

1-5-1975

Margaret Weininger, transcript only

Margaret Weininger

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories>

Recommended Citation

Weininger, Margaret, "Margaret Weininger, transcript only" (1975). *Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews*. 15.
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories/15>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections And Archives at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact digitalworks@union.edu.

Margaret Weininger
Greta Weininger

INTERVIEWER

LEWIS

- L.B. Mrs. Weininger, can you hear me now? Fine. Could you speak up too, so the machine could pick you up? If you could just speak up. You raise your voice.
- G.W. Talking is hard for me.
- L.B. Sure. Well, we'll just talk a little bit. What is your name?
- G.W. My name is Greta Weininger.
- L.B. Gretel?
- G.W. Not Gretel but Greta (Grete).
- L.B. And your maiden name was - what?
- G.W. My maiden name was Kulka.
- L.B. Kulka. And you were born, where?
- G.W. I was born in Austria. But this part is now Czechoslovakia after the first war this part of the country came to be Czechoslovakia.
- L.B. Which part?
- G.W. The part of the country where I was born.
- L.B. Which part was that, was it Moravia...?
- G.W. (*As what her I do not*) No. My parents moved. *Here anymore.*
- L.B. When was this?
- G.W. What time it was? I was seven years old.
- L.B. Could you tell me what year you were born?
- G.W. (Laughs) Oh! 1892.
- L.B. 1892. And you were born, now was this Bohemia, ~~Moravia~~ Moravia...?
- G.W. Moravia. And my parents moved to a very nice but little town, I think at that time there were 25,000 inhabitants.
- L.B. Oh. That's where they moved to?
- G.W. And this town was really famous for its culture.
- L.B. What was the name of the town?
- G.W. Despite the smallness of the town, it had the best schools, you know. We had a very good theater. We had opera performances. We had classics, the German classics of course, and this town was mostly German not Czech, but is now completely Czech. Trappau.
- L.B. Could you show me on the map. Now here's Czechoslovakia...about where would it would be? ...So that would be northeastern Czechoslovakia.
- G.W. It's quite different now. Not far from the German border. You know. When I came to study at the University of Vienna much later, people asked me if I was German. We called this Germany Reichsdeutsche. It was a different Austria because I spoke German, not the German dialect, ~~was~~ a touch of Reichsdeutsche
- J.W. (her son) If you're concerned about the location it's more or less near the point where Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany met. But the borders moved from time to time.
- L.B. You bet they did. Now you were born in 1892, in Moravia and at seven you remember moving. Right. To Troppau, right? How many children were in your family?
- G.W. Four. I was the third one. I had an older brother and older sister and when I was almost nine years old my youngest brother was born. We, four, two boys and two girls. *was*
- L.B. Right. And could you tell me what your father did?
- G.W. He was a merchant, you know. But he was not healthy.
- L.B. Not healthy?
- G.W. I never knew him as a real healthy man. Now I know that in my opinion he was suffering ^{from} emphysema. But at that time nobody knew about it, emphysema any more and so when I...when we moved the doctor said he had to give up business and he couldn't work any more.
- L.B. So how was your family supported?
- G.W. My father had saved money, we had lived very modestly and father invested his money in real estate. Sometimes it was better, sometimes he lost money.
- L.B. So he became an investment, uh, man essentially.
- G.W. But we had a wonderful life, a wonderful childhood. My grandfather, my father's father was a real scholar. He was a rabbi in a very small town, Moravian town.

