

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	68

Interviewee Surname:	Price
Forename:	Ruth
Interviewee Sex:	Female
Interviewee DOB:	16 March 1924
Interviewee POB:	Berlin, Germany

Date of Interview:	29 July 2004
Location of Interview:	Crowle Worcestershire
Name of Interviewer:	Helen Lloyd
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours 43 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE****INTERVIEW: 68****NAME: RUTH PRICE****DATE: 29 JULY 2004****LOCATION: CROWLE, WORCS.****INTERVIEWER: HELEN LLOYD****TAPE 1****Tape 1: 0 minute 46 seconds**

RP: I am Ruth Price, née Schulvater, I was born on the 16th of March 1924 in Berlin. I am an only child. I would like to return to the Schulvater name a bit later because there is a little bit of history to it. Strangely enough, I have got a couple of very early memories. I say very early because one of them at least is from when I was in a pushchair. The other one must be very near that same time too, I would think. The one in the pushchair, I am really quite amazed at that, to be quite honest. I remember turning around and sitting, not facing my mother but facing away from her, kneeling, and thinking, 'I wonder if I shall remember this particular moment when I'm older.' Now it seems rather strange that a small child like that should have thought that, however I have never forgotten it. The other memory that I have is of the flat where we lived, which was quite a small flat, sort of off a courtyard really, because our furniture shop was at the front. And I remember suddenly being confronted by my father, who I think had cut his finger and it was bleeding, and I know I was quite horrified, and it really did worry me terribly. It seems to have worried me almost ever since. Those, as I say, are the two really very early memories.

Tape 1: 2 minutes 51 seconds

HL: Can you remember the address of your flat and furniture shop?

RP: Yes I do, it was Münzstrasse, No.2. I don't know the number of the flat, to be quite honest. We left there when I was three years old. But, 12 years ago, in 1992, I was invited by the Berlin Senate for a week's stay in Berlin, as were many, many other people. I had never been back to Berlin for 55 years, and I did visit that particular street and house and the courtyard I was talking about was absolutely filled with forsythia and it was really beautiful. I remember that opposite to where we lived, it was a very humble sort of abode really, was what was then a very large lady. I don't really know whether she was Jewish or not, I think she might well have been. Her son was a dentist. And I can't just remember her name. I know she was Tante, which was Aunt Somebody or Other. I visited her every day, largely because, as one entered, a quite dark sort of entrance, there was a sort of film being shown, almost continuously,

which was very, very unusual in those days and that of course fascinated me. And so, as I say, that might well have been one reason why I would go across there every day.

We lived there until I was three years old. We then moved to another address, still in what was not then, but after the war, the East part of Berlin, which of course it wasn't possible to visit until 1989. Now I had many dreams, the same dream over and over and over again, that I was visiting Berlin, and visiting these places that I am talking about now, and of course, when I woke up, I was disappointed to find it had only been a dream. And then eventually, as I say, the time came when I was able to visit Berlin at the invitation of the Berlin Senate and I was able to visit these places and I never had that dream again. It really sort of completely satisfied me. It was just what I had hoped for for many, many years. It was quite amazing because very, very little had changed actually from when I was there, which was quite different from what one could say about the West part that was almost unrecognisable.

Tape 1: 6 minutes 23 seconds

HL: Before we get onto your second house, can I ask you how much you know about your ancestors? Perhaps we can start with your father's family?

RP: Yes, there's quite an extended family. I never knew my father's father because he died of heart trouble when my father, I think, was about 9 years old, which I think might be the reason why I myself am suffering from some heart complaint. My grandmother, his mother, I adored. She was a very regal sort of person, didn't live too far away from us, so I visited, we visited her quite frequently. Every Sunday morning I was allowed to telephone her. In those days, of course, you had to get through to an operator, you picked up the phone and eventually an operator would answer. Well, I was only about 3 or 4 years old and I remember immediately giving the phone number, not waiting until the operator had come on, so that was a bit of a complication. However, it all worked out all right, then I had a nice chat with her, but I did visit her quite frequently as well. And one of the things I remember there that was a favourite toy of mine, believe it or not, was a button box, and I just played and played and played with that. In those days, we didn't have a lot of toys and that was really wonderful.

Tape 1: 8 minutes 2 seconds

HL: What was your grandfather's profession?

RP: I'm not sure about profession. He founded the furniture shop I had spoken about earlier, and, as I say, he died quite young. My father was an only child, at least I think he was. I had heard, and I've never been able to verify this, that a child, quite a young child, a very young infant apparently, died from heart trouble too, but I'm not really quite certain about that. However, he founded this furniture business in 1885, which then went to my grandmother, and from there went onto my father, who himself had trained as an architect, but he was also a business-man, so he sort of really combined the two.

HL: What was the firm called?

RP: It was Firma Paul Schulvater. And I used to roam about quite a bit in it at one time. Actually that shop was sold to someone, who became very good friends, two people, who became very good friends of ours, and we moved then to another part, and I think my father expanded somewhat into various other things.

Tape 1: 9 minutes 30 seconds

HL: Would this be a good time to talk about the surname, where that came from?

RP: Yes, perhaps I can jump ahead a little bit, because, when I was about 13-14 years old, my father said to me, really rather to my surprise, 'When you get married', I don't know whether he said when you get married or if you get married, it was either one or the other, 'I would like you to keep the name Schulvater as a sort of middle name, because we think that is quite a unique name, because an ancestor in the 1800s had been- can I just say this in German? - a 'Fürsteher der Jüdischen Gemeinde', which was a sort of leader of the Jewish community in Berlin. He thinks, he wasn't 100% certain about it, but he thinks that he took this name because 'Schul' is Yiddish, I think, Yiddish or Hebrew, for synagogue and 'Vater' is father. And, as far as he knew, there was no-one else in Germany, or even anywhere else in the world, except in South America, who bore that name. There was a cousin in South America. And, as I say, I was an only child. There was no boy. The name would have died out. Now I am afraid I was somewhat naughty and didn't in fact use the name, simply because, by the time I got married, it was wartime, and having a German name wasn't the most sensible thing. Also, it was quite difficult when I gave my name because I had to spell it out, usually 3 times, and so really I was sort of almost glad to do away with it. But, since then, I have been rather conscious of what he said, so I'm hoping that mentioning it now might perhaps do what he wanted.

Tape 1: 11 minutes 43 seconds

HL: But what about your mother's family? What do you know about them?

RP: It wasn't quite as extended a family as my father's family. There were lots of cousins and aunts and uncles and that in my father's family. Both my grandparents are new. They lived very much further away, still in Berlin, at Weissensee, which is a well-known name because it was, well, still is, I believe, a large Jewish cemetery, the cemetery really. I never felt quite as close to my grandmother, my maternal grandmother, as I did my paternal grandmother. My grandfather died when I was 3 years old; my grandmother died when I was 5 years old. I was somewhat aggrieved because she would come and visit us, I don't know whether it was once a week or once a fortnight, whatever. My mother and she would play cards. As I say, I could only have been about 3 or 4 years, 4 years probably. And I would sort of go and look at my mother's cards, and then I would go and look at grandmother's cards, and she was quite cross about it, she thought I was giving away secrets, and of course I hadn't a clue what the card game was about at all. So I thought, well, what a silly thing, you know. So, as I say, I was never quite as close to her really.

HL: And what was their family name and jobs?

Tape 1: 13mm 22 seconds

RP: Their family name was Günther. Actually, my grandfather had 4 or 5, 4 brothers, I think, who seemed to be spread all over the world. One of them, in Dortmund, had a very large toy factory. So I did get presents of toys, which was rather nice. One or two of them I was in touch with, actually during and after the war. But of course they have all died now. She had a sister, who got married very late in life. Again, I didn't see as much of her really as I did of my father's family.

HL: Did the fact that you had a telephone in your own house in the 1920s suggest that you were quite well-off?

Tape 1: 14 minutes 20 seconds

RP: Yes, I would say that we were reasonably well-off. In fact, my father acquired a car when I was 6 years old, when very, very few people had cars, to be quite honest, and one of the most wonderful things was, when very, very occasionally, for some reason, he would take me to school in it, very, very rarely, perhaps twice a year maybe or something, but I sort of felt almost like a queen, you know, to be taken to school by car. It was quite wonderful.

HL: Can you talk about where you moved when you were three years old, and give the address if you can remember it?

RP: Yes, it was Krausnikstrasse. It was a larger flat than the one we had previously. There was a family opposite with 2 girls, a Jewish family. Now, I was always under the impression that it was quite a wide street. However, we would open the window and sort of shout across to each other. When I revisited, I found that the street wasn't nearly as wide as I had thought it was. I lost contact with these people. Of course, I started school when I was living there, at 6 years old. And I had a very sympathetic headmaster and a very sympathetic school teacher. This was of course still before the Hitler days. However, they obviously knew that we were Jewish. But the teacher seemed so sympathetic to me and a friend of mine, at least, that she invited us and our mothers to tea one day, which I thought was very nice. I was very happy at that school, I enjoyed that.

Tape 1: 16 minutes 30 seconds

HL: What was it called?

RP: I think it, I really don't know, I'm sorry, I can't remember that. No, I don't know.

HL: What was the education like?

RP: Well, I was only there for two years. It was what was called a Grundschule, which is a primary school, where you went until you were 10 years old, and then you would transfer to a secondary school. Actually, as I think I just said, I was there for only 2 years, because we then moved from Krausnikstrasse, which was in what was called the Scheunenviertel, which was quite a Jewish sort of quarter. We moved somewhat upmarket to the Hansaviertel, which was also a fairly Jewish quarter, not a ghetto or anything like that, but quite a lot of Jewish people did live there. Now, just

before we moved, Hitler had come to power. Oh, there was one thing I would like to mention: when I was about 4 years old, still at Krausnikstrasse, my mother took me on her lap one day, and she said, 'There's something I want to tell you.' And all I remember her saying was, 'I want to tell you that you're Jewish.' I don't remember anything else, but I do remember that. And, from that day on, I knew I was Jewish, although we had already probably kept some of the Jewish holidays, but they were just sort of normal to me, but I do remember that very, very clearly. However, as I said, we moved to the Hansaviertel, and I, of course, had to transfer to another school. I was sat in a desk, and, whether we all had to show our reports that day or whether it was just mine, I can't remember, I had had a very good report actually, nearly all As, if I say so myself, and the teacher who looked at it was quite impressed, I know, and he said, well, he said, 'There's somebody sitting behind you, who has had a very similar report.' By then, although this was only a few months, I somehow felt that I was no longer a member of the community; I now belonged to the Jewish community. However, this girl was very, very friendly. Very soon afterwards, the class was going to be taken on a trip, and I didn't want to go, I felt no, this isn't for me. However, this girl, who, as I say, I did befriend, she wasn't Jewish, persuaded me to go, and her mother went, and my mother went, and I really did enjoy it very much. I quite clearly remember this.

