I suppose. They didn't know what to do with us. And I remember, being the youngest there, I was helping the gardener and it was lovely. It was really very nice. It was the strawberry season and he gave me strawberries to eat. It was really nice. It was a beautiful summer. And so I quite enjoyed those few months in Dursley, in spite of being... yes, it was ok.

AG: How did, I mean, how did you manage to live? Presumably your mother wasn't working?

Tape 2: 20 minutes 15 seconds

GM: No, no we were very, very poor. My mother had some distant relatives who lived in the North. Harrogate and Stockton and Manchester and so on. Very distant relatives they were. But they sort of sent a little money and so on. Of course there was no, you know, it was pocket money, we got fed.

[Phone rings]

AG: Right, yes, you were just describing this former workhouse in Dursley, saying that you were quite happy there.

GM: But everybody had to work, everybody had to do something and it was, it was... The meals were all right, because after all the refugees cooked. But there was a lot of time when the men all were taken away to be interned. But they weren't interned for long; they all came back after a few weeks, so that was nice. Of course the wives were a bit upset about that, you know.

AG: How many, approximately how many people?

GM: Oh quite a lot. It seemed quite, I would say a good hundred, I think so. It was quite a few.

AG: How did you get on with the other refugees?

GM: Oh fine, it was all right. It was quite pleasant. You see it was summer, it was lovely, beautiful walks in Dursley. It was really very nice. I remember it as a pleasure in many ways. But in the winter, it wasn't so good. We were there until, oh end or late autumn and then it became quite unpleasant. I remember it was nice in the summer and in the late autumn and then we went to Gloucester, and we found a job, my mother found a job in a pub, in Bristol Road in Gloucester, to do the cooking etcetera, you know for the... And there was I, and I was supposed to help. Because they had me in the bar, and I was only 16, and it was illegal. And what happened to me, I got terrible bronchitis from all this smoking. I was, I mean, there was I going about with bronchitis. I remember going to the doctor and he said, if you, I won't be responsible for you if you stay in the place. And, I mean he was really committing, really committing an offence really, because I wasn't supposed to be working in the bar, or be any, you know. So anyway my mother, then we found a place, by that time it was the early spring, '41, and my mother found a place with a parson, not for her to be, but just to help, to clean up, and for that we had the basement flat. Now things were getting a little bit better, except that that parson's wife, I'm afraid she was what they might call out to lunch.

AG: Oh!

Tape 2: 23 minutes 54 seconds

GM: Yes. But anyway it was in a very nice part of Gloucester, and I found a job with a jeweller, sales assistant, so things were beginning to look up a little bit, and that's when I started to read in the evenings, go to lectures and so on, that I began to start learning again.

AG: So you had no schooling here?

GM: Exactly, no I didn't. And then my next job was in a John Lewis, John Lewis, my boss then, the buyer or whatever, the departmental manager, was German, and she was exceedingly unpleasant.

AG: A refugee or a...

GM: I don't know. I do not know. But she said to me one day, don't be so Jewish.

AG: Oh.

GM: Yes. So I don't know if she was or she wasn't, I believe she wasn't. So I didn't stay there very long. Then I went to the British Home Stores. And that was very pleasant. But I thought to myself, I want to do something better than that. But it was really very nice, the girls were nice, we always had, we always sang something before the place opened; it was very, there were the bosses. It was very nice.

AG: Did you ever encounter any hostility? I mean, either as a Jew or as someone from Germany? I mean, it sounds as if you were really made rather welcome.

GM: I went for a job one day, at a very posh store in Gloucester and the director said to me, why, I said, I thought you might have a vacancy seeing so many people are being called up. He was quite hostile to me. And funnily enough, advertised again and I was cheeky enough to go back. And he took me on. In those days they had a steam system with chains, you know the steam, they were like sort of little bombs and you put money in and by steam it came into the cash desk in the little office, it put it in the little office, and then you give the change and it goes back again. There were some tills as well in that store, but that was really a, by steam and that's how it worked. And the staff, Thursday was a half-day in Gloucester, so Thursday morning I worked there. Friday, Saturday, all by myself, except for my lunchtime when the boss of the office took over.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 7 seconds

The following Monday the managing director came down, that place was run by two directors. And the managing director came down, shook me by the hand and said congratulations, for the first time ever the cash wasn't a farthing out. You'll be cashier from now on. And I was. And they were really very fond of me, and I loved that job. I loved it, I got there half past seven in the morning and worked, I absolutely loved that job.

AG: What was the firm called?

GM: Denton's. But now, would you believe, it's Argos now. But it was a very nice store and they were very, I mean they took girls on, who were actually, they did their School Certificate as sales assistants, it was a very select store, it was very, very nice. And I was called up. And they tried to get me out, the directors, they really tried very hard to keep me but they couldn't. And I worked in a factory and they had me on riveting for the first day.

AG: So this means you were directed, you were made, you were ordered to do war work.

GM: Oh yes, and they got me on riveting the first day, and realised that I was useless. So they stuck me into an office. I wasn't supposed to be in an office really, I was supposed to work, but anyway, so it was all very secret but I worked in that office

because I was pathetic. And afterwards, after the war, I told the manager at the Labour Exchange because I knew him. I said, you know I didn't work in the factory. He said, I know, I know. But...

AG: Did you notice, you must have noticed war? Did you have air raids?

GM: Oh yes. We had not so many in Gloucester but we did have some, and I was under the shelter table and I was always hungry in the middle of the night and yes, oh yes, we did have some but it wasn't so bad in Gloucester, no. Bristol was terrible. So it wasn't too bad in Gloucester, we had a few bombs though.

AG: Were you affected in other ways by the war?

GM: Not really. I can't say we were, you know. It wasn't, it wasn't too bad. My mother had enough to eat, because my mother was a very clever cook and we had, fish was rationed. It was perfectly all right.

AG: And what sort of jobs did your mother have?

Tape 2: 30 minutes 5 seconds

GM: None. Oh, at Denton's, they were so kind to us, I can't tell you how kind. That director, who was so horrid to me first of all, my father was interned and the Red Cross wrote to us, could we possibly send some money for food.

AG: Where was he interned?

GM: He was in Vichy in the south of France.

AG: Do you know the name of the camp?

GM: Not the first one but the camp des Milles, you know, but he was in another one before that. And they sent, they sent that letter and we didn't have the money. I mean we could just pay the rent and food to keep us really, so I was crying, I remember crying, and he came in and he could see me absolutely dissolved, I didn't know he was coming in and I showed him that letter, because he wanted to see it and he immediately wrote us a cheque. That's why I worked so hard. He was so kind in the end, really. I worked exceedingly hard because I felt so grateful anyway. And I worked Saturdays. But I worked in that factory, you know, that office. I went back to the store, and worked the Saturdays. I didn't get paid, I didn't want to get paid.

AG: Could you tell me about the contact you had with your father during the wartime period?

GM: Yes. He wrote to us. He was very, I mean, very often mail didn't come through from us and he used to get terribly worried, but what could we do?

AG: How did you write? I mean, what was the means of communication? I mean, you couldn't just write a letter and send it to France.

GM: Yes, you could, in those days, you could write letters from that, yes, you could.

AG: And could you just write and address it to Les Milles Camp?

GM: Yes we did. Yes, yes. But they didn't, very few of them came through. Very few.

AG: Was it through the Red Cross? Because postal services I thought didn't work, were cut off between Britain and France in the war.

