

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Eva Brust Cooper
December 9, 1991
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Eva Brust Cooper, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on December 9, 1991 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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EVA BRUST COOPER
December 9, 1991

01:00:18

Q: Could you tell us your full name please?

A: Yes, my name is Eva Cooper. My maiden name was Eva Brust and I was born in Budapest in Hungary.

Q: And when were you born?

A: I was born in 1934.

Q: And could you tell us a little bit about your life before the war.

A: My life before the war was very, very nice. I remember living in a very nice house, actually an apartment on the Pest side of Budapest. You probably know the city is divided by the Danube and the part that I lived in we had mostly apartment houses as opposed to the other part which was private homes. And I was...uh...besides my parents, obviously, I had...uh...nannies and governesses and we led a very, very comfortable life with lots of vacations and...uh.. parties and I went to elementary school. And... uh...in school we had...uh...we had religious education in the public school system...uh...besides the languages, arts, geography, history and math, everybody went to their own religious classes during that particular period so as Jewish children went to a class where a Rabbi taught Jewish history, Hebrew, whatever. Catholics went to Catholic class and Protestants went to Protestant class and everybody mingled and got along very well and I was never aware of Jewish or not Jewish or anything else pertaining to religion until much later.

01:01:52

And until 1944, which was when I was 10 years old, I really don't recall anything particularly disrupting my life. In retrospect, now I understand that many things were going on since 1939. I was aware that my father was in labor camp, but I thought that was just being a soldier and he always came back. Uh...He went several times and came back and I...my mother did go help my father...run my father's business. My father was in paper...wholesale paper manufacturing business. Uh...But otherwise I, personally, was not aware of having to be afraid or being concerned until 1944. And that was a particularly special day in my life because my birthday is March 18th and I was having my 10th birthday party in my...my home with all my friends. They were really my parents' friends, children who I was brought up with, as well as some of the mothers and a lot of the nannies or governesses. And it was an early evening party of hot dogs, and...uh...we lived on a fairly main street. We heard marching of soldiers and we looked out the window and the German

army at that point, to my recall, was occupying Budapest. Hungary was the last of the Eastern European countries to be occupied. Poland and the other countries had already had German troops in them.

01:03:25

And everybody started running around and there went my party. Everybody went home. And the reason being that they were all afraid and that the Germans at that time were occupying Budapest and...uh...that's when our whole world really fell apart. Uh...There were a lot of negotiations. I didn't really know what was going on. Everybody tried to keep the children from worrying and...uh...we lived in...uh...a designated house that was called the Jewish house...uh... which happened to have been the building which we were in. What that meant is that several houses, apartment houses, were designated Jewish houses where the Christians had the option to stay or go. In a Jewish house, the Jews stayed and the ones that were not the Jewish houses, the Jews had to leave. Also we had a fairly large apartment, and we were only allowed to live in one room. But because my father was fairly active in the Jewish community, we were able to pick the families to move into all the other rooms. So we had friends and family move in. Uh...My parents' bedroom because our...our room. We had friends in the living room and somebody else in the dining room and somebody else in my...in my old room. Uh...That's when I first was aware of the fact that things were not quite the same. Also, one of the laws that came to pass at the time was that Jews could not have help, servants or whatever you want to call them. And...uh...so all our so-called staff, which consisted of my governess and a cook and a maid, had to leave. Uh...

01:05:14

Q: What were the sanitary facilities like?