HL: What year would that have been?

Tape 1: 19 minutes 40 seconds

RP: That would have been in 1933. And the following form teacher I had was a fanatical Nazi and he did everything he could to instil Nazism into his pupils. Although, I must say, he was not hostile towards the few Jews, to myself or the few Jewish pupils, who were there. So I almost liked him, to be quite honest. But he certainly was a fanatical Nazi.

HL: What sort of things did he do to instil Nazism into the minds of 9 year olds?

RP: He showed pictures and, one thing I remember, there was a great big, it wasn't a plaque, well, a kind of plaque with a huge swastika, and into it you, I believe, it was colourless, but into it you knocked nails, I think you paid a small amount or something, 5 Pfennig or something like that, each time you knocked in a nail, and each was one of three colours- red, white and black - and it eventually made the swastika. And, as I say, he just talked about Hitler and how wonderful he was and how wonderful everything was and showed pictures of the Hitler Youth and that sort of thing.

HL: You said that by then you began to feel not part of the general community but part of the Jewish community. Can you remember feeling part of the general community before that?

RP: Oh yes, yes, most definitely, yes. But the fact that, as I say, Hitler had come to power, things were beginning to be somewhat difficult, certainly just made me feel as though I was someone apart.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 53 seconds

HL: Had you been part of the Jewish community?

RP: Not very much really, no. Not in my earlier years. I was taken to synagogue periodically, but that was about all. But I got very much more involved later on in the being part of the Jewish community.

HL: Before Hitler, to what extent had you kept Jewish holidays or a kosher household?

RP: No, we didn't have a kosher household. My parents were very liberal, I must say. I know one thing my mother always stressed was, although we were Jewish, you respected every other religion. And, as I say, I was taken to synagogue periodically, and certainly we kept Hanukkah, which is the Festival of Lights. I believe we also celebrated Christmas. Of course the two are very close together. Laubhüttenfest, I'm not quite sure what that is in English, to be quite honest, it's a kind of harvest festival that we always kept, and there were one or two others, I'm really not sure that I can remember the names of them.

HL: Do you remember the name of the synagogue to which you were taken?

RP: Yes, the first one was Oranienburgerstrasse, which has been very beautifully restored, and I saw it when I visited Berlin in 1992, which was the only time I have re-visited there. And then, later on, when we moved, I went to Levetzowstrasse. There I went quite a bit by myself, and really largely I suppose because I transferred to a Jewish secondary school. I was to have gone to the local, I suppose, girls high school, which had a very good reputation. I don't think I was exactly barred from going there but, as things were going, my parents decided that it would be much better if I went to a Jewish school, which I did, which was called 'Mittelschule der Jüdischen Gemeinde' in Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, which still exists to this day, which I believe is a Jewish school, but I believe a lot of non-Jewish pupils attend there, which is quite interesting, which I was able to revisit too when I went there. I was 10 years old when I went to this school and, of course, there was a great deal of Jewish influence then and that I think is when I really began to feel part of the Jewish community. Of course, things got rather more difficult, although I think that things were never quite as difficult perhaps, until the end anyway, in Berlin as they were elsewhere in Germany, or so I understand anyway. I joined a Jewish youth organisation; it was what was called a German Jewish organisation, one still felt sort of German, although being Jewish. I quite liked that and the activities. However, I then left that and joined a Zionist Jewish organisation. And I really felt at home there. And I was beginning to prepare eventually to emigrate to what was then Palestine of course. It never materialised and, in a way, I'm glad to say it didn't, but, as I say, my life was almost taken up with that. But I did attend synagogue very regularly, practically every Friday evening, very often on a Saturday morning as well, I made many friends of course, in the youth organisation.

Tape 1: 26 minutes 39 seconds

HL: Would you like to tell me more about what a Zionist organisation was like in Berlin at that time, what people's hopes were?

RP: Well, we met regularly; I think it was every Saturday. The organisation, it was quite a large one, I don't know whether it was confined to Berlin only or not, I really don't know that, but we were divided up into various groups, really according to age, and had a leader of course, who was older. We would meet at different-. I think we were all girls, yes, we were divided, separated, yes, girls and boys separately, we met at different girls' houses, or flats I suppose, rather than houses, and we discussed things, we did some drama, and we did some singing, and very often, I think this was probably on a Sunday, we would have trips out. That was all still possible for about 2 years I think, until about 1937, then it got rather difficult, because things were sort of banned. We were banned from meeting together and banned from going on trips and that sort of thing and eventually it got to the stage where you weren't even allowed to meet with more than one other person. Now, there's quite a little story there: a friend of mine, a girlfriend, and my first boyfriend, the three of us went, that was the only thing we felt was possible, went on sort of a little trip around Berlin, which had very lovely surroundings actually, and of course we always went. I'm not sure whether we cycled. No, I don't think we did. I think we went by the local train and then walked a lot. And we were coming back and were on the platform, waiting to change trains, and suddenly two SA or SS men came up and grabbed us, obviously realised we were Jewish, and sort of tried to arrest us, said we had no right, three of us, to be together. However, I think they took our names and addresses and said the following day we were to appear in front of the Gestapo with our parents, being charged with, I suppose, unlawful assembly. So, along we went, I think the boyfriend had no father, father had been shot actually by the Nazis quite early in 1934, as a Socialist, and so our 2 fathers and his mother came, and we were questioned, and given a very severe telling off. Fortunately, one of the Gestapo men, who had been a policeman I think, recognised my father, with whom he had had some business dealings, I think, in the past, and we were actually let off. We were very relieved, because we thought it could have quite easily have meant concentration camp for our two fathers, simply for the three of us standing on the platform together, which was quite horrendous.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 56 seconds

HL: What would you have known about concentration camps then, in 1937?

RP: Not a great deal, but the fact that they existed, and that people were being arrested for very small offences and taken there, and that was pretty well all one knew really at the time. There was one concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, very near Berlin, and that is where people were quite often taken to.

HL: Mrs. Price, going slightly back to the Zionist organisation, would you have looked at maps of Palestine or thought, in any practical terms, of going there?

Tape 1: 31 minutes 45 seconds

RP: Oh, very much so. We were being prepared for that that was the whole purpose really of the organisation that we would all go as, well, Werkleute, which actually means working people. And, in those days, it was very largely agricultural work and

we were all very enthusiastic and very, very keen to go. My parents were less so, they were not terribly keen. I suppose, even at that stage, they didn't want to lose me. I believe you were not able to go until you were 16 years old, but, as I say, this was a preparation for it, and we did, as you say, look at pictures and hear things about it and discuss things and-.

HL: Did you know anyone who had gone?

RP: Yes, one or two, who had in fact gone, who were 16 years old. It was called going auf Aliyah, I'm not sure what that is in English, to be quite honest. I remember train-loads actually going, and going to the platform, of course, and going to the station, on the platform, when people were departing, and really being quite envious of the fact that they were old enough to go.

HL: Were your parents making any plans to get out of Berlin?

RP: Not to start with but by 1937, yes. I think nearly everybody one knew, including my parents, would have registered with the American Embassy, I would think you would register with, for a quota number. It was made clear that one might have to wait probably years and years before your quota number would come up. Then, in 1938, of course, came Kristallnacht, the 'Night of the Broken Glass', as it's known in English, which was quite, quite dreadful, of course. There were many, many arrests. My parents were able to leave the flat we lived in and stay with some Czech-Jewish friends, who were not, at that time, likely to be arrested. They slept four in a double bed. I went to a friend, whose father was Jewish, but whose mother wasn't, so again there was not so much danger there. But, of course, every shop had had 'Jude', 'Jew', written, sort of painted on it, the Star of David. It was a terribly worrying time.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 4 seconds

HL: Why were a Czech family in less danger?

RP: Because of their Czech nationality, I believe. At the time, this was still 1938, and they would be considered foreigners, I suppose. But somehow it was, but certainly there was no problem there with them, so that was alright. But it was, as I said, a very small flat, it wasn't much fun, with, as I say, four of them sleeping in one double bed. One really started to get very, very frightened. Scores of men were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Now, following on from that, this boyfriend and I had become very friendly and close by then. After that, there was no social life whatsoever. I had been a very enthusiastic opera-goer, I did a lot of sport, and none of that was possible any more. So we, I don't quite know how we got to hear about it, but a week, two weeks, perhaps three weeks later, some of these men who had been sent to concentration camps were being released, and we found out at which German, at which Berlin station they were arriving. Now, they might be from any part of the country almost, so we stationed ourselves at the top of the escalator, where they would come up, quite wretched people, they were dejected, they smelt, they were in terribly crumpled clothing, they had no money, and the only thing we were able to do for them was to direct them to the Jewish authorities in Berlin, for which they were very, very grateful, because they had no idea what on earth to do when they were released. They were simply tipped out, so to speak, and that was it. And we did this

day after day after day, for some weeks. So we felt we were doing something that was a little bit useful. Now it was soon, I think it was December 1938, Kristallnacht was in November, that the Kindertransport came into existence, so to speak. Now, something that seems to be mentioned very, very rarely is the fact that Holland also had such a scheme, and I believe they were prepared to take in 5,000 children. Now, we had some relatives in Holland, in Rotterdam, and my parents got in touch with them immediately, to see if, well, I say immediately, perhaps not immediately enough, to see if it were possible for them to accept me. They had already given refuge and a home to three aunts and a cousin of mine, they themselves were a family of five, but they were quite prepared to take me in too. However, it seems that the quota of 5,000 had already been reached. And my aunt, who I believe was actually Dutch, the uncle of course was German, wrote to say that this was being done through the Quakers. But she had a Quaker friend and this Quaker friend had a friend in England, in Birmingham, a Mrs. Adams at Woodbrook College. She would get in touch with her and see if in any way she could help. Now, we fairly soon heard from this Mrs. Adams, who was a delightful person, and so things were set in motion. Then we heard from an uncle of mine, who was a director of the Jewish hospital in Frankfurt am Main that his two boys, are 4 and 8 or something like that, had in fact by this Mrs. Adams been found a home with the vicar in Rubery, near Birmingham. So, of course, we immediately wrote to her again and told her about this and wondered if there was any possibility of anything being done there. Now, she got into touch with Reverend Dempser and he gave out at a Sunday evening service that if anybody might be interested to give a home to a German Jewish girl. Apparently, quite a number of people came forward; some of them I think weren't too genuine, they were probably just curious. However, a spinster lady, a Miss Dabbs, who ran a drapery store in Rubery, was quite serious about it. She was nearly 60 years old, and yes, she was prepared to offer me a home, which was absolutely wonderful news. Well, we got into touch, in our very poor English, with this lady and so things were set in motion. However, it took five months in order to get all the papers through and get the permission and everything for me to come over.