GM: Um, well, I don't know what happened but we did get letters from him.

AG: Yes, sorry, do go on.

GM: Yes. And then of course, the last letter he wrote was from camp, from Drancy, you see, and that of course was the last. And then we had a message, I had a message through somebody, in fact I had a letter, I opened that letter and it was to say that my father sent a message through that person to say that he went, that he went back East. So I didn't, I didn't, that was all really, and I didn't tell my mother and all during the war, she said I hope Daddy saved himself, and went over the Pyrenees to Spain or something, you know. And I thought, oh no. But I didn't, until after the war, I told her.

Tape 2: 33 minutes 50 seconds

And then I still went, I didn't know that it was Auschwitz, and that's why she said I could go to Germany when the manager of the Labour Exchange said, there's some vacancies with the Americans, could I go, you know, with the Control Commission, and it was branch of the intelligence service, counter-intelligence, and my mother said yes, go, perhaps you'll find your father and Ernst. I located him, my brother, but never saw him. We spoke on the telephone, but I didn't see him but of course, my father, whilst I was there I knew that my father perished in Auschwitz, as well as a lot of relatives, I mean, nearly all of them went, couldn't save themselves.

AG: Could I take you back to the wartime in England?

GM: Oh, yes, sorry.

AG: No, no, not at all, I asked you about your father. What were your impressions of England and the people during the war?

GM: They were very nice. I can't say that I met anybody who was hostile towards me.

AG: I'm glad to hear it!

GM: I mean honestly, they were very nice, didn't say, what are you doing here, you're a foreigner, didn't get that. It was very strange. They, they were, they put themselves out to be nice to us, many of them.

AG: In what sort of way?

GM: Well, giving, making cakes, for instance, or coming to see us, or taking me out, or inviting me to tea. I had a lot of that. All sorts of things. They were very, very nice.

AG: And did you make English friends?

GM: Oh yes, lots of them. Especially the Quakers, especially, yes, oh yes, I had friends. In fact there's one, his wife died not long ago, two weeks ago, but he's now in a home and he, well, he was a boyfriend of mine many years ago, but I didn't love him enough, but I liked, I still like him very much, he's a dear friend, and he's nearly 88, so he's in a home, and I spoke to him on the telephone only yesterday, to see how he was doing because he's got his own phone there, and yes, he's all right, he's quite happy.

AG: What sort of people did you mix with, and what did you do, you know, in your spare time?

GM: With the Quakers, yes.

AG: What did you do with your friends?

Tape 2: 37 minutes 3 seconds

GM: Well, we went on outings and there was also a refugee club in Gloucester.

AG: Oh, was there?

GM: Yes. They were in charge, there was a Quaker, well, he was a boyfriend of mine too. He was a, in charge of the refugee club, he was the secretary, the hon. secretary. And I met a lot of Quakers and other conscientious objectors, because they were all pacifists and they didn't fight, you see. But I was very, but I went to Quaker meetings too, it was very peaceful, very peaceful to go to Quaker meetings, yes. Oh yes, so we had, and then we, I went to the cinema, I had lots of friends, I was never short of... Nurses, I was friends with the nurses and pharmacists, I had lots of friends.

AG: And did you find that you learned English quickly?

GM: Yes, I learned English pretty quickly, yes, yes. I mean in the farm, on the farm, I'm afraid there were, one learnt swear words, but they, later on, oh yes, it was quite quick, I learnt English, yes. I can't say it was much of a problem to learn English. My mother found it more difficult.

AG: Did she continue working?

GM: No, no.

AG: So you actually provided the money?

GM: Well yes, yes. I mean that director, he had her crocheting, lots of string bags. You know, when I came back from Germany, he only did it out of kindness so she had some money. There was a stock room full of those string bags. When I went back,

I worked for the firm again although the director by that time had sold to somebody else, but I went back and worked there for a time and I saw in that stock room, all these string bags. Very few people wanted them and he did it out of the kindness of his heart. Yes. Very kind.

AG: I was wondering if earlier in the war, you weren't afraid that the Germans might invade England?

GM: Yes, that was a fear, but somehow I felt protected, sheltered in England. It was very odd. Very, very odd.

AG: Do you remember the Battle of Britain?

GM: Oh yes, of course.

AG: How do you remember it?

GM: Well, I remember the Battle of Britain because it was in the news, it was on the radio, it was, you know, one just knew that the Battle of Britain was going on. When, you know.

AG: Did you listen to the radio?

GM: Oh yes, we did.

AG: What did you hear? Do you remember any of the things that you heard on the radio?

Tape 2: 40 minutes 22 seconds

GM: Well lots of news of course, but then later on there were programmes like Vera Lynn and, was it the Lyons [Life with the Lyons]? That was after the war, wasn't it? I can't remember. No, it was during the war, the Lyons, I think. Beebee Lyons, Beebee and Ben Lyons and their family. And lots of amusing programmes, too, yes, quite a lot. And plays, radio plays. And of course news.

AG: Did your mother have more difficulty in adapting to England?

GM: Um possibly. Not too much, she was quite adaptable.

AG: Did she mainly have refugee friends, or...?

GM: Mixed. Yes, even in English she made herself understood and she understood better than she spoke, which was good. She managed, yes, she was all right. And later on, her English got better. But it was never very good. And she, any word she could not say in English, she said in German.

AG: It's amazing really that she could do that in the war, or just after the war. I mean, German was not exactly popular.

GM: Oh, they weren't too bad about it. It's funny, she got away with a lot. [Laughs] Oh dear.

AG: Do you remember things like D-Day?

GM: Oh yes, of course. D-Day, of course I remember D-Day. And of course VE-Day.

AG: Yes. And do you remember the end of the war?

GM: Of course and there was a street party in our street. Yes.

AG: What were your feelings when the war was over?

GM: It was great; I mean it was absolutely wonderful. And I really thought maybe my father's still alive, I mean, you know. But there was never, never any thought of going back to Vienna, never. By that time I was so used to England, oh no.

AG: Tell me how you came to get into contact with the Americans, the American forces, and go back.

GM: Oh that was through the manager of the Labour Exchange. He said, Trudy, would you like to go to Germany. He said, well, you know, a branch of the intelligence department, in the Control Commission, and I believe you will be part of the American army. I said, well I'd better ask my mother. I was, how old was I, I was 21, but I still had to. Just 21, 1945, yes. And I had to discuss it with her, she said you might find, you might find they're here, and yes, why not, if you want to go, go.

AG: I suppose they were recruiting German speakers.

Tape 2: 43 minutes 56 seconds

GM: Oh yes, yes. And I had to go to, first I had to go to London, behind Selfridges, to have an intelligence test. And a language test. And they passed me, for some reason or other. And then, every week I had to go to Mount Street, for my injections. Oh, it was terrible because I had to keep it quiet. I was still working in that factory, you see, and I wasn't allowed to tell anybody. They wanted to keep me on to make, to do their peacetime, to work for their peacetime because they wanted to do kitchen units. They said, well stay on, you... so my boss, who at the time came, oh I belonged to a concert party too – don't laugh - travelled around with that too but they, my boss wouldn't release me, he was too nervous, because the managing director, he knew about it. He was the only one who knew. But my immediate boss said, no, I'm not going to release you, which was hilarious, which was a compliment I suppose. But of course they had to release me. And when I got home on leave, my first leave, I was invited, with the manager of the Labour Exchange, and the managing director's wife, to lunch at that factory with the managing director. I was in uniform. I know it was very nice of them.