A: Uh...Well, it was difficult because we had bathrooms and all that but it was a...it was really really interesting from a child's point of view. It was a time of sharing and pulling together. I was an only child, so I thought it was just terrific to have all these children running around and I was always brought up very properly, to behave myself and speak when I was spoken to, and here they were all these people running around. And one of my father's very good friends who was a lawyer and had a great deal of...a tremendous sense of humor wrote poetry for the bathroom, to the effect that the men were to put the toilet seats down after use and all sorts of funny things. We just thought that this was great fun and we played jokes...uh...on the grownups and...uh...but things did progressively get worse because... And one of my first personal experiences as a child was when a little girl who lived in the building, who stayed in the building...all the Gentiles chose to stay in the building in their own apartments, but they kept the whole apartment. And one little girl said...I asked if I could play with her in that afternoon as we usually had, and she said no, she couldn't play with me. I said, "Well, how about tomorrow?" And she said, "No, she can't play with me tomorrow either." And I said, "Well, why not?" And she said, "Because you're Jewish." And I said, "Well, I don't really understand what that means or what does that have to do with

anything anyhow.” And she said well, she didn't know either, but her parents said that she couldn't play with a Jewish child.” So...

01:06:48

Q: What was a typical day like for you?

A: Well, by this time we weren't going to school. We were only ...Jews were only allowed to shop and market in the stores late in the afternoon. They were only allowed on the street ...uh...for an hour or so, when the produce and most of the stuff was gone and what was there was not terrific. Uh...my father would go to the Jewish Community Center to see what he could do. Uh...My father was a prominent person in the Jewish community so that the wealthy Jews still had some influence and were able to do such things, such as acquiring the...the Star for our building to remain in our house and...uh...to get much more information than we would have gotten otherwise.

01:07:41

Q: Tell us about the Star.

A: There was a Star outside the house that designated being a Jewish building so anybody that would pass by that was not Jewish building would know that this was a Jewish Star...Jewish house and...uh...the Jews had to wear yellow Stars. Had to be exactly put on each item of clothes as a certain measurement that had to be...and it had to be put on the left upper shoulder of each garment. In other words, that when you went out on the street, you should always be identified and if somebody wanted to spit on you, kick you, shoot you, take you away, that's what you were to do.

Q: Did you go out on the streets?

A: Yes, I did go out on the streets. We did go out. I have this...my...my little boyfriend who is 11, and he and I would go out and do some stuff in the neighborhood. We would also buy newspapers and sell them within the building. And...uh...we also, I remember...nobody in my family smoked, but people did. Europeans smoked a lot. And we would pick up cigarette butts from everybody...wherever we could find them, take out the leftover tobacco and roll them in tissue paper. I have no idea where we got the tissue paper. And sell them to the smokers, because there was a shortage of all things. And so having this and, of course, the fact that we were children everybody bought it for us and we decided that we would support our parents because we did realize that nobody was working. And I'm not sure we supported them, but it was again great fun.

01:09:19

Q: Did you have any frightening instances on the street?

A: No, I never had any frightening instances on the street. No. Uh...I did have...uh...a lot of fun things in the... in the apartment as a I said because we were friends and we had all the people. We played tricks on people and stuff like that. But, it was getting to be frightening because you ...you had sense of doom. You had a sense that there was... there was a lot of whispering going on, and sometimes not knowing what is going on is almost as bad as sharing and being told that okay, these are the things that can happen. Uh...There were a lot of trucks...uh...obviously, going on the street with lots of people in it, and everybody was making up stories about where they were going. Labor camp, to the country, all sorts of things, but it was...it was getting obvious even at my age that people were being picked up, but I didn't know why. And this lasted from about the middle of March until...uh...the fall in October. And in October, the Jewish houses did no longer protect the people that were there. Uh...my parents were able to...uh...get the Wallenberg protection papers. Raoul Wallenberg, under the Swedish king, was able to protect and save a lot of people. They were designated Swedish houses, protectorates, where they claimed that Jews could be saved and we did go to such a house...uh...for one night and they had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people. I don't know how many. But my parents decided that there were just two many Jews under one roof and if the...if the Germans really wanted to get rid of a whole bunch at a time, we would be better off going somewhere else where...where it would not be so obvious that we're together. I think that night that we left our home in October was the first time that I was really scared and I think that was the experience that, as a young adult, stayed with me for a long time.