Tape 1: 41 minutes 40 seconds

HL: Perhaps we can leave the war years, the Kindertransport, for a moment, and let's go back a bit over your childhood, because you've said the dramatically awful things that happened at Kristallnacht, but what other episodes of interaction with Nazis can you remember before then?

RP: Well, I think I was really very fortunate. As I say, one was eventually barred from everything and one was always looking over one's shoulder, but I didn't encounter, I must say, a great deal of problems, if I can put it that way. I felt I was leading a very active, within the Jewish community of course, life, but I was quite prepared and certain that I would eventually leave Germany. Germany itself, I mean the country itself I loved, but Germany itself and things that were German no longer meant very much to me, to be quite honest. As I say, until 1938, 1939, my idea had been to emigrate to Palestine, but of course things did change. But I can't really recall having any very great problem, I'm glad to say. Whether this just applied to me and my immediate circle of friends and relatives, I don't know.

Tape 1: 43 minutes 31 seconds

HL: You mentioned that you went to the opera. Where did you go and what did you see?

RP: I went, I used to set off from home about 3 or 4 o'clock on a Sunday morning, in order to queue for four or five hours possibly, at the Berlin State Opera, which was quite wonderful, of course, and I absolutely loved it. And -.

HL: With family?

RP: No, no, sometimes I went completely on my own, sometimes with a friend. And we would stand there, and of course we all sort of knew each other, and these weren't Jewish people of course, so that there I still felt part of them somehow. And, as I say, we all knew each other, and chatted and that, and it was all very orderly. And, depending on who was appearing, you probably queued that much longer. It might be five, six o'clock if the artists weren't quite so well-known. I saw, I think, most operas. I think my very first opera was Mignon, which is not one of the great operas, but I've loved it ever since, simply because it was my first opera. I've seen La Boheme, Madame Butterfly, La Traviata, Gounod's Faust, Rigoletto.

HL: Mozart?

Tape 1: 45 minutes 5 seconds

RP: Yes, Mozart. I did see some Wagner, which of course was always very, very long. We used to get tickets for, I think, it was a showing, standing right up in the Gods, standing, not sitting, and my father warned me, he said, 'Well I went years and years and years ago, of course, and I fainted, it was so much standing'. My mother, I think, was rather more fortunate. One of the brothers, one of her uncles, the brothers of my grandfather, whom I mentioned, was very well-off and he took her and they sat in the stalls, I believe. One of the stories she tells is that it was very, very hot and I think she sort of kicked off one of her shoes and the shoe completely disappeared and she never saw it again, which was quite funny really!

HL: And you also mentioned sport. Tell me about that.

RP: There was a Jewish stadium, sounds a bit funny talking about a Jewish stadium, it was a stadium belonging to the Jewish authorities, and I went there a great deal. I was very, very active, both at school and in the Jewish organisation I belonged to. I competed quite a lot and I was reasonably good at it, which probably is why I later on chose to teach it.

HL: What sports did you do?

RP: Quite a lot: sprinting, long-distance running, high jump, long jump, putting a shot, javelin, swimming, of course, which was elsewhere, that wouldn't take place there.

HL: What would you have worn for sports in those days?

RP: Well, I belonged to a sports club and we had a rather nice blue, sort of cornflower blue, top with a collar on, and shorts with stripes on. In fact, I could possibly find those now, I think I hung onto them, with a large Star of David badge on the front.

HL: What was your school uniform like at your Jewish school?

Tape 1: 47 minutes 48 seconds

RP: There wasn't a school uniform. I think very few schools in Germany generally had school uniform. So you wore really what you liked.

HL: If you were recognisable on the street, perhaps in your sports garments with the Star of David on, did you encounter any-?

RP: I wouldn't wear it on the street, no, no, you wouldn't wear it on the street.

HL: Did you encounter any kind of snubs from the normal population?

RP: Very little. We lived in one flat where the neighbours, we had a very lovely balcony actually, and they had too, and they were somewhat hostile, they would bang on the walls, and things like that, the sort of thing you get an awful lot of these days, here anyway. So, I mean, obviously, we didn't like it, but on the whole we found that people were very, very loyal. Employees of my father's were very loyal. I had an uncle, who had a business, and they were very loyal. On the whole, I think, I must say that we encountered very little. You might get someone in the general public who didn't know us perhaps, who'd sneer a bit and that, but not a great deal.

Tape 1: 49 minutes 24 seconds

HL: Did your family have any domestic servants?

RP: We did until, I think until the Nazi period. We always had a maid, we had a maid to live in. And, after that, whether things got worse financially or what exactly the reason was, I can't just remember now, and then we had a woman who would come and who again was very loyal, so much so that in fact she hid my parents during the war for a very short while, because it didn't work out, from her parents' point of view, not from her point of view.

HL: It's hard to grasp the kind of mixture of attitudes that led to some people encountering a great deal of hostility and others hardly any. Would it depend on what area you lived in?

RP: I don't know. As I say, on the whole I sort of got on with my life, and I can't really recall anything personally that, you know, I have a terrible recollection of, except, as I say, the arrest on the station that time, and these people coming back from concentration camps, that was quite horrific. But, apart from that, as I say, personally, and my immediate family and that, we didn't really encounter-. We knew it was happening, we heard it on the radio, we read it in the papers, and the papers were

absolutely full of hatred and abuse and that, but actually, personally, as I say, I did not. I have no recollection of anything terrible.

Tape 1: 51 minutes 47 seconds

HL: You mentioned that your boyfriend's father was shot because he was a Socialist. Was there any Socialism in your family?

RP: No. I would say my parents were very liberal sort of people, really.

HL: How long did your father manage to practice as an architect, as well as being head of the business?

RP: Really, well, he combined the two, to be quite honest. Of course, when my grandmother died, when I was five years old, which would have been in 1929, he did have to devote more time to the business. But he was still working as an architect, but at a reduced time, really.

HL: Do you know any of the premises on which he worked, or?

RP: No, I don't think that I do, to be quite honest. I think he was devoting a great deal more time to the business then.

HL: How many employees did he have?

RP: Not very many, about 4 or 5, I would think.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 58 seconds

HL: Just a few more aspects of your life before the war, you just mentioned that you went to a Kindergarten?

RP: Yes, when I was about 3 years old, I should imagine, which I loved. I loved Tante Ilse, who ran it. I sort of can see her to this day. Everything there was fine, except I was always reprimanded because I was so slow eating my packed lunch always, which might well be responsible for the fact that I still have very good digestion to this day.

HL: What would your packed lunch have consisted of?

RP: Oh, I suppose sandwiches that's about all I can remember, some fruit, of course.

HL: Did your family have distinctively Jewish cuisine, do you think?

RP: No, no, no, we ate quite normally. We were taken every day, in fact I had been taken there before I went to the Kindergarten, to the Monbijou Park in Berlin, which I believe, I'm not quite sure, I may be wrong on this, had been built by Frederick the Great. It was a very small little place, it was a lovely park. I believe that nowadays houses have been built there, but it was the beginning of my love of plants and flowers and birds and that sort of thing. It was a very, very happy time, and I was very

anxious to revisit it when I went back to Berlin. I did sort of catch a glimpse of it from the train as we passed it, but, as I say, I believe its not in existence any more as it was, but it's a place that has stuck in my mind all these years and I really loved it.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 13 seconds

HL: Did you go out with your parents much?

RP: As I say we were very fortunate in having a car, and we took trips out, and took friends with us, practically every Sunday. The ones I remember best I think are the ones into Eastern Germany. Even in those days it seemed quite a different sort of part from the West less prosperous, much more rural I think, and less developed. But I liked it very, very much, and we went and would sort of take a picnic, and drive into some forest, and spend a good part of the day there, and I have many happy memories of that.

HL: Did your parents have many non-Jewish friends?

RP: I wouldn't say many, but certainly some, if not actually friends, connections. Quite a lot of them were Jewish friends. As I say, there were certainly some, and one in particular, a kind of business associate really, did actually employ my father after, sort of, slave labour came into being during the war and I believe he was very good to him, by what little bit I could gather. Very, very difficult of course, later on, to gather what had happened during the war.

HL: Well we'll come onto the war on the next tape.

RP: Right.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 6 seconds

TAPE 2

Tape 2: 0 minute 12 seconds

HL: Tell me about your journey and how you arranged it.

RP: My journey was rather an unusual one. First of all, my father had to buy a ticket to show that I would be going on to America. Now, a school-friend of my mothers had married an American; they had written a letter to say that they were prepared to take me into their home alongside their 10 year old boy. I was by then 15 years old and I believe I was only allowed to come to this country on the understanding that I would, in fact, go on to America. Of course, this was before the war still. So my father, in fact, bought a ticket with North German Lloyd, which I have still got, and a little bit tattered, I'm afraid, and so although I came-

[Interruption, resumes]

Tape 2: 1 minute 39 seconds

RP: I was never really keen to go to America. My only thought was to come to England, partly because the boyfriend was here by then, he had gone to Manchester. It took many months; I believe I said before, to get the papers through. Anyway, eventually everything was in place and I, oh dear, I'm so sorry, I left Berlin from the Lehrter Bahnhof, on the 27th of June 1939, to go to Hamburg where I-, number of us, there were very many of us, of course, were going to board the SS Washington, an American ship. My parents, of course, came to see me off. I was determined not to cry and I don't think I did. Another friend came. I believe that quite a lot of the children were not allowed to have parents go on the platform but somehow my parents were. I don't mean that particular transport I went on, but other transports, on other dates. Anyway, my parents were allowed to come and were probably very, very sad and upset. I didn't cry. I was 15 years old and was determined not to. Towards evening, we boarded the SS Washington and it was going to be a 2 ½ day trip. The boat actually was on its way to New York. We called first of all at Le Havre and then had a crossing to Southampton. It was a very rough crossing. I had sailed, I think, only once before; I had been very seasick. Again, I was determined I was not going to be seasick, which I wasn't. And I occupied myself seeing to all these poor, little, much smaller children, who were-. Doling out water and that to them, comforting them and so on.