AG: What was this concert party that you were a member of?

GM: Yes, well, I was singing and yes, well, my voice is now very croaky but it wasn't too bad in those days. And I went, yes, we belonged to a concert party, one of the

middle managers put on, and we travelled. We went around Gloucestershire, we even went to London once, to the Merchant Navy place, to put on a show.

AG: What sort of things did you sing?

GM: It was, things like, 'Begin the Beguine' and 'Tiko Tiko', all sorts of things like that. But, little sketches, we did as well.

AG: Were there other refugees involved?

GM: No, no, I was the only one. They were all English.

AG: How many were there, approximately?

GM: Oh, about ten or twelve of us.

AG: Did you become close friends?

GM: Oh yes, with one of them, Russell, we also worked in the same office. We still wrote to one another years later. We stayed friends for many years. We had great fun, it was great fun.

AG: Let's get back to the Americans. You had these tests, you had this course of injections and then what happened?

Tape 2: 47 minutes 13 seconds

GM: Then what happened? I went to Germany and we were on the boat and we were Newhaven-Dieppe, and with the London Philharmonic. I said, I slept with the London Philharmonic on board, we were all in deckchairs, because there was no room on the ferry and I got very, well, I got very pally with the first violinist because she made, they made a film. They made a film, very recently before that, and there were various people on it and I was sort of looking round and he pointed people out to me who were in that film, because I saw that film. And we had a jolly good chat. We were talking on deck and it was nice. And then Sir Thomas Beecham, their coach came before ours and we were still standing there, waiting to go to Paris and their coach came before ours and Thomas Beecham was waving like mad to us. It was very nice. And eventually we got to Paris, stayed there, I'd never been to Paris before. So.

AG: What impressions...

GM: I saw the Eiffel Tower. No, we went up there and, not Sacré Coeur, I saw that another time, that was beautiful and Notre Dame and it was, it was all right. We went to a nightclub and the following morning we went, got a train to Frankfurt. And I was stationed in Frankfurt.

AG: What did you feel when you crossed the border going back into Germany?

GM: It was, it looked so terrible, I can't describe it to you, what Germany looked like. It was a complete mess. It was so bombed, it was dreadful. It really was terrible. And

it smelled and nobody was a Nazi. Nobody. There was only one who confessed that she belonged to the party. And I said, congratulations, you're the first one who ever, who told me the truth.

AG: What did you feel about the Germans when you arrived in Germany?

GM: Um, bit hostile I suppose. We were just allowed to fraternize, you know, just then we were allowed to. They weren't allowed to before. So we talked to them, that's about all. I had a cleaning lady, who came, she was very nice, she was ok. I mean, they were, I suppose, you know. I kept away from her, I didn't, you know, I wasn't, I didn't sort of detest them, it's just that I felt nothing for them, you know, it was just...

AG: What were your duties, working for the Americans?

Tape 2: 51 minutes 4 seconds

GM: Well, I was in the translation department and we were given, you see it was the censorship division. We, we in the translation department, got the interesting bits to translate, so we didn't have to go through letters or anything like that. And so we translated them and they went to the War Office in Washington.

AG: What, you say interesting things, like what?

GM: I was sworn to secrecy.

AG: Oh, right.

GM: I was. There were all sorts of things. They wrote to each other all sorts of very interesting bits. Some were still Nazis and some were something else and some were very personal things, you know. Anything that might interest the War Office, we translated.

AG: How long did you work for the Americans in Frankfurt?

GM: Nearly two years. I was signed on one year, for the first year, and then I left in November, I worked for them for about twenty months, altogether.

AG: Were you reasonably happy working in Frankfurt?

GM: Yes, it was Offenbach, actually, five miles from Frankfurt, but Frankfurt was so near. But yes, I was perfectly, yes, it was great. It was very nice, especially the first year, when President Eisenhower, well, General Eisenhower was still in charge. It was in Frankfurt, you see. And for the first year it was great and then Lucius Clay took over and things were not quite so nice under him for us because we had to pay for more things than we did with President Eisenhower, well General Eisenhower. And it was a different atmosphere. The first year was lovely, lovely atmosphere when he was around.

AG: What were the Americans like? Were the other people you were working with...

GM: Ok, very nice. Yes.

AG: I suppose there were quite a lot of them.

GM: Yes, I mean Americans, then the Danes came, yes, we had the Danes who also came to work for them and they were nice to work with. You know, the Danes were very, they were very good to Jews, weren't they, during the war. And I suppose that's why the Americans had them to work for them.

AG: When did you find out what had actually happened to the Jewish population in German-occupied areas? Do you remember how?

GM: Well, I knew already something, obviously, because when they came to, you know, they came to free Belsen and Auschwitz. But at that time I still didn't know about my father. But we knew, we knew what happened. It was, it was quite awful. And I remember Erika's mother, when I had spent, that was in September 1946, when I had my 24 hours in Vienna.

AG: Oh, yes.

Tape 2: 54 minutes 38 seconds

GM: And she showed me a photograph of Erika with a Nazi badge on, I'm sure she was hiding to be denazified, in the Steiermark part of Austria, that was a good place to hide apparently, and that's where she met her future husband, who was also hiding. But anyway, he was from there anyway. But she showed me Erika in a uniform with a Nazi badge on, with a party badge. And I said, I shouldn't show this around. I said, it won't do Erika any good. Erika was at the time nursing, becoming a nurse, baby's nurse, and she'd, it was a very difficult decision for me, well it wasn't a difficult decision but it was the wrong decision I had to make. She said, now you can't do two, you can go and see Peppi, Peppi was the girl who looked after me, woman who looked after me. You can go and see Peppi who works in a soup kitchen, or you can go and see Erika. Now what was I supposed to do? What a decision. I made the decision she wanted to hear, but I wanted to see Peppi, it was very difficult. Because seeing that photograph of Erika even told me more. So I went to see, you know, she brought, they were terribly short of food, and she brought Erika an egg, she said, look what I've got for you, an egg. And Erika was a bit standoffish towards me. Her father, her father gave, said could you, can I give you some money to buy Erika some shoes. And I did. And I, I don't know how the things I got them to her. Oh I know. She, we met in Salzburg, Erika and I, and we spent two or three days there. She insisted on paying for the hotel, whilst I took her [out], because the Austrians were allowed to be taken to our places where we ate, we were allowed to do that with the Austrians, but not with the Germans. And so I could, I provided the meals and she insisted that she pay for the hotel. And we spent two or three days.

AG: I'm going to have to stop you there, because the tape's coming to an end. We have to have a break.

TAPE 3

AG: Getraud Murrary, tape three. When we stopped, we ended the previous tape, you were just telling me about going to Salzburg with your friend Erika.

GM: Yes, we met there. I came from Frankfurt and she came from Vienna and we met there and it was full of snow and we spent, we went to the cinema, I believe, I seem to remember, and I gave her those shoes that her father asked me to get for her, I gave her. She wasn't too pleased with them but it's all I could do, really, because they didn't have high fashion shoes there, in the PX sort of thing. And, anyway, she had some nice meals because they didn't have much to eat in those days and I had my American meals which I was able to share with her in places. The Austrians were allowed to come into those establishments, while in Germany it wasn't allowed for the Germans to do it. The Austrians had a nicer time than the Germans. And so we spent some few days but we were not as close as we used to be as children, even so, we remained friends till the end of her life.