01:11:23

I was very attached to a pillow that I carried. We had no suitcases to take with us because we had to travel light. Uh...we were dressed, all of us, in several layers of clothes so as to have some warmth and have some change and I did take my pillow. And...uh...I also had long...long hair. I had long braids which were cut in case the sanitary facilities were non existent and I shouldn't get lice. And I remember asking my parents...uh...where're we going to sleep that night. And my parents said, "We didn't know." We were just hoping that somebody would take us in. I said, "But we have to have a bed. We have to sleep." And that was really very upsetting and as I said that took me a long time. I always like to know where I'm going to sleep. I don't like to go. I have to know where my bed is going to be. And we went to somebody's house who took us in for one night, that night, and again everybody whispered and it was really scary. People were being picked up on the street. And from then on, we went to several places.

01:12:33

Q: Did you actually see people being picked up?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were your thoughts as a child?

A: That I didn't know where they were going, and I didn't really get a lot of answers. I mean I was asking questions, but I guess my parents were...this was not the time for the truth. It was just time for me to be quiet and do what I was told. I remember very distinctly once taking issue with something that I had seen, and my mother gave me a very stern lecture and she said that if she says it's black and if I know that it is white, but if she said that it is black, it is black and I am never, ever to question because that's how people get killed. And this was not a time that people came up and said, "Are you Jewish," and my parents obviously were going to say no, and if I would have answered, "Oh, yes, we are Jewish. Why are you telling a lie?" That could get you into a lot of trouble. So I was really at a very young age told...was told to just do what I'm told and not to ask questions.

01:13:28

Q: Were you still wearing your star?

A: No. No. At this time we were so serious. This was not admitting to being a Jew. This was hiding...uh...and my mother did not look Jewish. My father did. And, of course, it's very easy to determine if a man is Jewish or isn't, especially in those days so that my mother always did all the talking. And...uh...she was very competent and very strong willed and...uh...was able to handle these situations. We did go to somebody's house where we stayed for two weeks. Uh...A man worked for my father and my father gave him the position as superintendent of one of the houses, apartment houses, that my father owned, and he let us stay in the basement...uh...for a couple of days, and brought us food whenever he could. And a very nice family who I think was aware that something that was going on, told the superintendent...uh...that they were going to be away for quite awhile and sort of insinuating that without their knowledge but it's okay, if we stayed in their apartment. Uh...I don't think we ever met them, but that's what the superintendent told us, that it's okay for us to be taken to this spot. He would bring us a tray. There was a radio. Uh...We listened to...uh...Radio Free Europe, and this lady happened to have had the best collection of child...of children's books, and I remember reading Little Lord Fauntleroy and a lot of the children's classics. I remember that very well. I was a avid reader, and that was the only place during the war that there were books that I read. I used to remember taking a bath. I was too hot and I almost passed out. And one of the things that happened that I recall very clearly...and it's interesting because my mother just finished her interview and she didn't mention it...my father was having a kidney stone attack or had...we thought he had a kidney stone, and he was having an attack. And he had no choice. He had to go to a doctor.

01:15:27

So he went and he left...uh...quite late in the afternoon so as...so as to be dark and my mother and I sat there wondering if he would ever return, if he was going to be caught or what. But he had to go because he had I guess ...I'm not sure but he must have had a kidney problem

before because the choice was not to stay. It was not going to go away. Anyhow, he returned. I don't know what happened to the kidney or the stone, but he came back. And from then on, we went to a place in the country, a very beautiful house. And by this time, there was a lot of bombing going on because the Russians and Americans were bombing. The Germans were starting to lose the war, so their interest in the Jews were getting less except if they happened to see any, they shot them. But I mean, it was not as active involvement in killing the Jews as to save their necks because they were losing the war. I remember somebody being shot. I think it was a Russian or a German. I'm not sure. But I know there was a dead body, and somebody went out and stole their shoes or whatever they could off the body. But I don't really remember the details. I just know that this was a body and people went and stole things off the body because people were now at this point didn't have shoes, didn't have clothes. The food situation was terrible. And I was an obnoxious, terrible eater. I still am. I don't eat if I don't like it. And most of the children just ate whatever there was to eat, including horsemeat off dead horses, but I was not having anything to do with that. So I had a hard time being fed because sometimes when something was found that was edible I save it up for a week and chop up little pieces of it and I would just eat it because I wouldn't eat if I didn't like it.