- L.B. What town? Do you remember the name of the town?
- G.W. And he died when I was eleven years old.
- J.W. Where?
- M.W. (daughter in law) Mother, would you tell me about Leipnitz (?) His name was Solomon, right?
- L.B. Solomon Weininger?
- G.W. No, no. Solomon Kulka.
- L.B. Oh, Kulka. It sounds like a Czech name, not like a German name.
- G.W. No, it is a Czech name.
- L.B. Now, what did you speak in your parents' home?
- G.W. German. I didn't even know Czech. Later on when I was grown up already my parents moved to another Czech town because at that time my father really didn't have ^{much} money left and he ~~had~~ bought a kind of a liquor store, you know, and really my mother did most of the work. Because my father had to sleep long, we children went on tiptoe, in the morning before we went to school, in order not to wake my father. But we had a wonderful life. My father loved books. We had a real, very nice library and his ^{own} authors in different editions. For instance, Heine we had in three editions and you know Heine?
- L.B. Oh yes. Um-hmm. So you were in the Austria - Hungarian Empire...
- G.W. That was all Austria.
- L.B. That was the Austrian- Hungarian Empire at that time. ^{you were there in 1899} Now let me get a line. You were seven and you moved to Troppau, and at that time was your youngest brother born yet?
- G.W. He was the only one who was born there.
- L.B. All right. Now did you go to school there? All of you, all four.
- G.W. My youngest brother only the first grade.
- L.B. He was too little, right. Now, what kind of a school did you go to?
- G.W. It was the Austrian schools. An elementary school, usually the elementary school had five grades, but if you were a good student, could get from fourth grade the high school. ^{for}
- L.B. To the gymnasium, was that next?
- G.W. There were no high schools for girls at that time. There was a , you would call it a middle school, a ~~middle~~ middle school, three years afterwards. You had to go to school until you were fourteen.
- L.B. Boys and girls? Boys and girls. (louder - Mrs. Weininger was very hard of hearing.)
- G.W. Boys and girls. But there was a high school for boys.
- L.B. But no gymnasium for girls.
- G.W. Not even when I was already sixteen years old I couldn't get to a high school.
- L.B. But you went to a University? So how did you study?
- G.W. I had a very complicated education. We went to this school. This school was public school, we didn't have to pay anything. But we had to have our own books, we never got our books from the school. But we bought them second hand from the kids who left school, you know, who left that grade, because the books weren't changed so much, the text books.
- L.B. We still do that, here.
- G.W. I understand they change the books here all the time.
- L.B. But they still buy second hand books. So what happened then when you finished your fifth grade?
- G.W. I had a very funny education/ First two years, in the little town where I was born my sister and I went to a convent school because supposedly they were much better than the public schools. Then we moved and I went to a Jewish folk school for two years. This Jewish folk school had only four grades. And then I went again to the public school for three years, and then it was really very difficult to get a good education although I think when I see what ~~they~~ the kids here do, how few essays they have to write, you know, for instance, we had...when I was 10 years old I wrote much longer and better essays than the kids here. We had to. And especially on top ^{in Troppau} ~~the~~ in schools, you know?

- L.B. Let me go back to before Troppau. You went to a convent in the town you were born, right? Now, what was the name of this town, do you remember?
- G.W. Yah. Witkowitz. It had big iron works, coal mines but the name doesn't exist any more because this little town was united with a larger town and its Czech, completely Czech, Morostrestova. It has also a German name, Marisch, Marisch means Moravian Ostrau.
- L.B. East?
- J.W. No, it's just a name. Osts Ostrau in German and Ostrava in Czech.
- L.B. Now, what kind of a convent did you go to? What order, do you remember?
- G.W. With the nuns.
- L.B. You don't know what order?
- G.W. No.
- L.B. What did you learn there and what language did they speak? German?
- G.W. Yah.
- L.B. So it was a German Catholic order?
- G.W. Yah.
- L.B. And what subjects did you study there?
- G.W. Reading, writing, arithmetic and we learned some geography already there, when we were seven years old.
- L.B. You're the first person we've spoken to that has had any background like this at all. Everyone else that we've spoken to has had some Hebrew or Yiddish, in their background. Especially Hebrew for the men and then amongst the women it was Yiddish. Was there anything like this in your education, in your background?
- G.W. We had Hebrew lessons separately.
- L.B. When, at home?
- G.W. No we went to the teacher. And I remember he was very strict.
- L.B. At what age did you start Hebrew do you remember?
- G.W. In the second year.
- L.B. So you were very young.
- G.W. You know that was a funny thing about Austria. Austria had no separation of state and church, and consequently it was a part of the instruction, religion. Like any other subject, twice a week we had so-called religious instruction.
- L.B. In the Catholic religion? But it was a very liberal state compared to the others?
- G.W. It was not liberal at all.
- L.B. What was it if it was not liberal,?
- G.W. It's very hard to say. The official title was a constitutional monarchy. And there was the Emperor and there were the - it's very hard how to explain - at that time it was not Austria, but the Austrian Hungarian monarchy. And the Czechs in Bohemia belonged also. But they were really suppressed, oppressed.
- L.B. But you were Jews.
- G.W. We were Jews.
- L.B. Now, how were you treated?
- G.W. I was too young to know then.
- L.B. Did you hear your parents talk?
- G.W. My parents talk?
- L.B. About how Jews were treated there?
- G.W. It was terrific anti-semitism.
- L.B. There was, in these small towns
- G.W. In the small towns, no. We didn't go out so much. We stayed at home. Our life turned around the house and the family. My father had sisters, he was the oldest, and they all worshipped him and they came and visited us for weeks. My grandfather came for many weeks. In the family we had so much conversation.
- L.B. Did they all live near Troppau?
- G.W. No. Only the family of my mother lived in Troppau, part of it, my grandparents, lived there.
- L.B. Where did your father's family live?
- G.W. My grandfather lived in that small town where he was a rabbi but he was mostly travelling, when he was older you know.