AG: What was it like for you, you came back to Austria in American army uniform as a member of the occupying forces, in a country which you'd effectively been kicked out of?

GM: I know, that was rather nice actually. I quite enjoyed that. I quite enjoyed that, I must say, in a way, because I did feel a little bit resentful of being kicked out of my beautiful country which I was so fond of. Still am, I suppose. But the people, and I still, when I go back to Austria and I hope, maybe, that I can manage it once more, I don't know though, anybody a little younger than me, my age and older than me, I treat with the greatest, not respect, caution. I'd sooner not have much... But sometimes this is handed down to their children, because I knew somebody I worked with, well, she worked in Vienna and I worked in England but we belonged to the same firm and I knew there was anti-Semitism there. The moment she knew that I was Jewish, her manner changed because she used to be all over me like a rash before.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 25 seconds

But I managed it. Yes, definitely, it can still happen. But most of them are very friendly and certainly my pen friend, who was seven years younger than I am, there's no trace, on the contrary, on the contrary, he writes to quite a number of Jewish people and has Jewish friends all over the world really, because he is so, the curator of a museum in the Third District, and he was trying to find as many former residents who were Jewish and he did, he found, he went to a great deal of trouble to find out about them, and that's how I know him really, because my aunt and uncle lived in the third district, that's how I got to know him.

AG: How did the Austrians behave to you when you first came back, after all they must have known that you were an Austrian Jew?

GM: Oh, they were very nice, very, very nice, oh yes. Even the taxi drivers, very nice. He said, are you a former refugee, are you a former Flüchtling, you know. I said, yes. He said oh my goodness, so nice. Yes, amazing. And he was young, a young man.

AG: And what was it like when you found yourself going back to Vienna for the first time? What would this be, 1946 or 47?

GM: Yes it was, it was September 1946.

AG: What was Vienna like when you went back?

GM: It was terrible. It was so dreary and bombed. Well yes, it was not as bad as Germany but you could see it had been damaged. But it was very dreary to me, it didn't look like the old Vienna somehow. Of course now it does, it's all right, lovely. But not then. It was sad, really.

AG: How did you feel going back there?

GM: I felt, I felt sad. I wasn't. I felt sad. I just wanted to go hopefully to find my brother, but I couldn't, not at the time. And certainly my father was, I didn't have any hope to find him in Vienna itself, but I still had a hope to find him. But I wanted to see Vienna, for 24 hours, in those days, and obviously I stayed with Erika's parents, who were very, very hospitable and nice. And I must admit, she had a boyfriend who was a dentist who was Jewish, before the war. I believe he had a girlfriend who was also Jewish. So they were perfectly, it's Erika who obviously was brainwashed in Germany during the fortnight she had there as a child and became an enthusiastic Nazi. It's amazing what they can do in a fortnight.

Tape 3: 7 minutes 15 seconds

AG: How did you feel about Vienna itself?

GM: Well it was, it didn't look the same to me, you see. I can't say that I was, it looks different, it was different somehow. I had hardly any feeling about it then, because to me it wasn't like my beloved Vienna. And now of course I do, I do love it again, I mean, as much as ever. But, and Austria, of course is, I couldn't wait. From Frankfurt it took a 15-hour journey and sometimes I couldn't get a sleeper. Fifteen hours by train, each way, just to spend a few hours. Sometimes, because when we very first came to Germany we worked on a Saturday. That was stopped later, but at the time. I travelled a night to get to Salzburg, spent a few hours in Salzburg, at 5 o'clock back again to Frankfurt. That's as much as I loved to go to Austria, just for a few hours.

AG: You mentioned your brother.

GM: Yes.

AG: Actually, I haven't asked you anything about him. Since you told us that he'd escaped across the mountains to Switzerland, and was interned there, what then happened to him?

GM: Well, as far as I know, because I never actually saw him again, although we spoke on the phone and often wrote to each other, of course. He must have got himself to France eventually and he, I think he went to Marseilles, and he married a French girl and had a little girl. And then of course he was with the French Resistance and got to Dachau.

AG: He was captured?

GM: He was captured, yes. And after the war...

AG: Do you know how long he was in Dachau?

GM: I don't know. He was liberated after the war, and joined the French army, or something, he wore a uniform, a French uniform, I do know that. And he spent his time in the Tyrol then. And then eventually he was discharged from the army or wherever and he went to Vienna, back to Vienna, to live. And he just couldn't.

AG: What about his family, the lady he'd married?

GM: He left, I'm afraid he left his pregnant French wife and his little girl and went to the Tyrol. There he met another girl, had a baby, they had a baby and again he left her. Because she wrote to us to tell us. And then he went to Vienna and found his old girlfriend, and I don't know what happened, but the last letter we had from him said I'll write again when things are better, but apparently they never got better because in June 1950 he committed suicide in Vienna, and we had the notification from the girlfriend he left in the Tirol. So I'm afraid we don't know why and how but I suppose he had enough.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 32 seconds

AG: Do you have any contact with...

GM: No, no. In fact his younger daughter, by his French wife, came to see us one year. But there again, we lost contact. I met his older daughter when I went to Paris, that night, first night in Paris and the following morning I said to one of my new colleagues I said, would you speak French? She said yes, and I said would you do me a favour and come with me, I want to visit my sister-in-law. And she did, and so she interpreted and there was Monique, my little niece, yelling the place down. And there was also Alice, my sister-in-law's name was, Alice's mother there and a very nice apartment in Paris. But she told me then that he left her. I didn't know. I thought I'd see my brother there, possibly. Yes.

AG: While we're on the subject of your family that was still in Europe, when did you find out what had happened to your father?

GM: It was during one leave where one of my, my Quaker boyfriends, so he told me that the notification...

AG: From?

GM: From the Red Cross, to say that my father, nothing was heard about my father since he went to Auschwitz, that was the last heard of him. So it's obvious that he, that he died there. You know it's a horrible feeling not to know how somebody, how much they suffered and all that sort of thing. It's left a mark for the rest of my life, you know. A very nasty, nasty mark which I shall never get over.

AG: How long after you started going back to Vienna and back to Austria, how much longer did you work for the Americans in Frankfurt?

Tape 3: 14 minutes 34 seconds

GM: Oh well, I went to Vienna in September 1946 and I left, I left Germany then at the end of June '47. And that's when I went home. I had three leaves during that time, you know, whilst I was in Germany.

AG: Did you go back to Gloucester?

GM: Oh, Gloucester, yes, to my mother. We had a flat in Gloucester.

AG: How did your mother manage?

GM: Oh, I sent her money.

AG: Because probably you earned quite well, with American dollars.

GM: It wasn't too bad for those days, no, no. And I sent her money.

AG: So you, she had there in Gloucester, what? A rented flat?

GM: I always, yes, I always sent my mother money whatever I did, wherever I worked.

AG: And how was she getting on in Gloucester? She was there for nearly two years by herself.