Tape 2: 4 minutes 24 seconds

One thing I know upset me very much was a small baby, about 4 months old I would think, in a pram. I just thought how terribly sad it was that this young child, it was in charge of a carer obviously, had been sent away by its parents. I thought this must be quite terrible and I think so to this day. I often wonder what might have happened to that little child. I'm not sure if it was a boy or a girl even. It was a very exciting journey really, considering I had never cruised before. I had only once before been to Helgoland, which I believe is now called German Bight, and that was simply a day trip. So I did in a way quite enjoy it. We arrived in Southampton on the 30th of June and got into the train and there was a bag of goodies for every one of us, which was quite wonderful to think that people were so kind as to do this for us. We then had, I suppose it would be about a 2 hour journey to London, where the father, an uncle of mine, the father of these two boys I had mentioned earlier, was going to meet me. I arrived at Waterloo Station, but no uncle. But as the train pulled up, there was, I think it was a second cousin, or second cousins rather, he and his sister, standing right outside where the train pulled up. I had no idea even that they had come to England because one just simply lost touch and didn't know what had happened to people and where they had gone and I was just amazed to see them. They weren't there to meet me at all, they were there to meet somebody else, a friend of theirs whom I barely knew, who had also come on the same trip, but I had no contact with whatsoever, because as I say I hardly knew her at all. It was just a sort of question of hello and goodbye, but of course I and whoever was in charge of me was very concerned that the uncle wasn't there. Well, the uncle was at Victoria Station, for some reason or other, I don't know why. Anyway, in some miraculous way they made contact and he did eventually arrive, but it did delay me somewhat.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 21 seconds

He is the uncle who, as I say, had been the director of the Jewish hospital in Frankfurt am Main. He was an extreme extrovert. Straight into a taxi and I had a tour of London

with him. Now I, well, not I, but one would have thought he'd have been almost a born Londoner, but he had only been in London for three days. However, I saw Buckingham Palace and St. Paul's and everything else you can think of. And so he eventually got me to Paddington, from where I was to depart for Snow Hill Station in Birmingham, where Miss Dabs, I think I've mentioned her name before, the lady who said she would give me a home, and the clergyman, who she knew very well, and the elder of the two boys, were going to meet me. I remember having a very pleasant train journey. I thought the countryside was lovely. I got into contact with two slightly younger boys, I think, whom I never saw again, but we had a quiet sort of chat, and also one other slightly older, young lady, I suppose she was, of course, by then, who was also coming to Birmingham, who again I never saw again. Anyway, I arrived at Snow Hill, much to the relief of the little party that was waiting for me. Walter, the elder little boy, was very upset, because apparently Miss Dabs had said to Father Dempser, 'Well', she said, 'This is funny; she should have been here hours ago'. And Walter was very upset because to him funny meant that I was sort of a bit peculiar and, 'Not funny at all, not funny at all!' He wouldn't have it.

Tape 2: 9 minutes 40 seconds

His English, of course, wasn't too good, nor was mine, I had only done one month, one term English at school, because French and Hebrew had been my two languages. Anyway, all was well, I arrived. We set off in a very old Morris Eight and out we went to Rubery. There I was put in charge of Miss Dabs' nephew, Ken, who talked-. She, of course, had to go to attend to the shop again, which, of course, in those days, was open until about 11 o'clock at night, I think. He was put in charge of me, talked to me sort of incessantly, of which, of course, I hardly understood a word, and eventually the shop closed and we made contact again. She actually was due to go on holiday. She had already delayed her holiday because of my delayed arrival. And so she was going to be away for three weeks, which was rather a pity really, but there were two other people there, who were running the house and the shop, and so I dealt with them. I wasn't allowed to work, of course, that was one of the conditions of all of us children arriving, so I couldn't help in the shop, which I would have loved to have done, but I did help a little bit in the house, making beds, doing a bit of dusting and doing a little bit of shopping. And I saw quite a bit of those two little boy cousins. I did also come into Birmingham a fair bit, as much as my very little bit of money that I had been allowed to bring with me would allow.

Tape 2: 12 minutes 2 seconds

There were a number of, some Jewish, some non-Jewish people, in Birmingham, who were concerned with refugee work, and who would invite me and possibly other refugees, including the Cadburys, went to their very lovely house. And, of course, Mrs. Adams at Woodbrook would allow me to go there and mix and I really had a very pleasant beginning to my stay in England. I also got into contact with the said boyfriend, he was able to come and visit me from Manchester, and he also paid for me to go up there, 5 shillings return on a Sunday, occasionally. I also went to synagogue at Singers Hill. None of this of course lasted very long, because, two months later, war broke out.

Tape 2: 13 minutes 20 seconds

It was a very tense time, as everybody who knows of that period will know, because one didn't know was war going to break out, how were things going to be, what was

happening and so on. It was a Sunday morning, we had listened of course to Mr. Chamberlain, Miss Dabs and her assistant had gone to church, and I think they must have heard about it, I believe I had already heard about it on the radio, I believe they must have heard about it as they came back from church. And it was the only time I remember seeing Miss Dabs in tears. She was very, very upset. I must confess that I was not so upset, I think to me it was quite a relief. I thought, 'Well, something is now going to happen'. I mean things were so dreadful by the time I left in Germany that anything that could possibly alter things, even if it were to be a war, was to be, you know, a good thing really.

Tape 2: 14 minutes 50 seconds

To begin with, nothing very much happened, of course, in the war. I did begin to settle down really very well. My one thought, of course, was that I would really like to continue my education because I had left school. I forgot to mention earlier that I did go to an American school for a short while because my parents thought it might be a good idea to perhaps learn a bit more English. However, I was barely 15. In fact, I don't think I was 15 when my education as good as finished. And, as I say, I felt that my education hadn't really been completed. But there had never been any mention of school or schooling or anything of that sort. I think legally I was no longer compelled to attend school. However, I began to sort of put out feelers, very largely through Mrs. Adams, who was very influential, of course, with a number of people. But, as I say, I settled down very well with the family. Miss Dabs, who herself was a spinster, had a married sister. They lived at Hartlebury, in a very lovely part. They had three children, all a bit older than myself, and they took to me very much and I took to them very much and eventually they really became part of my family and I became part of them.

Tape 2: 16 minutes 37 seconds

Miss Dabs and I spent the first war-time Christmas there. We at home, at my request actually, had stopped celebrating Christmas; I didn't think it was the thing to do anymore. But I saw no reason whatsoever why I shouldn't celebrate and enjoy Christmas, and I did, and I had a quite wonderful time. Of course, I was very concerned about my parents. I was no longer able to write to them. They wrote to me almost daily until war broke out and I wrote back nearly as frequently as that. As I mentioned, there were relatives in Holland and so they sent letters and cards to them and I did the same in return. That, unfortunately, had to cease when Holland was invaded, and then letters came to me via relatives in America, in North America. And that went on until America ended the war, it took very much longer of course, and then I got letters and messages via South America, which could take as long as three months, which wasn't terribly satisfactory. Later on, the Red Cross started sending what were called Red Cross messages, they were 20 or 25 words one could send but I'll come back to that later.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 15 seconds

As I say, a lot of my visits to Birmingham ceased. In fact, my parents urged me not to go into Birmingham because of the pollution there, they said, but, of course, by the pollution, they really meant possible bombing, and so they felt it would be very much better for me to stay put where I was because I was in much less danger. At that time, there was really no danger in Birmingham, but of course, later, there would have been. To come back to my schooling, perhaps there's one thing I could mention. I

don't know how this came about. The Midland Adult School Union, whom I knew nothing about, apparently decided that it would be nice if they could do something for refugees, and they thought they would like to choose one particular refugee child who they could support in some way or other, and, for some reason, they chose me. So, the members apparently paid sixpence a week towards this. Well, my future husband happened to be a member, and of course we knew nothing about each other whatsoever, but later on he always teased me and said he bought me for sixpence a week. Eventually, they allowed me, I think it was about a pound a week, this was really when I started school again. And this was very, very useful because it paid for my fare into Birmingham and for a school meal once a week, I believe, and I was very grateful indeed to have it.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 23 seconds

Somehow, the Birmingham Jewish Refugee Committee were able to get Edgbaston Church of England College to grant me a free place, which was quite wonderful, and I started there in May 1940, which was nearly twelve months after I first came to this country. I had a very wonderful two terms there, then the school had to close down temporarily, because what was then called the Fuel Office, whether they owned the premises or what, I don't know, but somehow they confiscated the building for their own use. So we all had to be distributed and some of the pupils went to, including myself, went to Edgbaston High School, who also granted me a free place; some went to the Alice Ottley School in Worcester, and some went to Morgan Girls College. I had a further two terms there by which time I was ready to take what was then called School Certificate, which would be GCSEs these days, wouldn't it? I felt very proud because we took this in the big hall; I think it was called the big hall, off of university. And another very kind family allowed me to stay in; I think it was in Wellington Road in Edgbaston, a Mr. and Mrs. Stiles, who I believe were also connected with the university, while I was taking my different papers, in order to save me the travelling, which, by the way, was in the old-fashioned trams in those days.

Tape 2: 22 minutes 39 seconds

HL: What subjects did you take?

RP: I took seven subjects. I don't know if I can remember them. English of course.

HL: German?

RP: German, yes that I passed with distinction, I'm glad to say. Geography, History, Art, French, I don't know how many that makes, but there were seven altogether, and as I say I did pass them quite well, which really stood me in good stead in later years. Then it was a question of what to do next. I was still living with Miss Dabs. I really was able to make very little contribution then because I was completely taken up with schoolwork, but she very kindly still gave me a home. As I say, it was a question of what to do next. I had become quite friendly with an English young gentleman, I suppose it was by then, through church socials, which Miss Dabs encouraged me to go to, which I enjoyed. The boyfriend in Manchester and I had somewhat drifted apart, really, I suppose, because we weren't able to see each other any more because of the war, and I had become really friendly with Alec, who became my future husband, and he was very interested in what I was doing. I had hoped to enter teacher

training but that was out of the question financially. I thought of banking but for that I needed two English-born or British-born parents, which I haven't got; library work, that for some reason also had some sort of restriction put on it, so he suggested nursing. And I thought, 'Well, yes, I'll see what I can do in that respect'. So I applied for children's nursing at the Birmingham Children's Hospital because that I was able to enter at age 17, whereas general nursing you couldn't enter until age 18. And I was accepted under a very strict matron. My goodness, I wish we had them these days. It was very hard work I found, and I did find that healthwise it really was too much for me, so after about 12 months, I think, I gave it up, and I started some nursery nursing instead, which I found less taxing, to be quite honest.

HL: Where was that?