L.B. And your aunts?

G.W. He gave lectures in Germany and everywhere. (coughs)
(Unintelligible interjection from daughter-in-law - He also wrote you know... You know that mother.)

~~Grdx~~

L.B. Now your grandfather wrote a history of Josephus Flavius?

G.W. My grandfather, my father's father wrote, who was a rabbi, wrote a...he wrote other things too, that was really a big, big work,...

J.W. What was the subject?

G.W. Josephus Flavius, the man who was treated in Feuchtwanger's books, you know?

L.B. No, I haven't read Feuchtwanger.

G.W. These are very good books. You should read it. They are translated from German into English.

L.B. Now tell me, you say it was not a liberal government and yet you don't remember having any problems as Jews? When you were little I'm talking about now.

G.W. When I was in Troppau I knew about it of course.

L.B. What did you know?

G.W. I know that there were, the people, the Gentiles, they were of course in the majority, far in the majority, there were not so many () they were all German Nationals, I mean real, the precursors of the Nazis, you know. And I had very good friends in school. We went to school together. We went from school home but I was never invited to their house, would never have been invited in a Gentile's house. They wouldn't have come to my house.

L.B. Now were these children mostly Catholic?

G.W. Mostly Catholic. A few Protestants. There was only one Protestant church and there were many Catholic churches in the town but only one Protestant. I had only one Protestant school friend and I always suspected her of being of Jewish descent. There were many, many baptized Jews at that time.

L.B. Did you have any Jewish friends?

G.W. A lot.

L.B. Now, where did you meet them? Were there many Jews in this Troppau, for example?

G.W. Yes.

L.B. How many Jewish families were there?

G.W. Oh, I don't know. I really can't say.

L.B. Five? Ten?

G.W. Oh, more.

L.B. One hundred?

G.W. About, yah.

L.B. About one hundred. Did you live in a separate, of the town?

G.W. No. But where my grandfather lived, Leipzig, there was a separate town, and they had their separate mail even.

L.B. And this is still in the Austrian Empire?

G.W. Austrian Empire, yah.

L.B. Fascinating. Now let me see what else I wanted to ask you about this time. Oh, tell me what kind of a house you lived in? Was it brick, was it wooden?

G.W. No, there were no wooden houses at all, even in the smallest villages. Because the bricks were cheaper than the wood. There were no wooden houses there. We all lived in solid houses. We lived in an apartment. My mother was a very nervous woman because of, I think, at that time I didn't understand it, now I got older, she had really a lot to care for and to do. And her nervousness expressed itself in restlessness. She ~~liked~~ liked moving. She liked, I remember, Troppau, I was 15 years when I left Troppau and in this eight years we lived in apartment, a nice apartment. We had, you must know that time in Austria not everybody had a bathroom.