GM: She was fine; she had so many friends in Gloucester. She really did. Oh she was perfectly all right. I mean, if she had said to me, I don't want you to go... There was also something I omitted to tell you. My uncle, my father's brother, managed to get to England. But I'm afraid he wasn't my favourite uncle and I wasn't his favourite niece but he, he went to Scotland. Anyway he joined the Pioneers [Pioneer Corps] and he became a sergeant, oh yes, and later on he went closer to us, I'm sorry to say. He went to Chepstow, which wasn't far from Gloucester, not far enough. Anyway, and of course he visited my mother quite a bit and so on, and he had a family in Germany. He married out. So did I. He married out and he, for the second time, and he had, it was very tragic. He had a little boy in Berlin who burnt. He fell into a bucket of hot water. They left a maid in charge, you know. So one doesn't know whether it was accidentally or on purpose, I don't know. But it was during the Nazi time of course and that poor child, because he was a lovely little boy, he was three years old. They had a baby, a three-month old baby at the time, and then a year later they had another baby. Another girl. And whilst I was in Germany I was allowed to go to Berlin, as long as I signed not to go into the Russian Zone and I did that. And I thought they lived in the British Sector of Berlin, but they moved. My aunt, well you know, aunt by marriage, her sister still lived there, where I thought they all lived, and I was very fond of that particular sister of my aunt, though I wasn't so fond of my aunt but I'm very fond of her and I stayed the night with her.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 18 seconds

I managed to see my cousins eventually as well, whilst I was there. It was one Easter, 19, I think it was 1947, that's right. Easter or Whitsun, I forget. No, I think it was Easter. And then that was it. I went back to Frankfurt. So I saw them, my cousins. I'm still in touch with my youngest cousin. The other one, I'm afraid died, which was very sad. Cancer. Leaving a very nice family. And Ingrid, my youngest cousin, I'm still in contact with. She lives in Duisburg. She said she tells everybody she meets, my father was Jewish, you know. Oh yes. So only recently she invited me to write to her and tell her about our family, things we do, she doesn't know. Well I did my best, I wrote back to her, filled her in as much as I could.

AG: And how did you get on in England, after the war, when you went back to Gloucester?

GM: I went back to my old, to the store, which changed hands, it wasn't quite so nice as before, obviously you know, I preferred it the way it was before. It was all right, but after a while, that was in '47. In 1950 I had enough and I wanted, I wanted out. So I found a job with a firm, a photographer's, and I was sent to Reading to begin with and then I managed a photographer's in Cardiff for three years and then I went to Derby for a few months, and then my mother had a fall and I thought she shouldn't really be left. So I went back to Gloucester and got a job in Cheltenham, in a sub Post Office, it was cold, I hated it, and but that man thought, he said, I was, well, no I'm not going to say but he thought I was very, very good. He said even the nicer words, you see. But I didn't like it and I had to leave. I hated it. My mother said to me, I had a letter from my former boss at the photographer's and he said, Plymouth, because I opened, re-opened Plymouth for them. Plymouth vacancy, there's a vacancy in Plymouth to take over the branch, won't you take it? They wanted me back, and I said, and my mother said, go. She said, find a flat and I'll come. So I did. And she came to Plymouth. And that was in 1954. Well, I wasn't there very long, because I met my future husband in 1955 in Newquay, on holiday.

AG: Tell about that, how did that happen? How did you meet him?

Tape 3: 22 minutes 10 seconds

GM: Well we happened to stay in the same hotel. I didn't know. But I had dinner in another place and so did he. I mean, I didn't know it was. But he sat by the window, I came in and sat by the wall on the other side of the room. I finished first because I'm a quick eater, he's a slow eater, he was still eating. And I went out. And I had a boyfriend in Plymouth at the time, who took me to Newquay, told the barman to look after me at the hotel and came to, said I'll see you in a week. He was working for the Admiralty in the dockyard, he was quite, he was in a fairly high position, he was, and he went and anyway, the following morning a car number was, I was having breakfast and that man, who made eyes at me the night before in that restaurant, was sitting opposite me at another table. And a car registration was called out because obviously he was in the way. And I thought, I thought, Surrey I said, well it was a car that was registered in Surrey but he lived in Middlesex, I wasn't to know that. I said, Surrey. So he smiled, I didn't smile. I used to buy some buns and things to take on the beach for my lunch. And suddenly he came from the town; I was going to get the buns. He

said where are you off to? He said to me. I said I'm going to buy something for my lunch and I'm going to the beach. He said why don't you come and have coffee with me instead. And that's how it all started. He was very, very nice.

AG: What was his name, could you tell us?

GM: George. George Hamilton Murray.

AG: And what did he do?

GM: He was an engineer designer, he was a mechanical engineer and he was in charge of the Napier-Deltic diesel engine. He designed that, that's his baby.

AG: What's that an engine for? Sorry, I ought to know that.

GM: Well it was supposed to be for patrol boats and marine... but British Rail wanted it and it pulled the Flying Scotsman for years. And also the fire department in New York wanted it, so that was another one. But he travelled to Norway quite a bit, because some sheikh wanted it for his yacht and so on. And so he was chief designer of that. And then he became chief design and development engineer. And he was brilliant.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 36 seconds

AG: And how did your relationship progress?

GM: Well we went, he was, we went out and he, we had coffee and he, one evening he took me out to dinner. I remember we walked along the beach and got back to his car and he wiped my feet, dried my feet with a towel, and I looked, suddenly at his head, I said, I like him. And I thought, I wouldn't mind being married to him, I like this. That's how it... So strange, it's very odd. He was a widower and had a son. Anyway it was all very platonic and nice, and before I left he said, I'd love to stay in touch with you, can I have your address and phone number? I gave it to him and two days [later], my friend, Frank, he met me, and took me back and it was a very silent journey because I think the barman already told him. He went to Portsmouth for a holiday for a fortnight to see his mother, and the coast was obviously clear. But I didn't know that, I had no idea what was going to happen with anything. And then I had a letter from George, could he come to, he wants to come, I want to cut short my holiday in Newquay, would you book me into a hotel in Plymouth, please? And he came. And we spent a week going out together, I was working during the day, but we spent a week and on his last night, he demanded to see my mother. So I took him home to my mother, my mother didn't like Frank, but she liked George. And the following morning, the phone rang, in fact it woke me up and it was George and he said I'm just, just before my breakfast. I must say, George was, although he was born in England, of Scottish parents. He wasn't impulsive in any way at all. On the contrary, I'm the impulsive one, but anyway. Just before my breakfast I want to, I want to tell you, that I love you, will you marry me? And I was half asleep. And I said, yes, put the phone down and my mother said, who was that? I said, George. What did he want? I said, I think he asked me to marry him. And what did you say? I said, I think I said yes. So that was it. So then Frank came back, I said, I'm engaged.

He said, how can you be, I've got a ring! So George came, that was in September, George came in October.

Tape 3: 29 minutes 17 seconds

AG: Which year is this?

GM: And bought me a ring. Sorry?

AG: Which year is this?

GM: '55. And we married in March, March, 28th of March '56. But the funny thing was that, well it wasn't funny, it was terrible. For six months during my period of engagement, and I only saw George about every, well once a month, maybe, you know, I went to London for a week as well and so on. But I saw, I didn't see, but Frank was trying his hardest, and it was agony, it was difficult. I liked, of course I was fond of Frank. It was very, very difficult. It made life very hard for me, yes. But there you are.

AG: Where were you married?

GM: In Plymouth.

AG: In what?

GM: In a registry office, yes.

AG: And was he actually living in Plymouth?

GM: I was living in Plymouth. George was living in Pinner, and worked in London.

AG: Oh, in Pinner. So did you then move to London?