RP: That was at a day nursery at Northfield.

HL: Not so far to travel?

RP: Not so far to travel, no. Well, I was living in, of course, at the hospital, you had to in those days, and woe betide you if ever you even thought of going outside in your uniform, that was just absolutely strictly forbidden, and a very good thing too, because I think that is how nowadays germs are passed on so very much. Anyway, I then went to live with-, Miss Dabs by then had had to accept some evacuees, which of course was compulsory, and so there was no bed for me anymore. And a very kind lady, also in Rubery, offered me a home, quite a small house, very nice little place. It so happened that her birthday was exactly the same birthday day and date-wise, and year-wise, as my mother's, so that sort of brought me very close to her. And she was a wonderful person. She really, sort of, you know, looked and said, 'Well, I'm your second mother' and that was it. And she and her husband were very, very good to me indeed.

Tape 2: 27 minutes 35 seconds

HL: Were they attached to this church in Rubery as well?

RP: No, they weren't, they weren't church people actually, no. They only just lived around the corner from where Miss Dabs lived. But they were very nice people indeed. I'm afraid a lot of the people I talk about, of course, have all passed away. The whole family of Miss Dabs have all passed away. I did stay in contact with them until their death, so I'm afraid that was that. As I say, when the Red Cross began to introduce, I suppose, these Red Cross messages, whereby one went along somewhere, I really don't know where, somewhere in Birmingham, to write out the message, you were only allowed 25 words. Whether that included the address as well, I can't remember. But, anyway, it was 25 words in which one could say very little indeed. By then, I had known Alec for about two years, I would think, and I had sort of just about mentioned him in one of them. Back came a message on my 19th birthday, which was the very last message I ever had from them and, amongst one or two other things, they said, and it really quite surprised me, 'We hope for engagement'. Now this was so unlike my parents, they would have normally wanted to vet and know and all the rest of it, but I think they were pretty certain they were not going to be much longer. I think several relatives and friends had been deported and never heard of again and I

think they knew this was going to be their fate and I think they wanted to reassure me that they would-, I don't think they even knew he was English, they wanted to feel, you know, that I was being, perhaps, taken care of.

Tape 2: 29 minutes 58 seconds

As it happens, they made a very good choice in what they said. What I perhaps should have mentioned was that I had to go before a tribunal in 1940, I think it was May 1940, must have been just about as I started school I think, in order to be classified as an enemy alien, or I thought it was friendly alien. As I say, I was 16 years old. This was just after Dunkirk, of course, and every refugee or German of any nationality had to go before a tribunal, it was at the law courts in Birmingham, to be vetted. And, fortunately, I was vetted as what I thought was a friendly alien and was not to be interned. Now, much to Mrs Adams' dismay, another girl, the same age as myself, came from Vienna actually, who she had also taken under her wing, same background and everything similar to me, she for some reason was interned. And nobody could ever understand why. Anyway, I did consider myself very lucky that at least I was spared that. To come back then to this letter, I eventually, not straightaway, I eventually told Alec about this Red Cross message I'd had from my parents, and so he gave it a little bit of thought and he said well, 'Shall we get engaged?' And so I said-. I'm not sure whether I gave him a reply immediately, or whether I didn't. However, I did eventually, if not straightaway. But we did decide that we would not get married until we could find some accommodation to ourselves, which was just near impossible in 1943. Any people who got married would just have to live either in lodgings or with parents or parents-in-law.

Tape 2: 32 minutes 15 seconds

My future father-in-law was not terribly thrilled about it. He thought, well, 'Why should my boy get married to a foreign Jewish girl?', you know. And, in fact, I don't think I was allowed into that house for about 6 months. However, he changed his mind and I eventually became a great favourite of his, which was rather nice, and especially as he was quite critical. My husband had two brothers and two sisters and he was quite critical of all the in-laws. But, as I say, I did become a favourite of his in the end, so it all worked out rather nicely. We'd been out for the day, I believe, nearly, no, not 5, 6 months later, and we got back to the people I was living with, Mr. and Mrs. Haynes, and she said, 'We've got something to tell you', and I said 'Yes', and she said, 'The in-laws at Redditch have bought a smallholding down in Bude, in Cornwall, and they're going to go down there fairly soon'. So very nice. And then, I suddenly thought, 'I wonder what's going to happen to their house?' I think I'd been to visit them there. In those days, people nearly all rented houses. I mean, you just didn't own your own house, so I simply took it for granted that it was a house that was rented and it would become free, and of course I was right. 'Ooh,' she said, 'I don't know.' But she said, 'We'll cycle over', which was pretty well the only transport by then. And yes they would be leaving soon and they would go and see the landlord. The landlord said, 'Yes, anybody who wants it can have it for 27 shillings a week', which was not bad, even in those days. So, of course, that was our cue for making plans to get married, which we did in roughly a couple of months time or something like that. It was going to be a church wedding because Alec was Church of England, he wasn't Jewish, and it didn't bother me a great deal, to me to be honest. And I felt, in a way, I owed it to Miss Dabs, and Father Dempser, who was going to marry us. In fact, he was ill and somebody else had to marry us. I owed it to them

really that I should get married in the local church. I then found that I had to get permission from the Bishop of Worcester because I was still underage and my parents weren't able to give consent to the marriage, which would have had to be given for anyone under 21, so I had to wait for a while to get permission from the Bishop of Worcester, I'm afraid I've forgotten his name. However, it came and so all was set. So we had a very nice wedding. We were able to have a car to take us from the church, for about 500 yards, I should think, to the vicarage where the reception was, they gave us a reception. All the other guests had to walk, which, as I say, is all that was possible then. And I had to report to the police, I suppose, for the last time, because all my movements, this was one of the conditions, of course, when I think of the tribunal, that all my movements had to be recorded, reported and recorded in a little book. So every time I wanted to move more than 5 miles from where I was living, I had to go along with a little book and it was recorded that I had reported, and reported when I had arrived, and reported when I had returned again. I also, this is something I should have mentioned earlier, I also was given permission to use my bicycle, which had arrived from Germany just before the war started. And that was absolutely wonderful because I loved my bicycle and it did enable me to get around very much more than I had done before.

Tape 2: 37 minutes 26 seconds

HL: You had the reception in the vicarage?

RP: I had the reception in the vicarage and Alec had a little Austin Seven, which he was still able to run actually, but of course petrol was very restricted, it was rationed to, I think, 5 gallons a month or something like that. So we were able to drive to Redditch, where again I had to report to the police, and where in Redditch they entered that I had got married, that day, to a British subject, which then, believe it or not, made me British, which was absolutely wonderful. And a very funny thing happened because the policeman said, 'Are you related?' So, I thought for a moment, and I thought, 'Well, now we're married, are we related or aren't we?' So, I said, 'Well', I told him, I said, 'Well, not really, but we are married'. And he said, 'Well', he said 'Well, I only ask because you look so much alike'. Well, I'm sure we didn't look alike, but he seemed to think we did. So, anyway, we went to our new home, it was a nice, detached house. I had cycled over, it was September, I had cycled over on foggy mornings for at least a week, to clean and see to it and get it ready and so on. And of course we had been busy buying what furniture we could: a) what we could afford, and b) what you could get. You couldn't buy anything new then but you could get some rather nice second-hand things, which we did, as far as finance would allow. Of course, I had no money at all. It was all up to Alec, I'm afraid.

Tape 2: 39 minutes 21 seconds

HL: Had you earned anything as a nursery nurse?

RP: I earned £30 a year nursing, which didn't exactly get me very far, and I earned less than that nursery nursing. I mean, it was all just taken up with paying Mrs. Haynes for some lodging. She was very good, she took very little, but there was no question of any savings at all. And we were allowed, of course, some utility furniture. I think you had so many points or something, when you got married, and that allowed

you to choose what you wanted. In fact, there's still some about in the house now. So we started married life, very happily. It did last for 55 and a half years, so I feel I've been very lucky. We had a nice garden, which I busied myself in. Alec was working then; he was working at what was then Austin's at Longbridge, and travelled very early every day. For a while, as I say, I was busy in just the house and garden, and then of course I was contacted and told that as a married woman with no children under 5, I would have to do some war work. And so I got sent to, I'm really not quite sure what the place was, some backstreet little factory, I don't even know what I was doing to be quite honest. Two hours later, the manager, I suppose, came and said would I sort of come out with him, which I did and he said, 'I've been contacted, and you're too well qualified for the work you're doing, and so you have to go somewhere else'. So they sent me to BSA to do inspection work, which was obviously very much better than what I was doing for those two hours, I don't even remember what it was. And I was there for the duration of the war, of course. Cycling down, I don't know if you know Redditch at all, its got a very, very steep hill, from where we lived anyway, so I freewheeled down, and pushed the bicycle back up at night. I quite enjoyed it. It so happened that I sat next to a young lady, who I found had been to my school. She had left; she was a bit older than I was, at Edgbaston Church of England College. So that was very nice, I had made contact with somebody straight away. I think, as regards social life, there just wasn't one, you were just busy with war work, and, of course, I was very worried about my parents, not having heard anything at all, and fearing the worst, and, of course, the worst in the end turned out to be the worst.

HL: How long did that journey take you by bike from Redditch to the BSA?

RP: Oh very quick, getting down. It was the BSA in Redditch. Yes, it was near Studley, I believe. It couldn't have been more than ten minutes, yes. It probably took about half an hour to push the bike back up this very steep hill.

HL: Did your husband have enough petrol to go to Longbridge?

RP: No, no, no, there was a coach run and quite a few people went there. And, actually, our neighbour happened to be working, he was a toolmaker, the neighbour I believe worked in the patent shop, or something. They made us welcome absolutely immediately, I said whether it was the war or what I don't know, they were very, very friendly. They were a bit older, quite a bit older than we were. They had a daughter who was only about 4 years younger than myself and a little boy who was eight, and with whom we stayed friendly until the parents died, and so the two children eventually took over. The daughter died quite sadly, actually, two or three years ago from a heart attack suddenly on a beach in Croatia, but the boy, who was then, is now nearly 70 years old, I think, and I see him from time to time and go out with him from time to time, so that's quite nice and certainly lasted a good long while. And then, of course, came - I still saw a great deal of the family I was talking about, Miss Dabs' family - and then of course came the end of the war and great relief all round and the question for many of us was of course what had happened to our loved ones?