L.B. You had a bathroom?

G.W. We had always a bathroom. And we lived in maybe six or seven apartments.

L.B. In 8 years?

G.W. I remember after one year when we moved to Troppau we got to another apartment. She always changed the furniture around, at least it had to be re-upholstered, something different, you know? But she had a hard life otherwise. And the children were very much attached to my father. My father was a very very educated man, but self educated man. When he was 14 years old he was the oldest in the family, and his father, the rabbi, had a very small salary, it was a small congregation, you know, so he couldn't go to school. He would have liked to study. He would have like to become a lawyer, all his life he regretted it, but he had to go to work. And then when he got older ^{he} they had to take care of his younger sisters. But when we children didn't know something, we had to study you know, and we had reference books, he bought us and when a new edition came out he had to have it for us children. But before we took a reference book, and looked it up, we asked him and he always could answer our questions. And his sisters, they were also well educated. When they came it was the greatest pleasure for us. Because they were so attached to each other and all of them to my father. When ~~they~~ ^{they} sat at table, eating you know, the quotations were always flying from one till the other person. That I remember from my youth.

L.B. It was a happy time? You remember that as a happy time.

G.W. It was a happy time. I said that before. I had a very happy childhood.

L.B. But you remember your mother in a different way from your father, really?

G.W. Yes. And also because the family of my mother was different from my father's.

L.B. Was your mother educated, herself?

G.W. Her family? One was a doctor, the youngest brother was a doctor. They were not uneducated, but later on they were only interested in making money.

L.B. But that's true of a lot of people, even the educated. Now let's go back to your house. How many rooms did you have in your house, do you remember?

G.W. I shared a room with my sister. The two boys shared a room. My parents had a bedroom. We had a dining room, we had a kitchen, we had the bathroom.

L.B. A You had a big house!

G.W. No.

L.B. For those times?

G.W. We were in an apartment, you know. My father had the old houses ~~but~~ they owned houses, but not in Troppau, I don't know why. He owned that in Ostrowa (?) and then, I think, he had an agent. And I remember him very well, such a little short man, and I think there was something he...

L.B. Was he a Jew?

G.W. He was a Jew.

L.B. Were most of the contacts your father had with Jews or non-Jews?

G.W. In real estate? I don't know. He didn't tell us.

L.B. How about his friends?

G.W. He didn't have many friends. My father, as I told you, had, at that time the doctor's called it chronic bronchitis and he had to cough. And he never wanted to disturb people.

L.B. Now did your mother play any part in the business or in supporting the family? This is common in Eastern European ...

G.W. Not with the real estate, no. It was not real estate like here that you go for an apartment also. There were only, my father bought for instance a lot of land because there were rumors that a canal would be built that would have been very important for Europe. Then that canal was never built and he lost of course much money.

L.B. Was that the canal that was supposed to go south to Turkey?

G.W. Umm, Yah, Donnanu(?), Oder-Donnanu canal. (Talk about the canal among family) Well, you asked how come that I went to the University? So I, I was not quite 14 years old because my birthday is in the beginning of the year, and I entered school a little earlier. And there was only kind of a finishing school. Most girls went to a commercial school, a business school for two years.

L.B. Now what year are we in now? 1905-1906.

G.W. The so called "good" families, you know, wanted their daughters...the boys

L. BROWN

went to high school, very good high school, very strict high school, so called academic, Latin, Greek, and all the other subjects. Very, very hard work. The girls went to a school. It was a small building. And it was by Association of Women sustained, you know. And it was called Töchtertschule, the School for Daughters. And we learned, we studied here French, English, German, German literature. And not even Chemistry and Physics. We had a little chemistry and physics in the public school, but very little.

L.B. Did your family at this time - 1906 - Franz Joseph is still Emperor - Did they love the Emperor? How did they feel about the Emperor?

G.W. Yes, we loved him. We respected him. We children. I don't know if my parents... we never spoke about it.

L.B. Was there a picture of him in the house?

G.W. (Laughs) No.

L.B. Well, among the Russians it was Batyushka Czar, but not amongst the Jews.