01:17:16

Q: What was your contact with other children then?

A: Very little. At one point, we were being hidden and there was another child there. And that's when I was told that I was not to say that we were in hiding, that we were friends of the family. And I really don't remember too much about that.

Q: What were the living conditions at that point?

A: Terrible.

Q: Can you describe them?

A: We slept on the floor...on beds...as groups of people, together. I don't remember the sanitary conditions as far as baths or showers. I remember my mother mending things when they were torn. Wearing the same dress, you know, over and over again. Sometimes rinsing things out in little pails if there was enough time for it to dry to wear again. And then as the bombing got worse and worse, we moved. We didn't move, we walked to the countryside. I wouldn't call it a suburb. It was really countryside, village, peasants, a lot of poor people lived there.

Q: Before we go into that, is there any story about your mother making a cake?

01:18:30

A Oh, yes. This is as a matter of fact happened in the country. I was, as I said, a very bad eater and my mother, some way or other...out on a walk, saw some people that had some food and stole an egg. And out of this egg, she whipped up a I guess what you could call yellow cake thing and there was the one egg and I guess she had the other ingredients. So I ate that for a very, very long time. And then this...this was in the country and there was a lot of bombing going on. It was sort of getting towards the end of the war. We all slept on the floor. Usually I slept between my parents. The toilets there I remember, they were on the outside. We used to take trips to go to...to an outhouse kind of a thing.

Q: About how many people were with you?

A: I don't know, but a lot. I think maybe a dozen or...I mean, not fifty or a hundred but maybe a couple of dozen people.

Q: All Jews?

A: No. Not Jews. At this point there was a mixture of people because the war was ending and people were hiding. There was...at this point in the war, people tried to keep alive from bombings that were going on. There were a lot of shooting and bombs and this all sorts of things going on as far as our physical safety. And at one point I remember and I was going to ask my mother and I don't remember but we were in front of the firing line. We Were lined up to be shot and I think they were by Russians, but then something happened and we all walked away. But I remmeber thinking that we were going to be shot. I mean, I was aware of the fact that there was a lineup and there were guns.

01:20:20

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about how you got into the line?

A: We were...we were walking. We were walking from one place to another place, and we were caught. And whoever was with us...there were other people with us...

Q: Who caught you?

A: The...the soldiers. And...uh...and that's really all I remember. I don't really remember...I know there were bad guys, but I don't know whose side they were on. By this time, the Russians started coming. And they kept saying that they were winning the war, and there were not too many Germans around.

Q: Do you remember being in the line?

A: Yes. Oh, yes.

Q: What...do you remember your feelings as a child?

A: Yes. I was scared. I mean, I don't know if I thought about death as far as that's concerned, but I know that it was bad.

Q: How many people were in the line?

A: I think two dozen.

Q: And what were their feelings there?

A: I mean, there was a lot of, you know, crying out and talking and negotiating and foreign languages and stuff like that. And then all of a sudden it was dispersed and we just walked away. And then we stated walking back toward Budapest because we were told that the Russians and the Americans and the English, liberation had occurred and that the Germans were gone. And it took a long time to come back because the roads were bad. There were a lot of bodies and still there was still some bombing going on because there were still groups of Germans all over the place.

01:21:41

Q: What was your reaction when you would see a dead body?

A: I just wanted to...oh, I think we were all very happy to see them, especially if they were German. I mean, there was like...like almost a game of...of Germans. I remember later when we were back in Budapest. I was back in school. The Germans were being hung outside on trees and stuff, and I remember everybody was very joyful and as a child, you just sort of go along with it and just...it almost becomes meaningless. You just walk through the bodies, and you're just happy you're alive. And we walked back...

Q: Do you remember the physical exhaustion?