Tape 2: 45 minutes 5 seconds

And it was impossible to get any sort of news for months and months and months. And eventually, I think it was about June, it might have been even later than that, '46, which was at least 12 months after the end of the war, suddenly a letter arrived from

Mrs. Adams, who wrote a little note, saying that she enclosed a letter from the Friends, from a member of the Friends Ambulance Service, which were the Quakers, who had been working on the Continent, who, at her request, had managed to visit the house where my parents lived, and that the caretaker people, who were very nice people, and who apparently were very, very good to my parents, I have a letter from them which I will show you later, said that they had been taken away in March 1943, presumably to Auschwitz, had never been heard of again. And they felt sure that, if they were alive, they would have heard, or made their way back to them. Now that was a terrible shock to me. I mean, I had sort of feared it, but this was the final thing. I think that was the worst day of my life, to be quite honest. I know I just wept for a whole day, I just could not stop. My husband happened to be at home, I don't know whether he had been made redundant and was at home for a fortnight or something, he eventually went to work at BSA, but, fortunately, he was there and was comforting me, but it was a dreadful day. Obviously, I never really gave up hope, not for many, many years, and I contacted various organisations and waited for months and months and months always and eventually the reply came, 'We haven't been able to find out anything'. And it wasn't really until, oh, what would it be, oh, getting on for the nineties probably, late eighties, nineties, that I realised that the Red Cross had a search department, I think, in Germany, and I contacted them and I think they did have some more detail and I did in fact get almost positive proof that they had been sent to Auschwitz and perished there, of course. So then, in a way, I was then able to put it behind me. I spoke of a dream earlier, now I had another dream, over and over again, that a letter arrived from South America, and from here and there, and it was always a sort of, you know, rather large envelope and it told me my parents had been found, or it was a message from them, and of course it was only a dream. Again, that stopped once I'd had that definite proof from the Red Cross people.

HL: Did you feel in any way British by this time?

RP: Yes, very much so. As much as any sort of refugees, I think, if not even more so. I had sort of gone straight to British people, they spoke practically no German, and so I did pick English up fairly quickly. As I say, I married an Englishman. I mean, I loved England, and Britain as a whole, and just I sort of felt more at home here than I ever did in Germany, in a way.

Tape 2: 49 minutes 49 seconds

HL: Did you get any reactions to your German accent during the war?

RP: Not a lot, no, I don't think that I had very much of a German accent really. As I say, I probably stuttered my way through things for a while. I suppose being at school helped a lot, being with English people all the time. No, as I say, my biggest trouble, I think, was the name, which I had to spell about three times over to everybody that I got a bit tired of.

HL: Any reactions to your being Jewish?

RP: Not to being Jewish, I don't think, ever. A lot of people I've had contact with, who don't know anything about it, who don't even know that I am a refugee, a lot of people I taught with. It always depended. If I felt that people should know, then I

would tell them. If I thought it didn't matter anyway, I just didn't bother. Now there isn't anyone in Crowle who knows, incidentally, so it's going to be just a bit difficult to explain to these people, you know, what's going on, but I'll find a way. I only ever remember one quite, very nice person really, I was nursing with. We met on a corridor, I was on the same course as she was on, and she said something derogatory, not about being Jewish, but about being a refugee, I think, and that is the only time I can remember about it.

HL: You said that you stopped going to Singers Hill once the war started. Did you have any contact with the Jewish community in Birmingham after that?

RP: I didn't really, to be honest, no. I might have done for a short while afterwards, because things were reasonably normal still, but once things got really difficult I didn't anymore. I tended to-, I never sort of converted to any other religion, but I did stop being, sort of, a practising Jew, I suppose you'd call it that.

Tape 2: 52 minutes 20 seconds

HL: Do you still consider yourself Jewish?

RP: Yes, I do, yes, yes, I do. There is one thing I must mention. It must have been 1944ish. Suddenly, a letter arrived from the second cousin I mentioned had been standing outside the train window when I arrived at Waterloo Station, with whom I'd had absolutely no contact whatsoever - in fact, I had hardly thought about him, to be quite honest - to say that - this was in London, you see - to say that he was in Birmingham. He was a dentist and he had a patient and they were talking about himself and he came from Berlin. These people were Czech people actually, Czech refugees, from Prague. He was a journalist, I think. And they were talking about Berlin, and this lady says, and she said, 'Oh, I know somebody from Berlin'. And I believe he said, 'Who is this?' And, of course, my name came up and, as I say, this name being so unusual, he knew straightaway who it was. It so happened that they'd got my address, which they gave to him, and he straightaway wrote, and so we made contact. I became very good friends with him and his wife, who is now his widow, he died about five/six years ago. They became dear friends of mine. She is still a dear friend of mine now. She lives in Hall Green and I see her very frequently, telephone her even more frequently, and it really made quite a difference to my life, as well as feeling that, at least, I'd got one relative.

Tape 2: 54 minutes 28 seconds

HL: Did they practice?

RP: Yes, they were practising Jews, quite a bit actually. They have one son, who I suppose is a third cousin of mine, who lives in Manchester. But I don't have a great deal of contact with him.

HL: Did you ever find out what happened to the boyfriend in Manchester?

RP: Yes, also in the 1990s. I had joined AJR, oh, in about 1975, I think. And in about the late 1980s, I think, there was an offshoot of AJR, calling itself AJER, Association

of Jewish Ex-Berliners, and I thought, 'Oh, well, this sounds interesting, I think I'll join them', which I did. And not long, yes that's right, AJER, yes, AJER got out their own newsletter, and on the front page I saw Harry Blake and Rabbi Wassermann. Rabbi Wassermann had, in Manchester I think, made contact with Harry or something. And I thought, 'Harry Blake, now surely that is who used to be Hans Becker', who was the boyfriend - I think this was 40 years after I had last had contact with him - 'I must get into touch'. So I said to Alec, who knew him - they had met because he had visited us, until a couple of years after the war, I think - 'I must, shall I make contact'. So, 'Yes', he said, 'Do', and so I did. And of course it was the Harry Blake, and he was very pleased indeed to hear from me, and I was pleased to hear from him. He was married. I found out it was his second wife, as his first wife had suddenly died from cancer, and so I said, 'Well, we must meet'. And of course they came to visit us, it must be just over 10 years ago, as I say, because when I went to Berlin I hadn't met him then, in 1992, so, as I say, it was as late as that that I made contact with him again. It was very nice. He sadly died just under a year ago but I'm still friendly with his widow. Saw her last Sunday actually.

Tape 2: 57 minutes 37 seconds

TAPE 3

Tape 3: 0 minute 12 seconds

HL: Tell me what you did after the war.

RP: Well, I was made redundant at BSA because obviously people weren't needed any more for the war effort, but I either went, or was sent to, the English Needle Factory in Redditch, which was the industry in Redditch, of course. I worked there for quite a while, did some secretarial work, and I quite enjoyed that. My husband, Alec, had by then also been made redundant, and he then moved to BSA, so they seemed to want somebody there anyway. I was then at home for a while, and I know I listened very avidly to the Nuremberg trial, which went on for, I would think, something like 12 months probably, if not more than that, and I found that extremely interesting. I think I've already mentioned that I'd had this letter about my parents' fate, sadly, and that really sort of spurred me on to try to find out more, really without much success. I contacted quite a number of various organisations and mostly they said, no, there were no records and they were sorry but they could not give me any details, but I just went on as much as I possibly could. And then, I would think about 1946, we visited these, this family of Miss Dabs very frequently, they were at Hartlebury. Very nice house, lovely gardens, spent a lot of time there, and we were visiting them one day. John the younger son had been in the air force and he was either sent or was given a pamphlet about the teachers' emergency training scheme. They were usually people who had worked in some way or other for the war effort. Teachers were-, there was an extreme shortage of teachers, and they were trying to recruit suitable people to train as teachers at a very concentrated course, lasting only about 13 months at most, whereas an ordinary teachers' training was, of course, two years.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 14 seconds

And he showed it to us, and Alec turned to me and said, 'You know you could do this'. And I said, 'Well, I haven't even done any war work'. He said, 'Yes, you have,

nursing', and of course at BSA. He himself was in a reserved occupation, so although he would have liked to have joined the forces, he wasn't allowed to. He had to carry out the work he was doing for Austins at Longbridge. So John said, 'Well, take it home and have a look at it', which we did, and Alec was very insistent. He said, 'I'm quite sure you could do this'. I mean, in those days, if you were a housewife and married, you didn't really think of having a career, to be quite honest, so it took quite a bit of persuasion. And I said, 'Well, alright, I'll have a go at applying for it', which I did. And, after quite a lengthy time, I believe, I got an interview, in Worcester, I think, and I was informed eventually, yes, I had passed the interview and they would accept me on their next, on their first training course, I believe it was. And it started in 1946. And then I said, 'Well, look here, if I can do this', I said to Alec, 'Then you can do it as well'. And he said, 'Well, alright'. I mean he had done war work, so he certainly qualified for it. John incidentally also applied but was turned down.

Tape 3: 4 minutes 56 seconds

So Alec applied too but he was told that, until he was 33 years of age, he would still be eligible for war service were there to be another war and therefore they could not accept him, to wait until he was that age. So this is what we did. I believe I deferred mine. I said, 'Well, my husband is hoping to also to enter the training, but he can't do so for quite a while'. So they, yes, they accepted that, and I could go onto the next course. Well, he eventually got an interview, and passed the interview, but was accepted for Birmingham. So, we said, 'Well, this is no good, one of us going to Birmingham and the other going to Worcester from Redditch', practically impossible really. So they looked into it and decided, yes, he could also go to Worcester, so that was very much better. So we were sent details of the next training course, which I think was from '47 to '48. And we started on this course and were very much astounded and surprised to be called out to the front by the Principal to be introduced as the first married couple to be on an emergency training course. They lasted for about three years, I think. There were three courses, each lasting thirteen months. It was a very intensive course. We were up early in the morning til midnight. We travelled from Redditch to Worcester, still in this little Austin Seven, and then came a bit of a blow, because the people who owned the house suddenly decided that they wanted to move into it. And, in those days, you just had to offer some alternative accommodation, in order to get people out of the house, which those people did, but it was a horrible little place and we really didn't feel we'd got the time to make a move, to be quite honest, we were so fully occupied with the training course. However, another student, who had a house practically by Worcester College, offered us a tiny little box room where we could sleep. It was just about big enough to get our bed into. And so we simply moved our furniture from the house we were in into this other house, which we never really lived in, and lodged in this tiny little boxroom for the duration of our course, which at least enabled us to finish it. And we made quite a lot of friends.