G.W. Well, in Russia it was absolute a monarchy. But I remember the Emperor's birthday.

It was celebrated in the smallest village. The 16th of August.

~~Exhibition~~

L.B. So there was no great love for the Emperor as far as you know?

G.W. It may be that many people...

L.B. I mean in your family?

J.W. Yes, But actually when it came to the war, mother, then they were all whipped up to patriotism and nationalism, and my uncle Arthur, your brother, he went off to war fighting the Russians.

G.W. When the war started I was already in Vienna.

J.W. Yes, but he was very patriotic for the Empire.

L.B. I'll tell you why I'm asking this now. The impression we have, both from books and from talking to other people, is that those Jews who lived in the Austrian Empire, before the first W.W. were quite well off. They were comfortable. They were not persecuted the way the Russian Jews were.

G.W. What do you call persecution? There was a numerus clausus. For the Jewish students it was very very difficult to study medicine, a ~~very~~ numerus clausus. I don't know how many. I remember when I was a student in Vienna in 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1913 there were always fights between the Jewish students and the Deutsch Nazionale (?). Every Saturday the both sides of the University, one side there were the Jewish students on the other side... And there was always fighting. And the police came. But the Czechs, who were still in the monarchy ~~before~~ before the W.W. and during the W.W. they hated the Austrians. They hated the Viennese. They hated the Emperor. They really were traitors. We could understand that. They were traitors during the W.W. They deserted to the other side, to the Russian side. But the Jews were not, you couldn't call it persecution. For instance, later on, in Poland, no Jew could study medicine.

L.B. When?

G.W. In the 30's.

L.B. No, let's not go that far. Let's stay before the first W.W., during and after.

G.W. And I know. I had a professor. He came from Germany, from Bonn. And he hated the Jews really. He left Vienna after three years, went back to Bonn...

L.B. He was a Reichsdeutscher?

G.W. A Reichsdeutscher. Because Vienna at that time was not enough national for him. And he wouldn't shake hands with any Jewish student. I think I was the only one he shook hands with. Really, I never told you. (To her family)

L.B. What year is this? You were at the University what years?

G.W. I got my Ph.D. in January 1915.

L.B. During the war?

G.W. It was during the war.

L.B. There you were. A woman, a Jew, from Czechoslovakia - ~~from the Czech~~

G.W. No, I was not from Czechoslovakia, it was all Austria...

L.B. I know, but you from the Czech portion of the Empire and here you were in Vienna and you were getting your Ph.D. at the University. Now how did you do it? How did you get it?

G.W. At that time it was not like here. Not so many people went to Universities.

L.B. I know, but it had to be difficult for you.

G.W. And if you had a high school diploma there were not many universities.

There were four or five universities.

L.B. Was it difficult for a woman to get into the university?

G.W. No, the professors didn't treat you like they treated the male students.

For instance, the professor of French literature. It's ridiculous. He hated women. He hated women students. And but he couldn't help it when we were accepted. But there weren't so many, ... *maybe in one of his classes.*

L.B. But how did you get in?

J.W. What mother calls a high school diploma, is called matura. And it is much more difficult to get that. *G.W. I didn't have a real high school*

L.B. Did you get your degree in externa. My father got his degree in externa and that's how he was able to go.

G.W. I had to take private lessons to take the examinations, to enter, but not at the university, at the high school.

L.B. Let me see if I understand, if you passed the examinations from the gymnasium, then that was your matura, then that was your passport to the university. Right?

J.W. But it is also already two years of college here. *It amounted to 14 years of schooling*

L.B. Now, did it make any difference then, once you had this exam, this matura, whether you were a woman, Jew...

G.W. No.

L.B. Did you have to bribe anyone to be able to take the exams?

G.W. No.

L.B. Because we spoke to men that had to pay.

G.W. Only I had to take, when you were such a student as I was, and there were more.