A: Yes. Especially with a child, you know. You're always tired and you want to stop and you couldn't stop. You had to go to the next destination.

01:22:30

Q: What condition were your clothes in at this point?

A: Not very good. Funny, I don't remember anything about shoes. But I...I...just...I don't know. Of course, we were also cold, because by this time, you know, we had gone through the winter, and I remember being cold. I still am. I'm always cold. My hands are always cold. And my hands and feet were frozen and...

Q: Did you ever leave your parents' side at this point?

A: No. No. At one point, I was supposed to be sent to a convent. And also some arrangements were made. A lot of Jewish children were being sent to convents because the nuns were going to take care of them and save them. And then...I don't think I wanted to go and my parents just decided that we would all get through the whole thing together or...or not at all.

Q: Any question of conversion for you?

A: Yes. Actually, before all this, we were told that...that...if you had non-Jewish papers, Catholic papers...by a certain date that you would be...considered a half-Jew and possibly not be taken to concentration camp or whatever. So we did acquire Catholic papers and my father didn't. My mother and I went to church and we learned whatever it is. I don't...Cath...whatever you call it.

Q: Catechism.

A: Catechism and the beads and all that kind of stuff. And we actually had to take a test or at least I remember taking one, and I remember reciting the...uh...what everyone recites, and so we had papers. I don't know if my mother still has them, but we had papers saying that we were converted. My father wouldn't do it, but he thought it would be a good protection for us. Subsequently it didn't help anybody anyhow because it was just another gimmick, but we did have the papers.

Q: What was the attitude of priests and nuns during your classes and learning?

A: Fine. They were happy to convert, and I guess they were hoping maybe ultimately that people would remain. And a lot did. A lot of people who came to this country when we came...families of my parents I knew had converted when they came to this country, raised their children as non-Jews. Well, we always remained Jewish and after the war was over the paper that was just a piece of paper that may have saved our lives at the time, but it probably wouldn't have. So it sort of served its purpose.

01:25:00

Q: When you were out of the country, were you aware of what was happening in other parts of Europe and the work camps? Do your parents talk to you about it?

A: Yes. Yes. By that time we were aware of concentration camps. I don't know if I personally knew what that meant and I think the grownups had difficulty acknowledging that there could be such a thing as...as...as ovens where they...where they gassed people. I mean, to comprehend that whole thing is...is very, very difficult. And a lot of people who should have at the time believed that it existed refused to believe it because it was so mind-boggling and I don't really think I had any particular feelings or total awareness of just exactly...I knew we

were in hiding and I knew we were running away from being taken away. And then as we started coming back, I remember my father saying that if there was anybody in our home he would just kill them. Which is most unlikely because he was a very, very gentle man. But you do get angry. But I think it was when it was all over for us, I think it was a relief that it was over and some of the anger kind of went away. And I am an only child and since my parents and I survived together, that was already a good beginning. A tremendous amount of our relatives were gassed in Auschwitz. Most of these relatives being my grandmother's sisters, brothers, and their children. Then after the war were the horrors of identifying people. Yes.

Q: What were your thoughts as you were coming back to your apartment?

A: I just wanted to go home. I had enough of all this.

Q: So you went back to your apartment. What were your feelings?

A: I went back to the apartment. Glad to be home.

Q: What did you do when you got back?

A: The apartment was a mess. Interestingly enough, the furniture and all, that was there. It was not totally destroyed. Windows were gone from bombings. This had nothing to do with the Germans. This was, you know, the shooting. And...life just short of started all over again. I went back to school. People found whoever they found. People cried. They cleaned up...the cleanup process was really the bodies and they were just all over the place. At our temple...in the backyard of the temple -- the court I guess is what you would call it -- became a graveyard for those who could not be identified or they were such...they were so totally disfigured that they were not recognized. My father went to identify people and, you know, one of the ways to identify these bodies that were practically not recognizable through their teeth, through dental something. I'm not sure what, but it was like their teeth or through birthmarks, stuff like that. So that was a horrible experience.

01:27:59

Q: This is something you witnessed?