Tape 3: 8 minutes 27 seconds

Then, suddenly, or sadly, I should say, a colleague, who was also on the course, died quite suddenly from poliomyelitis. Is it polio, infantile paralysis, is that poliomyelitis? I think it is. Which was quite rampant in those days, isn't anymore. And Alec had to go to visit the widow, to take some tools or something, and, as he visited her, she mentioned that the people in the next bungalow, which was a little fisherman's bungalow, two rooms, no bathroom, kitchen 4 foot by 4 foot, an outside toilet,

although it was a flush one, was becoming empty and might we be interested. So we said, 'Yes, of course we would be.' So Alec came rushing along, got me out of a lecture to discuss it, and it was all arranged in no time at all. And so we moved into this little bungalow, which had the most beautiful position, right by the river, looking out across fields to Malvern, and we spent 15 years there. It was only supposed to be for a very short time. However, we spent 15 lovely years there, went swimming in the river from time to time, had swimming parties. And, anyway, we finished the course. The time, of course, came to apply for a job. And, before that though, we had both qualified to go on another three months additional course, not, unfortunately, at the same time. Alec went to Loughborough College and I was to go to Birmingham but it wasn't at the same time so we had to make arrangements for that. His parents helped out actually because they lived at Rubery, and so that was quite helpful, and we just met up at home at weekends. And then Alec got a job at one of the secondary modern schools in Worcester, where he taught for 30 years, and I went the following term and got a job at another secondary modern school, where I served for 30 years. So, we were very, very lucky to have both got jobs in Worcester. In the meantime, I did manage to get into contact with a few survivors, none of whom had been in a concentration camp, they had survived somehow either by being hidden or, well, I think that was mostly it, they were being hidden. And, oh, one friend in particular, whose father had been High Court Judge in Berlin, they were smuggled out into Switzerland, by the, I'm trying to think of the name, I think it was Graf Stauffenbach, who was very much involved in the assassination plot against Hitler in July 1944. And so, of course, she and her family survived. We remained very good friends, wrote to each other and saw each other from time to time, telephoned, until she sadly rather suddenly died from cancer, about two years ago. So that was really quite a great blow for me.

Tape 3: 12 minutes 49 seconds

I taught Physical Education originally and needlework, and then, about 1951, Alec and I had by then visited Germany, couldn't get to Berlin of course, because that was in the Russian zone, so we went to the West part. We were hitchhiking actually, all the way from home right sort of down to Bavaria, where I was reunited with another friend. And it was then, after I got back, that my headmistress asked me if I would be prepared to teach some German. I said, 'Yes, I would have a go'. It was very unusual then for a foreign language to be taught at a secondary modern school but she was very ahead of things and she did eventually introduce, it was then GCE, into the secondary modern school, which again was unusual. So for quite a number of years I did teach German, I enjoyed that very much indeed. Through that, we made contact with a school in Wiesbaden, and started having exchanges with them. I know that quite a number of the pupils made sort of lifelong friendships through that.

HL: How did you feel about Germany?

RP: I had mixed feelings about it, to be quite honest. It wasn't my suggestion that we should have these exchanges and visits, but I couldn't really do anything else but agree, to be quite honest. But, as I say, I had mixed feelings about it. I wasn't entirely hostile, but I say cautious, and I didn't quite know how I felt about it, to be quite honest. Then, in 1952, I don't know why it should have been, oh yes, one of my relatives, there were, oh, at least 10, I think, in Holland, all of whom had perished, three of them, at least, quite elderly aunts, sort of getting on in their seventies. It was

quite dreadful that these poor women should have been taken to a concentration camp and suffered there and perished there. But the son of one of them told us that he went underwater, here we would call it underground, but, apparently, in Holland they call it underwater, because of the many canals, presumably. Anyway, that's how it was known there. He told me that a little bit of money had been left to me, nothing very much, only about sixty pounds. He was about to emigrate to America, and he would take this money with him, because the uncle I had mentioned earlier, the father of these two little boys, about whom there's a funny little story I'll tell in a moment, had emigrated with the boys to America, said he would love us to come and visit but we would need to bring a little bit of pocket money. Now, that sixty pounds would have just been very nice for that bit of pocket money and that eventually materialised. The little story I want to tell about the boys goes back quite a way now. They were living, this was soon after they came here, of course, at the vicarage in Rubery, and, one day, Walter, the elder one, told me that they were living in adjacent bedrooms, but his bedroom was in Worcestershire, and the little brother's bedroom was in Warwickshire, because the county boundary apparently ran right through. That was a lovely little story. Anyway, to come back, we made enquiries, and, of course, in those days, you didn't think of flying, so it was a question of a sea journey, which was going to take ten days, which was going to be a lovely cruise, and turned out to be a lovely cruise too, until the foghorn went for two days and nights off Newfoundland because it was so terribly foggy. We arrived there, my uncle meeting us, and they gave us a wonderful time. The only problem was it was so hot in New York, and not only hot, it was 100% humidity, and we really did suffer. We kept diving in and out of stores and shops because they were air-conditioned, but, of course, it was awful coming out, it was like stepping into an oven.

Tape 3: 18 minutes 24 seconds

However, we had to get three weeks leave of absence, I don't know why, but it was to be an eight-week trip. We got our leave of absence, unpaid of course, which eventually made a little bit of difference, unfortunately, to our pension even. We then moved up north, to relatives of my husband's head teacher, who, when he realised we were going, was most anxious we should visit them. They were Americans and gave us a wonderful welcome. This was in Boston. We stayed with them for a few days and then we moved further north to New Brunswick, in Canada, where my husband's sister was living, because she had married a Canadian serviceman. They gave us a lovely time too. And then we moved onto Quebec, which I thought was absolutely wonderful. And then we had a very lovely journey back up the St. Lawrence river, and back home again. That was really a wonderful experience. One of the main reasons for my wanting to go so very much was that, by then, who was my nearest relative and quite an elderly aunt she must have been, getting on for eighty or something like that, who was the mother of this uncle, was there, and I was very anxious of course to see somebody I'd known all my childhood and there weren't very many people who were still alive whom I knew from my childhood and who had known my parents and so that was a really happy reunion, really.

Tape 3: 20 minutes 19 seconds

HL: When did you have children?

RP: I haven't got any family at all, no, I haven't had any children, no.

HL: When did you go back to full-time work after the war?

RP: Well, really when I began teaching. You see, I didn't finish at the English Needle Company, I think, 'til 1946. And, in 1947, I just sort of had a little respite really at home I suppose, and in 1947 we started the emergency training, and, of course, I then carried on then until I retired, on medical grounds actually, in 1955. And I'm always grateful to Shirley Williams because it was she who wrote the letter to say that my application for early retirement because of medical condition had been granted.

HL: You talked about changing to teach German, what other subjects did you teach?

RP: I taught English, which I also enjoyed. Sometimes to the top classes, sometimes to the lower classes. I got a reference from my headmistress, who said that she felt that I was a person to which she could entrust sometimes the most able children, sometimes the least able, which I thought was rather nice. I loved teaching the first years because I sort of felt that I could mould them, and they always said I did mould them, so I rather hope I did. I never had to move away from Worcester since. I do meet a lot of old pupils, most of them seem to recognise me, and sort of call me by name, and say, 'You haven't changed a bit'. And I don't believe a word of it, but I suppose I haven't changed that much, or else they wouldn't recognise me. But it is very nice. And so many of them have turned out so nice and have got very responsible jobs and it's very satisfying to know that I've had a sort of influence perhaps on what they're doing. Just very recently, one of my pupils, actually it was her mother who rang me to tell me that she had just been awarded an MBE, largely for her work at the Ministry of Defence at the British Embassy in Washington. I didn't realise that there was a Ministry of Defence there, but apparently there is. And she, quite recently, in the last three or four weeks, has been to the Palace to receive it, and then gave a little get-together for people, who had been involved somehow or other in her life, and that was very pleasant as well.

Tape 3: 23 minutes 35 seconds

HL: What did you do outside your working hours, both of you?

RP: Well, there wasn't an awful lot of time, to be honest. Teaching took up a great deal of time and I did quite a lot of extra work, oh God, it isn't voluntary work, it was extra work. Because teaching, doing sports and PE and that, I've got teams to take about and periodically I would take pupils to compete in sort of, perhaps, national events and that. I did country dancing. I did country dancing and a lot of it. As I say, it did take up a lot of time. We went on holidays, of course. We went camping and eventually caravanning did go to theatres from time to time. We made some very good friends. She was a colleague of mine actually, who seemed very interested in my past and that, and one very nice thing she always did was to give me a cyclamen plant on my mother's birthday, which I thought was very, very sweet. We went out a great deal with these friends, sometimes in their car, sometimes in our car, and covered pretty well the whole of the British Isles, I think, so I feel I know a good deal. We did go to the continent a good number of times as well.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 25 seconds

HL: Did you have any contact with Jewish people at all in England after that?

RP: Hardly at all, to be quite honest. There was one person I knew in Worcester, who actually was initial in making me join AJR, so that, I felt, was a very good thing, but on the whole I didn't have much contact at all, except for the second cousin I mentioned, the dentist, who suddenly appeared again, but on the whole no, I didn't have a great deal of contact with Jewish people, it was mostly English and British people.

HL: Were there any Jewish pupils at the school?

RP: Well, not as I knew of, but I have very recently met somebody who used to go to synagogue in Worcester, which no longer exists, they now go to Cheltenham, who tells me, yes, there was a pupil at Christopher Whiteheart School, a Jewish pupil, who used to belong to the community, but I didn't know about it. But she must have been there during my time because I was there for thirty-two years. I have, unfortunately, forgotten her name, which is rather a pity.

HL: And have you ever had any occasion to go to a synagogue?

RP: Hardly at all, not really, no. I'm afraid I have rather drifted away from that almost completely. My husband was brought up Church of England. Just as a sort of experiment I think he tried various religions. I don't think he was, you know, he didn't turn against the Church of England at all, but he got rather cynical about most religions. He was a believer but he thought that so much trouble had been caused by religion that he felt, 'No this is not for me'. And I sort of tended in a way to follow him in that. So, as I say, I am not a practising religious person at all.

Tape 3: 27 minutes 51 seconds

HL: You said earlier that you did feel that you are Jewish. What would you say is your primary identity - English, German, Jewish?

RP: Well, I suppose I'd better say British, hadn't I, really? I do feel very British, I must say, partly English, I suppose. My husband was half-Welsh and terribly proud of it, so I tend rather to be sympathetic towards that. But, as I say, I do feel that my roots are in Judaism. I mean, you can't get away from that, and I think that many people do feel that. Now, there's a, wasn't it Bishop Montefiore, in Birmingham, wasn't it, who was Jewish, wasn't he? And I believe he too said the very same thing, didn't he? But you can't get away from being Jewish. I believe, so somebody tells me, I don't really know this, I believe that the same applies, he's not, I don't think he's the Bishop of Worcester, Bishop Selby, I believe it is, I'm not really sure about this, to be quite honest, but I have been told about two.