I had friends, we had to take all the subjects, all the subjects, even religion we had to take examination. A written and an oral. At the boys high school they didn't know me. I had applied for the examination. In everything. I learned Greek in two years. And I read more Greek authors than the boys in high school. So I had to take Latin, I had to take Greek, I had to take French and English. The French and English I took I didn't need for the examination. It was really difficult. And then, we didn't have like the students here have the advisors when they come to college and they are told what to study, which classes to take. We had to choose our own courses. They were very cheap, I mean the university.

L.B. Where did you live in Vienna?

G.W. I had with my friend together a furnished room. A furnished room with a mother, with a very nice old lady. The mother of my former French teacher. *(1)*

L.B. Were these people Jews?

G.W. Yah, but not practising Jews.

L.B. I was going to ask you that, was your family, let's say your father and mother, were they observant Jews? Did they go to shule, to synagogue?

G.W. It was a very small synagogue. We didn't go every... Funny thing, Friday night was not so important. It was Saturday morning. And they didn't go. My father didn't go much. My father went to the High Holy Days and to Pesach and Yitzkor, my mother went more often, but we had a kosher house.

L.B. And the prayers in the synagogue were in what language?

G.W. In Hebrew.

L.B. In Hebrew. And you studied Hebrew you said, for how many years? ... *No? (She laughs)*

G.W. I studied just the prayers.

L.B. So you learned enough Hebrew to read the prayers. You did not read any of the literature in Hebrew that came later?

G.W. No.

L.B. Were you influenced by the Zionist movement at all? Did it touch you at all?

G.W. Not my family, really. But my older sister got married and her husband was a Zionist already as a student in Vienna at the University and she became a very, very active Zionist. Very active. She didn't live in the same town with my parents. didn't know Hebrew but at that time the real chalutzim we called them, I remember and my sister was an English teacher. She had studied partly at the University of London, gave private lessons in English.. And she had always ten or twelve of these chalutzim who learned English. Because at that time, I don't think that anybody knew really Hebrew, in Austria.

L.B. Now Herzl was a Viennese wasn't he?

J.W. I don't think he knew Hebrew either.
 L.B. I'm sure he didn't.
 J.W. Theodore Herzl, did he know Hebrew? (To his mother)
 G.W. I suppose he didn't. Maybe he learned a little
 L.B. Well, did you know about him? Did you hear about him?
 G.W. Of course.
 L.B. Were you interested in what he was doing and writing and saying, in the whole movement? Were you yourself interested?
 G.W. When I was married in the family of my husband was not interested at all in this.
 L.B. They were not interested. When did you marry Mrs. Weininger?
 G.W. in 1917.
 L.B. Two years after you finished your Ph.D. And you lived where?
 G.W. In Vienna.
 L.B. You stayed in Vienna. And they, the Weiningers were not interested in Zionism?
 G.W. No. But they were quite an interesting family. *L.B. yes, we heard about one of them.*
 M.W. Do you want to know how she met father?
 L.B. Yes, I'd like to know. Where did you meet your husband?
 G.W. At the opera house, in the fourth gallery.
 M.W. Naturally!
 L.B. Do you want to tell us about it?

End of first side

L.B. Now when you were living in Vienna during the war, Jews were coming from Galicia. Peculiar Jews were coming from Galicia, right? Peculiar Jews were coming from Eastern Europe with the war. The Russians were advancing and they were running.
 G.W. And I must tell you, I'm sorry to say this they behaved very badly.
 L.B. Is that right? In what way?
 J.W. Who behaved badly?
 G.W. I can understand if they were poor, you know, but they organized a black market. I mean we really had not much food during the first W.W. and they organized a black market and people sold their jewelry to have some money to buy food for the children, on the black market. They had the black market in jewels.
 L.B. Now what did that do to you? Did it hurt you somehow? Did it interfere with your life.
 G.W. Of course. Gentiles knew about it and made remarks.
 L.B. Ah, I see....But actually it didn't touch you. Did you know any of these people? Did you meet any of these Jews?
 G.W. No.
 L.B. Your life was separate from theirs? What happened to these people, were they pushed forward or sent back?
 G.W. They were not sent back. Most of them stayed in Vienna or went to other cities.
 L.B. Now, these people whom we know who were very well educated and they came from one portion, they were in the Austrian Empire and were evacuated to your section, to Moravia. And then as young boys they went to Vienna to study. Now these were originally Hasidic boys. You know about the Hasidim? Yes. Did you know any Hasidim?
 G.W. No. I never saw one.
 L.B. You never saw one.
 B.W. I think they must have changed.
 L.B. When they came to Vienna they cut the pails, first thing, then the hat came off, and the clothing changed. Then they were liberated. But they lived in the second district.
 G.W. Oh, they lived in the second district, it was the Jewish district. But also Christians lived there.
 L.B. Now, they reported that during the war and especially after, they had terrible problems getting jobs, getting enough to eat and then of course there was the problem with them of citizenship, once the war was over, because they had originally been Austrians but when the war was over they were Poles. Right? And they didn't want to go back to Poland. And they were actually without status in the city of Vienna. Did you know any of these people? *annually*
 G.W. No.