A: Yes. And...uh...

Q: And your thoughts when you would see sights like this?

A: Scared. And...but I guess it's interesting, you know, from a child's point of view, because I...I was with my parents. I always felt a certain amount of security and that I really think is what helped me come out of it fairly well-adjusted, I guess. For a long time as an adult in this country or as a young adult, I never wanted to go anywhere without knowing where I'm

going to sleep and I do not like sirens because we always ran to the shelter and I always knew that when the bombing started that there was the potential of being killed.

Q: What kind of shelters did you go to?

A: Well, when we were still living in our house, there was...the basements, became bomb shelters and they were not set up with first aid. There were underground facilities under the building, and whenever the bombings and sirens went off, everybody ran to the shelters.

Q: What did you take with you?

A: Nothing. Just whatever we had. Some food, if there was any to be had. A flashlight, that kind of thing. As a child, you were just sort of dragged along to go and be quiet, and that was a safe place to be and when the...uh...when it was over, then you came back up again. And at this point it was obvious that many buildings were bombed out and sometimes people died. So, you know, toward the end of the war, you didn't know if you were going to survive because...or not survive because you were a Jew or just because you could get killed from the bombs.

Q: Did you ever talk about not surviving with your parents?

A: No. No. And so by 1945 we were back home. My father tried to get his business back and for a while it looked like everything was going to go back to normal, but then the Russians sort of started taking over what the Germans had taken over before. And my grandparents had come to this country in 1939 to visit the World's Fair and my grandfather I guess he was smarter than most of us, had planned to stay. He just didn't tell my grandmother because she wouldn't have left. And so we came out here to this country in 1947. It took a while to get papers and visas and all that kind of stuff.

01:30:30

Q: When you first came back to the apartment, did you try to look up friends?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Some survived.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What did you talk about with them?

A: Most of my friends were children of my parents' friends and they all survived. And I think we were just really talking about all the things that happened and busy listening or not listening to each other's stories. A lot of these youngsters...well, they're not youngsters any

more, they're my age. A lot of them are in the States and Canada. Some have stayed in Budapest. I have not stayed in touch with any of them.

Q: What are some of your feelings about leaving Budapest to come to this country.

A: I didn't want to leave.

Q: Why not?

A: Well, that was my home. I mean, after...after the war was over, there were my friends. There was my family, whatever there was, and it was an adventure coming here and we came through Paris and then we went to England and we sailed on the Mauretania, which doesn't exist any more, but it was a Cunard Line and we travelled first class. It was a wonderful trip. And then when we came here, it was a very, very new life for everybody. But a child adjusts very quickly.

01:31:47

Q: Did your father have any experience with Adolph Eichmann?

A: Yes. My father, because he was an important person in the Jewish community, met anybody and everybody that came to do any kind of negotiating and basically Eichmann wanted money from the Jewish community and the wealthy Hungarian Jewish Community had a great deal of money and he made all sorts of deals to promise to release some people or take less people to prison camps for money. So it was a trade. And my father was in on some of the negotiations. They were not intimate friends, but as my mother told the story, that he was a perfect gentleman and elegantly dressed, as all Germans were, as opposed to the Russians, who were boors and did not, you know, their uniforms were not as the Germans' were. The Germans always were saluted and were, you know, in their own horrible way were always perfectly behaved. Such as Eichmann who obviously was not a perfect gentleman otherwise. And the Russians were...were just the opposite. But when the war was over, there were a lot of American soldiers were and my parents became quite friendly with some of them. And the, as I said, the wheels started working...to my father, was not really thrilled about coming to this country in the beginning. I mean, he thought that everything was just...that was his home, and...

Q: What were your feelings to go out on the streets as a child when the freedom came about? Were you...did your parents let you go out after the war was over?

01:33:36

A: Yes. No...after the war was over, for your own personal safety, there was no...there was no more problem. Very slowly it was really the government, because of the Russians, the

Americans left and and the Russians stayed. But that took a while.

Q: Did you go back to school?