Tape 3: 29 minutes 2 seconds

HL: Now, you've made extensive notes, so is there anything we've left out from your life over the war, after the war?

RP: Well, as I say, we lived by the river in this very primitive little bungalow, which actually we loved, 'cause it was in such a beautiful position, and everybody thought it was absolutely wonderful, but we did feel that, you know, we couldn't go on living there forever, it was so primitive, although we managed wonderfully well. So we looked round quite a bit and could never really find anything that suited us, but, in 1962, I think it was, we happened to come past the end of this road where I'm living now, and happened to see that there was some land for sale. So, we came up and had a look and thought that this would be a wonderful place to build a bungalow. Unfortunately, we were going away on holiday and it was an auction sale while we were away, so we rather missed it. However, we were so taken with it and so intrigued, we came back to find out what we had missed. Of course, it was just a field, all the bungalows here were built on this field. And we happened to speak to somebody, who became our next-door-neighbour-but-one, and he said, 'Oh, yes, a builder has bought it'. We had to find out who the builder was, we did eventually find out who the builder was, it took a day or two, contacted him, it was very, very difficult at that time to get land to build on at all. Anyway, we managed to contact him. 'Yes, yes, anybody who wants a place can have it built.' So we felt this was absolutely wonderful. He was prepared to sell us the land for a very small sum and it sort of went from there. So, I actually designed the bungalow, first of all. He looked at it and he said, 'I can't put a roof on that', so we had to cut it down by about a foot right across, or something like that, which wasn't too difficult. So, he built it for us during a very bad winter, 1963. Nothing could be done from Christmas to Easter because it was just frozen. It was just ready, I believe, for plastering and they couldn't plaster it because of the frost. However, it got built and everything was fine. My husband, of course, helped with the design and various things, and so, in 1963, we were able to move in and have been here ever since. As I say, sadly, I lost him in 1999, but we've had very happy years here. And I'm still really content. At least, you know, I've managed to settle down very well on my own, although, of course, I've wished I weren't on my own but, unfortunately, I am.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 28 seconds

HL: Is there any message you'd like to give to anyone watching this video in future?

RP: Well, I'd like to say that I do think I have been very fortunate in what has befallen me. I mean, there have been sad times, of course, but, as I say, on the whole, I have been fortunate. And I'm very, very sad to think that many have not been as fortunate as I have. One thing I didn't mention and perhaps I should have done but, in 1970, my headmistress, she was not the same one whom I first taught under, who had a great influence on me and on many other teachers. She was a wonderful person, very strict, but very wonderful. I was asked to become head of the lower school, which I did, after a little consideration, and that gave me a great deal of satisfaction. I was very proud to accept that really. And so I was responsible for the sort of welfare, I suppose, and the well-being and that of the pupils in the first and second year. And that went on until, as I say, I retired in 1971 because I had had some heart trouble even earlier than that, but it got to the stage where I really couldn't carry on, of course. I had to go before, it wasn't a tribunal, but you had to be medically examined and that, and it was deemed that, yes, I shouldn't carry on teaching any more.

Tape 3: 34 minutes 14 seconds

HL: But you seem very well?

RP: Well, I suppose I'm not too bad really, yes. I do have quite a few problems, walking is one of them. I've got, as I say, apart from the heart problem, I've got diabetes, I've got peripheral arterial disease, which does limit me very much indeed, especially walking, but I also have had a cough for three and a half years and they cannot find out what the trouble is. So, I just go on coughing, I'm afraid, fortunately, only in the mornings, for about two hours, then usually I'm free from it, which is one good thing at least. I believe I already mentioned, didn't I, that, in the early 1990s, I got into contact again with Harry Blake, who had been Hans Becker, who was this first boyfriend. He was quite influential, very, very helpful to me in a number of ways, and things he knew and could advise me on and that sort of thing. And he was very much involved with Beth Shalom, which maybe you know of, he was one of the very first people I believe to go there. I'm sure everybody who will listen to this will know about Beth Shalom. He, as I think all of us are, was so impressed by the fact that this was a non-Jewish family, who, after a visit to Israel, decided that they wanted to do something, especially for the younger generation, to remember what had happened. And, of course, they've built this wonderful place in the lovely Nottinghamshire countryside, which many, many people visit, but I believe their main concern is, as I say, the younger generation. And he was one of the very first to go there when there was practically no-one there at all. I think he became very good friends - he went there many, many times, took a lot of parties - he became a very good friend of the Smith family and, I think, has helped them somewhat financially as well, I would imagine also in his will. As I say, sadly he died, less than twelve months ago, and I really do miss him, and I miss his advice, and it's very nice to think that, after those many years, at least we did get together again.

Tape 3: 37 minutes 0 second

HL: Does he remember your parents?

RP: Oh yes, yes, so that was nice, remembered my home and my parents, and-.

HL: Did you talk to him much about your childhood?

RP: Yes, quite a bit, yes, yes, we did. So, as I say, all that helped quite a lot.

Tape 3: 37 minutes 26 seconds

END OF INTERVIEW

Photos and Documents

Document 1

Tape 3: 38 minutes 21 seconds

RP: That is a photograph of my mother, father and myself, taken, I would think, in 1937ish in the Schwarzwald, the Black Forest, when we were on holiday there. I think it could be, it certainly is the only photograph I have of the three of us, because my

father had a camera, I don't quite know what the right name is, which he would set and then he would dash there so he could take the three of us, and it was really taken by him in a way.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 5 seconds

Document 2

RP: That is going back a bit in time, right at the beginning, in fact, it is my birth certificate. I was very amazed when I actually went to visit the house because that on there says Münzstrasse Zwei, number two. When I got there, it was number twenty two. And I know it would not have been changed because it was a number that I'm quite certain would have been there from the year dot almost. So, somehow, somebody got something wrong somewhere, so I just hope its valid.

Tape 3: 39 minutes 45 seconds

Document 3

RP: That is the identity card that every Jewish person had to carry. It was issued in 1939, sometime after Kristallnacht. You might notice that the name Sara, 'Zarah' it would be in German, had to be inserted, which every Jewish woman had to insert with her name. And Israel every man had to carry. These, as you can probably see, were fingerprints, as though one was a criminal, right and left finger, index finger, I believe, 'Zeigefinger', ja.

Tape 3: 40 minutes 55 seconds

Document 4

RP: That is the rather tatty ticket from the North German Lloyd I mentioned before, which my father had to purchase before I was allowed to gain entry into England. It, I believe, gives a date, 22nd of October 1939, which is when I should have travelled to America, but, because of the war, of course, that never materialised, very much to my re... [Tape cuts off here]

Tape 3: 41 minutes 27 seconds

Document 5

RP: That is, in very great detail, all the things that I proposed to take with me. I don't think anything was crossed out, but, when I say in great detail, I believe I even had to state how many handkerchiefs I was taking with me. It was as detailed as that. And it all had to be examined. Somebody came to the house and made sure that I wasn't taking anything more than that.

HL: Why this two there?

RP: Oh, it must be the code number. It says three dresses, one costume, two skirts, four blouses, two pullovers, one coat, etcetera, etcetera. As I say, right down to handkerchiefs.

Tape 3: 42 minutes 31 seconds

Document 6

RP: That was really to say that I require no visa and that I had permission to enter the United Kingdom with just a few details about myself.

Tape 3: 43 minutes 2 seconds

Document 7

RP: That is the registration book I was given after I had been before the tribunal, which enabled me not to be interned, but in it had to be recorded every detail of where I went, how and when, further than five miles away from my abode. I believe it says somewhere inside that I have permission to ride a bicycle, which I had to have permission for. It in red also changes my name to my married name, and, in fact, through marriage, gives me British nationality, which, quite honestly, I don't think I even realised before, it just came as a very nice surprise.

Tape 3: 44 minutes 1 second

Document 8

RP: This is the journal of the Midlands Adult School Union and, as I said earlier, they decided they would like to help on refugees and they wanted to help a child refugee in particular and, for some reason, they chose me. It meant that they asked their members to make a small contribution every week and I believe that those who could, and wanted to, paid sixpence, including my future husband, whom I didn't know, nothing of him at all whatsoever, but he never forgot to remind me that he bought me for sixpence a week later on.

Tape 3: 44 minutes 55 seconds

Document 9

RP: This is one of the Red Cross letters I spoke of earlier, the one where on the other side it says that my parents hoped that I might have become engaged. It took many, many weeks to reach them, and then many weeks to reach me again, but at least it was some sign of news.

Tape 3: 45 minutes 29 seconds

Document 10

RP: This is a letter from my - her last letter, written on the 2nd of March, she was deported on the 3rd of March - to a Frau Fuchs, who was a non-Jewish person, but whom she could trust completely, just to say that her husband had already been fetched, so had all other people working as slave labourers in the various factories, but she herself had been at the doctors and therefore was not in fact fetched that day. But I know she was fetched the following day and that is the very last sign of life I ever had from her.

Tape 3: 46 minutes 15 seconds

Document 11

RP: That is the letter from a member of the Friends Ambulance Unit I mentioned earlier, who brought me the very sad news that she had been to my house and had spoken to the caretakers who had been very good to my parents and they said that, had my parents returned or survived, they would certainly have got in touch with them and how very sorry and sad she was to have to give me that news.

Tape 3: 46 minutes 54 seconds

Document 12

RP: Now this is a very detailed letter from Frau Kühn, who was the wife of the caretaker, they were both caretakers really, sent in June '46, the first contact I'd had from them at all, saying, telling me of the fate of my parents and stressing what very good people they were, how very good they had been to them. And I know that that

applied also the other way round, that these people had been very good to my parents and really were in their confidence, and they were really very, very sad indeed to find that they-, what had befallen them. But it was a very touching letter and I was very touched to receive it.

Tape 3: 47 minutes 52 seconds

Document 13

RP: Those two are photographs of my wedding day, just my husband and myself outside the vicarage at Rubery, and my husband, myself and his parents at the same place, in September 1943.

Tape 3: 48 minutes 16 seconds

Document 14

RP: Sadly, the last photograph taken of my husband, taken about six months before he died at a friend's house, actually the friend I mentioned earlier, who was the widow of the cousin whom I unexpectedly saw outside the train when I arrived at Waterloo. I don't know if you noticed the halo over the top of my head

Tape 3: 48 minutes 51 seconds

END