GM: I moved yes, after my marriage I moved to, I sold the house during our engagement because I spent a week in London, George booked a hotel and then that's where I met Roger, my stepson, as well, and he showed me the house, he said, what do you think, would you like to live in this house or not? So I said, yes, it's got lots of possibilities, all right. And he was very kind. He had my mother as well, for, until Gerry was a year old, but Gerry was born in May '58. And we thought my mother was too domineering, really, she was taking, she took charge, she was very overpowering, bless her. So George found her a flat in Folkestone and she was happy as a little sand boy.

AG: Why Folkestone? I mean it sounds most unlikely.

GM: Well, it was a lovely resort to retire.

AG: Yes, of course, she would have been getting on in years.

GM: Oh yes, yes. But she was very happy in Folkestone. We went to see her very often, she came to see us as well. Gerry remembers his granny very well. He saw quite a bit of her.

AG: How did you get on in Pinner? How did you find Pinner?

GM: All right, especially when Gerry started to go to school, because Gerry was not very well, you see. He started convulsions at seven months and it was very sad. But George paid for, I mean their private schools, you see Roger went to private school and so did Gerry, of course. And Gerry was at school until he was 19. It was a struggle, he struggled. He struggled.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 34 seconds

AG: How did you get on with your stepson?

GM: All right. It was all right. I mean, he went to public school, boarding school, and George used to say it turned him into a cold fish, you know. He, also he, I still, we are in touch, Gerry is not very kind towards to him because he didn't come to his father's funeral. But I am in touch with him. He's after all George's son.

AG: What did he do professionally?

GM: He was a lecturer, teacher. He went to Oxford, and Magdalen [College], and, yes.

AG: What did he lecture in?

GM: History, English, things like that. Yes.

AG: When you were in Pinner, did you then come into contact with more refugees?

GM: Very few. Oh yes. I mean I really had contact, when Gerry started to go to kindergarten at four. He was Gerald then, of course. Gerry wants to be called Gerry now, you know, but he was Gerald, you know, but the mothers, I mean we had coffee together, we became very friendly. And another thing I joined was a sorority, it was called, it was brought in from America, Beta, Sigma, Phi, and there again it was sort of like a, almost like a, I don't know a, it was a sorority, I mean we called each other sisters and things like that. Very American. Although everybody was English except me and another girl who was Italian. But, so I had plenty of friends in Pinner, plenty.

AG: And Pinner is an area where there are quite a lot of British Jews, did you come into contact?

GM: Now there are. Yes, I noticed but I didn't have the opportunity because, don't forget, although George was an agnostic, I married out, you see.

AG: Did you keep up any sort of Jewish observance in England?

GM: Not really, to be honest. I, although George was very, very much, my goodness me, when we went to Vienna and I went to a Heuriger, and they came and played Viennese and Austrian songs and so on and I started to cry and George, his tears were running down his cheeks, you see. He had, he really felt so much with me and for me. And I did not observe Jewish holidays, no. I've more so now than before perhaps.

Tape 3: 36 minutes 10 seconds

AG: Did you give up work when your son was born?

GM: When I was married, I gave up my job, they gave me the Kilburn branch after I got married, because we stayed in a hotel for six months in Hampstead. Yes we did. And then, when that came to an end I gave up that job. But I wanted to do something. My mother was keeping the house, you know. And so I had three days in London as an export receptionist in a very nice store in Regent Street. And it was lovely.

AG: Which store was it?

GM: Dickens and Jones. Before it was, before it became, I mean it was so selective, it was lovely. I loved it. And even when I was expecting Gerry, they said, stay as long as you like. But the doctor said, you must give up commuting, so when I was about four and a half months I had to give it up. But after that I, when Gerry was a few years old, he was about five, I said to George, can I work there as a secretary? And he said all right. It was only Saturday morning, I think, it was only for a few hours. But I loved it, I really did.

AG: What did you like about it?

GM: Oh, I just liked the atmosphere. I mean, I spent the money I earned on clothes, actually, on Dickens and Jones. And Gerry had his Layette (?) from there, I mean it was a lovely, lovely store. My mother bought the pram for him because she had some money then from Germany, some reparation thing so she was better off actually. And then she bought him a beautiful pram, but I chose it. A Wilson pram from Dickens & Jones, but I had a discount of course, and it was lovely. And so I worked there till we, till George's office moved to Colchester. So I only worked there Saturdays, Saturday mornings, unless they had a sale. And then I was involved a little more, I asked George if I could. He always said yes, very wisely, bless him. He was lovely. And then we went to Colchester and that's when I started to miss having friends, because although his colleagues, first of all we had a flat belonging to the firm and there was one colleague with his wife downstairs, we were on the first floor and then another lot came, they called them executive flats you see, another lot came to the second floor. So I met those two wives. But then, Weight Watchers came to Colchester and I went to the open meeting.

AG: When was, which year was this?

Tape 3: 39 minutes 20 seconds

GM: That was in '68, September '68. We moved there in August. And I thought I'd go to the open meeting. And I'd just lost weight again. And they weighed me,

measured me, and I said, I don't have ten pounds to lose. I mean, in those days one had to lose ten pounds. They said, oh yes, you do actually. So I joined them. And then they asked me to work for them, which I did. And I worked for them for 18 years.

AG: Based in Colchester?

GM: No, no, no. First of all I did, I mean, yes. I was trained in London and then I took over the Colchester branch, class from the one who was doing it. Then I opened Ipswich. Then I opened Clacton and then I was bored and I said would you like me to open the North-East for you? After George said he would be all right. So they said, oh yes. So I did.

AG: Where did you go in the North-East?

GM: Newcastle.

AG: Goodness gracious.

GM: Newcastle. I used the Flying Scotsman, I loved George's engine, it was lovely I could hear, lovely atmosphere, always conveyed by them. It was lovely. And stayed in a hotel, in the Royal Station Hotel, which was very nice. Well, it was pleasant, because they looked after me very well. And Gerry could come with me during his holidays because George was working. And I commuted to Newcastle every week. And I was there two or three nights, and of course there was a supervisor's meeting every Monday in Windsor, so I had to go to that and then go up to, either or the same day, flew up or went by Flying Scotsman on the Tuesday morning. Yes. And it was great, fifteen months that I developed, I trained people to take classes, I took classes myself. One in Newcastle, one in Gateshead and then one in Darlington. And opened in Teesside, all over the place, also Carlisle. And of course Northumberland and so on. And there were about 17 classes when I left it and handed over to a local capable woman and off I went down back to East Anglia, when I was given the area of East Anglia and it became the best area in the country. I loved that area, I loved East Anglia.

AG: What did you like about East Anglia?

Tape 3: 42 minutes 21 seconds

GM: Well it was just lovely, I liked it there, it was so light and nice. It was lovely. And I liked Brightlingsea, where we lived a lot. The house, it was growing, I watched it grow, it was brand new. I loved it. And then I was area manager in East Anglia and then I was promoted to operations manager, which meant that I got to leave East Anglia to come and live nearer to Windsor, you see.

AG: And that was the headquarters?

GM: Yes. Well, it was Slough for a time, but then it became Windsor again. It was Windsor, Slough. Now Maidenhead.

AG: And where did you live then?

GM: Sorry?

AG: Where did you live then?

GM: In Bourne End.

AG: Did your husband and son come?

GM: Oh, we all went, yes. Oh yes, well, Gerry was pleased to leave, he said there was nothing there for him, really.

AG: And had your, was your husband still working?