A: Oh, yes, I went back to school.

01:34:00

Q: And what were your experiences with your non-Jewish classmates?

A: It all passed. As a matter of fact, one of my best friends was non-Jewish, and at one point after coming out to this country, I tried to bring her out because she was having hard times there. And I tried through a Jewish agency and through a Catholic agency to bring her out and then I lost track. But I never had any...my only experience with...with so-called anitsematism besides the large scale of things was with one child who said she couldn't play with me because I was Jewish. But otherwise, it was not a one-to-one thing. It was the whole world was collapsing and being Jewish I was part of that world.

Q: But you didn't feel singled out at school after the war was all over?

A: No. Not at all.

01:34:50

Q: And then what were your thoughts as you were travelling from city to city to come to the United States?

A: Well, that part was really...again, it was a very nice trip. It was a pleasure trip coming out. I mean, we weren't running away with...with clothes on our backs. By this time, my father had acquired some of his properties back. We weren't penniless. We weren't escaping. We packed our belongings and we were taking a trip. We had left options that if my parents didn't like it here to come back, to go back to Budapest. Things were packed, ready to be shipped if we had said to ship it or not. And as I said, we came out first class and my grandfather was here. My uncle was here. We had relatives here. It was a difficult adjustment for my parents. New language. New country. Different lifestyle. My father was a very prominent person in Budapest, and here he wasn't. So it took a long time for him to adjust...and probably a little bit faster for my mother. But I went to school. I literally got off the boat, went to camp, and then went to school. And except for the fact that I spoke with an accent and I was probably a little embarrassed that my parents did, I just became an American teenager.

01:36:10

Q: Where did you settle?

A: In New York. I lived in New York all my young and old adult life. I went to schools in Manhattan and I have one daughter and three grandsons. And that's the story. I think that I got involved with the Holocaust Museum...actually, my daughter had pointed out to me about a year ago a New York magazine had written an article about the Hidden Children Conference that had taken place last year in the summer, and she thought it would be something...something I should look into. And I did. And I did attend the Conference and I realize that with my generation...it's kind of the end of the road for the people that have been there, that participated. That after me it's just history, which is very different from having been there. And I think that's for us who...whatever way participated in the war, it's very important to record the history, to tell our children and their children. And when I attended the Conference, I went with mixed feelings, thinking, you know, the war is over. This was fifty or forty years ago. What am I doing here? And I found the Conference very, very moving. I found a lot of Hungarians. Some from similar and some from different backgrounds. A lot of the nationalities formed support groups within themselves. The Hungarian women of my generation formed a group. The Hungarian women that have been meeting monthly and during the Conference besides meetings and people still searching for each other and people finding each other...there was also a large library of books on the Holocaust.

01:38:17

And I bought one book: the name of it was Remember Never to Forget. And it was a book written for children in a very simplistic way with pictures, black and white barbed wire, but nothing particularly scary, certainly if you don't know what it's all about. And I bought the book thinking that one of the days when my grandchildren are old enough, I will read it to them. And I forgot all about it. And this summer I took my oldest grandson who is six and a half to the train to pick up somebody and as we were standing at the train station, he raised his right hand in sort of a Hitler salute and said, "Heil Hitler." And I was very upset and I tried very hard not to scare him. He didn't think he was doing anything bad. And we sat down on a bench and I said, "Adam, I don't ever want you to say that again, and I want to tell you a little bit about who Hitler was, what he did, and how it affected me." And he really was fascinated. He's a very bright little boy and he's very curious. And I said, "When we go home, I have a book that I'm going to read to you," which I subsequently did. But the reason he did this "Heil Hitler", because we had been watching "The Sound of Music", and he loved the music and that was one of the salutes. So that's where it all came from. But the concept was still there and I had to get rid of his other brothers, because they really were too young, and he and I went into a room and read this story. And since then he has very often asked me to tell him stories.

Q: Any other final message you would like to leave?

A: Yes. It should never happen again. That's it.

Q: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

01:40:07