GM: Oh no, he wasn't. He was quite a bit older than I am, you see. He was fourteen and a half years older than me. So he retired and so I could do that. So I did. So we moved to Bourne End, which I never liked that house after my lovely one in Brightlingsea. It was a town house, three-storey town house I think. Well two-storey, you know, one, two. And didn't like it much. With a flat roof.

AG: How was your son getting on then, through these years? How did his education go?

GM: Well he, that was the trouble. Funnily, I read a letter not long ago from the headmaster of his prep school in Pinner. It said, I'm so sorry to lose him, he was ten. Because he went, he had three years in a pre-prep school, with a kindergarten and pre-prep, then he had three years at that prep school, St John's in Pinner, which was excellent, where his brother also went, and then he went to a prep school in Colchester, which, I mean, he had 80% in French, can you imagine, because he said to me, we've done it, we've done it, you know. And then he went to another school where there were lots of rich, well it was a place in Copford, there were lots of rich boys from the Middle East.

AG: Where was this, did you say?

GM: Copford Glebe it was called, in a, near Colchester. And it was a day school. It was 15 miles from where we lived so it was really quite a drag because we had to, either George or I had to go and get him, and take him there every day. And then he, when he was 16 there was a beautiful looking, brand new state school, what do you call them?

AG: Comprehensive?

Tape 3: 45 minutes 35 seconds

GM: Yes. Round the corner from us. So I went to see the headmaster, and said to him, my son at the moment is in Copford Glebe but could you, could he come and transfer to you? He was 16 at the time. He said, yes, we'd love to have him. And so they, so he did. And he was there until he was 19. Unfortunately failed his A-levels. But he got Os. But he failed his A-levels, perhaps that was too much to ask of him. He was at

school from four till 19. He could read at four, I know, it was marvellous. Very excited. The kindergarten teacher came out to me and said, Mrs Murrary, Gerald can read. I said, are you sure? I said, because he's got a photographic memory, are you sure? She said yes. It was something completely new. He could read at four.

AG: What was he, he continued living with you, I mean, he moved with you from Bourne End?

GM: No, he didn't, he didn't move to Lincoln with us.

AG: No, I meant to Bourne End.

GM: Oh yes, but he didn't move to Lincoln with us.

AG: How long did you stay in Bourne End for?

GM: Ten years, ten years.

AG: So you were quite senior in Weight Watchers?

GM: I was operations manager, for the southern half of the country, they took in Wales as well, South Wales, up to the, well, it took in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall, it was up to the Wash, I had the bigger population than my colleague did, but she had the bigger area. She obviously had Scotland as well.

AG: It seems to me that you must have had considerable administrative experience, because from when you were very young you - not experience, ability I mean - because you seem to have run this, you ran the cash till when you were about 17 ...

GM: I know, I couldn't understand it.

AG: ... you ran the photographic branches in Cardiff and Plymouth.

GM: I know.

AG: And then set up in Weight Watchers. And did you like it?

GM: Oh yes, oh I did. Yes, certainly. Oh yes, it was great fun. Very exciting because I feel, my friend who's also now retired who was North and I, we were pioneers, you know, I mean there were people there who were weighing there longer than we were but because it started in England I think in '56. No, what am I saying, '66, '67, and we came along 1968 so there were a few older ones than we. But pioneers, it has so changed, it's unbelievable. But it was very exciting.

Tape 3: 49 minutes 0 second

AG: When you finished with Weight Watchers, when was this? What year?

GM: I finished in nineteen sixty, nineteen sixty, no, what am I saying, 1986, I think it was, 1986.

AG: You were with them about 18 years?

GM: Oh, I was with them 18 years.

AG: Is that when you then came up to Lincoln?

GM: Two years later.

AG: Why Lincoln?

GM: A colleague of mine from Weight Watchers retired in Lincoln and she sang Lincoln's praises. And I thought to myself, hmm, property's cheaper and I can't stand this house anyway, I couldn't, I couldn't possibly, you know. And I said, shall I go and have a look at Lincolnshire first? So I went to south Lincolnshire, because George thought it might get too cold in north, I mean it doesn't, does it? So I went to the south and a place called, Sutton, Long Sutton, where they were building, I got in touch with a builder and he met me in Spalding and we went to have a look. The houses were fine. But there was nothing in Long Sutton at all. But I let George see it, I took George there and George said, I don't like it, I don't like Long Sutton, it's terrible. How could you... I said, well it's very close to King's Lynn, and my beloved East Anglia, you know. He said, he said, well that's no. And Wisbech, I said. Anyway, he said no, we've got to go to Lincoln. If you want to go to Lincoln, we'll go to Lincoln. So I started to write, to get in touch with builders in Lincoln and estate agents and so on and we had lots of communication and lots of houses to look at. And I went and yes, I went to see a builder, that's right, in North Hykeham and nearly bought, and nearly, well at the time we nearly bought it but we didn't, thank goodness. But anyway. But one day I had a lot, we had a lot of houses to look at, about 17 would you believe, in one day, because of course we couldn't make it, not all of them. And we decided on the, I think this was the eleventh we looked at, decided on that one. It was the garden. Yes, the moment we saw the garden we looked at each other and we were, it was a very nice garden.

AG: Have you been happy in Lincoln?

Tape 3: 52 minutes 22 seconds

GM: To a certain extent, yes. I'm very active regarding my, I belong to what is called LEF which is an elders', Lincoln Elders' Forum. I, also Share the Care, I'm one of the trustees, one of these days I shall give it up, but you know, so also I'm a associate member of Age Concern and I belong to a library, a mobile library, I order books and I get lovely books and I don't have time to read them, would you believe. I love reading, absolutely. But it is nice. It's not too cold in Lincoln, in fact very often we escape the snow. It's very nice. A nice place. And going up the hill is beautiful. And my son is like an old hen, he won't let me go alone. I'm not allowed to go out in the evenings on my own, not even driving, I'm not allowed to go out. Unless somebody takes me. That's the only way I'm allowed, yes, he's very anxious about me, I know. Oh dear.

AG: What, I have to ask you, what happened to your husband?

GM: Oh, well, he died at 90.

AG: When was this?

GM: That was five years ago, next, 5th of May, it will be five years. He was very ill. He started to have ulcers on his legs and one became gangrenous and it was, he had, he would have had to, had he not been so weak, he would have had to have an amputation. Also he had prostate cancer. He would not believe he had it. He went to the urologist every six months, and he did one biopsy and he said, you know, I didn't want to hurt him, please let him, let him, I wish he would let me do another one, because I only took five samples instead of the usual six and I'm sure he's got cancer, I'm sure of it. And he said, no, no, no, I haven't got cancer and I don't want another biopsy, thank you very much. And that was it. With his ulcers, the one that's, they tried to blow his veins somehow, it didn't work. There's some sort of thing where they can sort of blow, do something to clear the veins and it didn't happen for him, it didn't work. He was too furred up, his arteries. So then the specialist thought of what is called a sympathectomy. A sympathectomy is a thing where they inject something in the back, which is supposed to release some blood and flow immediately, and flow right through to his legs. They were hoping that would happen. Before his heel became gangrenous, by the way. And did that, it didn't work.

Tape 3: 56 minutes 18 seconds

But what I suspect happened is that, that that injection might have released his cancer. And within. Released it within the rest of his body you see. And within two weeks, he fell about, well, he couldn't hold his... you know, he, it was awful, it really was terrible how ill he was. And that was his, and that was his end, I'm afraid. He nearly... Went to hospital because of the gangrene, forced him to go, and within three nights, three days later he died. And I miss him terribly. He was my best friend. He was lovely.

AG: I think that's probably an appropriate moment to stop and change the tape.

TAPE 4

AG: Gertraud Murray, tape four. Just, now, to wind up, there are two or three questions I'd like to ask you. The first is, when did you join the Association of Jewish Refugees?

GM: My mother was a member years before. I, of course it must be about ten years, easily ten or twelve years now, yes, easily.

AG: Why?

GM: I just wanted to, you know. I've been beginning, I was beginning to feel I belonged, you know, to belong to, now that I'm retired I've just wanted to, really go back to my roots.

AG: Do you have any contact with refugees in this area of England at all?

GM: Yes, I go to Nottingham when I can and that's where I meet others. But most of them are German, with German backgrounds, very few have Austrian backgrounds.

AG: Do you find that you notice the difference?

GM: Not really, because I knew so many with German backgrounds, you know, really. It's perfect, lovely, very nice people.

AG: The other question I wanted to ask you, which I forgot, was when you acquired British citizenship?

GM: Well I came back from Germany in 1947 and in 1948 I had my German, my Aust-, my British citizenship. A solicitor helped me get it because, after all, being away, I mean I was working for the Allies, let's face it, as if I wasn't out of the country at all really.

AG: That's what I wanted to ask you, because I know technically you didn't have the residence qualifications.

GM: And I came home to England three times during that time anyway.

AG: Did you have any problems, any difficulties acquiring naturalisation?

GM: No, none at all.

AG: And your mother? Did she?

GM: Oh, she became a British citizen after me. Yes. But I had difficulty in Paris trying to get through, that was really odd. There was a, an, I was only using it from one station to another one but he wanted to see my papers. And he said, well what nationality are you? I said at the moment I'm stateless but I belong to England. I've got, you know. And he wouldn't have it. We went to the station, to the police station together. He took me in there and I tried to explain and in the end he let me go. I said, I don't want to stay here, I want to go to England, I want to go home, I don't want to stay in Paris.

AG: This is when you were coming back from Frankfurt?

Tape 4: 3 minutes 22 seconds

GM: No, it was a holiday because I came back via Holland. The Hook of Holland, I came back when I came home for good again, you know. But dear me, I was stuck in Paris one week too, with a girl I met on the boat, on the ferry, we, the trains were full up to Frankfurt for a whole week. It was awful. We were allowed to eat with the Americans obviously, so that we weren't starving or anything, but we had no money otherwise. They even paid for a hotel, I believe, yes they did, the Americans, because we couldn't. It was awful but we didn't want to stay for a week in Paris. It was dreadful. No transport, you see, it was in the winter of, it was the beginning of '47, that's right.

AG: Yes. One of the points that occurred to me, going back a long way in the interview, you came on a Kindertransport via Holland and a portion of the children remained in Holland. Do you know what happened to them?

GM: I have no idea, and I worry about THIS, I really do. They were scouts there, now Liesl, she kept, she kept obviously a correspondence going and one of the, there were two Scouts, they even saw me off at the ferry, they came and cycled along, they also had German backgrounds, German-Jewish backgrounds and one of them perished and the other one didn't. And it was so sad because they were so, they sang with us and it was so nice, they came and played instruments and it was nice. And of course I don't know what happened to the children. Very sad.

AG: One, I think, last question, and that is, as far as your national identity is concerned, what do you consider yourself to be? British? Austrian? Jewish? Viennese? How would you describe yourself?

GM: Well, I would say I, as far as, no I would, I think I'm, I suppose I'm British. It's very difficult, I'm sort of half and half. I would say I'm Austrian, I was born in Austria, how can I possibly lose my identity? I was born there and German is my native tongue, although I think in English, so I prefer to speak English and write English but I'm sort of half, I suppose, half and half. As far as religion is concerned, I don't, I don't think much about that, to be quite honest. I know there is a God but there are so many religions one loses... you know. There's only one God, isn't there? There can't be umpteen.

AG: Probably not.

Tape 4: 7 minutes 1 second

GM: But I'm proud to be Jewish, although I'm not a practising Jew. My friend, my friend is English and from Leeds, she was my colleague and we're good friends, we speak every week at least, on the phone, if not twice but she is orthodox Jewish, I mean she is really nice. And I sort of think well, I'm Jewish and I'm proud of it but I wouldn't, I mean this kosher eating, after all those laws are tropical laws, before refrigerators and things like that, and freezers. Isn't that correct? I don't know. Well we never did, you see, and she, I mean I remember we went to Vienna together once, on business, Doreen and I, and we actually stayed in the Imperial Hotel, would you believe. And I wanted carp. She said, has it got fins on it? I said, I promise you, it's got scales, it's got everything it should have. I promise you, my mother used to make carp at holidays, please, and we had carp every evening. But oh yes, she, that wouldn't. But on the other hand she tells me about soya milk, and I absolutely love soya milk. I love it.

AG: Good. Sorry, go on.

GM: No, no, I'm just saying, I can't say that I, I don't know. But I'm proud to be Jewish. I'm very pleased to be Jewish, oh yes.

AG: Well, I'll just say thank you very much indeed for doing the interview with us.

GM: Thank you very much, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

PHOTOGRAPHS

AG: Who are the people in this photograph, please?

GM: Well the first one is my paternal grandmother, who came to visit us, I believe. And the next one is my father, who was a little bit annoyed, I believe, because my mother arranged for a photographer to come to see us. The next one is my brother, then myself when I was about six months, and my mother.

AG: And when was it taken?

Tape 4: 10 minutes 12 seconds

GM: Towards the end of 1924, I believe.

AG: And where?

GM: In Vienna, in our flat.

AG: Thank you very much.

AG: Who are the people in these photographs?

GM: Well, my mother and myself, and they're poly photos, they were called then. And they were taken in Gloucester, approximately April '41.

AG: Thank you very much.

AG: What is this document please?

GM: That's a copy of a letter my father wrote from where he was interned, in time for my 18th birthday. We heard from him once afterwards, but he was then in Drancy and it wouldn't have been long before he was transported or deported to Auschwitz. But that was a letter from my father; mostly to me I would think, because of my birthday.

AG: When was it written?

GM: In June 1942, I think, in time for my birthday in June.

AG: And this camp where he was, Les Milles, where is that in France?

GM: That is in the south of France, in Vichy, and they were very cruel Nazis and obviously did what they were asked to do by deporting them, deporting their poor prisoners or internees.

AG: Thank you very much.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph?

GM: Myself.

AG: When was it taken?

GM: In the spring of 1950.

AG: And where?

GM: In Reading.

AG: Thank you very much.

GM: In the photo studio where I worked, the studio.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph?

GM: My husband.

AG: And his name?

GM: George.

AG: And when was this taken?

GM: Nineteen fifty, I would say 1955 or '56. It was before we were married, just before.

AG: And where was it taken?

GM: In Plymouth.

AG: Thank you very much.

AG: Who is the person in this photograph?

GM: My son Gerald.

AG: And when was this taken?

GM: He likes to be called Gerry. It was taken, I wish I could, it was in the late 70s I would think. '76 or '77, something like that.

AG: Where was it taken?

GM: I think in East Anglia, it could have been Bourne End, I'm not quite certain. It certainly, it could still be East Anglia before we moved to Bourne End, more than likely, yes.

AG: Thanks very much.