L.B. What kind of people did you know?

G.W. I must tell you we had friends, but always the same friends for years and years. We didn't look for new people.

L.B. What kind of people were your friends? What did they do?

G.W. Business and...ordinary people.

L.B. There ~~was~~ must be something that made them your friends and not these other people. These other people were not your friends.

G.W. We lived rather far from the second district of Vienna I mean. Far.

L.B. Your husband was in business?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. What kind of business was he in?

G.W. Exporting, importing.

L.B. And you had how many children?

G.W. Two.

L.B. You lived in what, an apartment or a house?

G.W. An apartment.

L.B. An apartment. What district in Vienna?

G.W. The sixth district.

L.B. The sixth district, in an apartment in Vienna. And you had two boys and your husband was in import and export. What did you do during the day?

G.W. The first years I was teaching.

L.B. Before your children were born?

G.W. No, already when my older boy was born. But you know, he was born in the last year of WW I and it was a very bad time you know. And I remember he was born in March, I stayed home, I didn't go to school. It was the end of the school year, and then in September I started teaching again.

L.B. You had help then. Somebody had to take care of the baby?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. Whom did you have for help?

G.W. At that time mostly everybody had a maid, a live-in maid.

L.B. Was she a Jew?

G.W. No. No Jewish girl would do domestic work in Vienna.

L.B. What was she? What nationality was she? *(Austrian) Was she a Jew, a Czech, a Pole?*

G.W. First of all we never asked her, "What are you?"

L.B. But couldn't you tell by talking to her.

G.W. I always had my maids for a long time so I didn't have...they all got married from my house. So the first one was Czech. But the other one was Austrian from the Tyrol. Upper Austria. ~~Das erste Mal~~ My last one was very close. Her father was a farmer close to the place where Hitler was born. But she is...she is still alive and she's a wonderful woman.

L.B. Do you still correspond with her?

G.W. Yes. She'll never forget the birthday of my children.

L.B. And they were married from your home. Now most of these women were Catholic then, is that correct?

G.W. Only Catholic.

.....

L.B. Now Marion's trying to bring something out, that you went to opera, you went to coffee houses. When was this that you did these things? After you were married or before?

G.W. No. As a student.

L.B. How could you afford it?

G.W. It didn't cost much. Standing room on the fourth gallery and the students could get half price but you had to be at the University at 8 o'clock, there you got the ticket, then we had to run to the box office of the opera and to exchange it. And then we had to be at the opera which we wanted to see. At three o'clock in the afternoon standing outside because we had to run up to our standing seats.

L.B. Now what do you remember about your time there at the University? Do you remember anything? You say the professors did not like Jews, right?

G.W. One. One I knew.

L.B. In general. In general was there any feeling?

Grete Weininger p. 10 Side 2 10:30

G.W. We do not say, we were not persecuted, we Jews, but no Jew could become a full professor, at that time.

L.B. What I meant, there were no pogroms, or were there? There was no violence was there?

G.W. Pardon?

L.B. Was there violence? This was what I meant by persecution.

G.W. No, No.

L.B. There was none. That was what I meant.

G.W. There was violence, when Hitler...

L.B. No, ...

G.W. Before Hitler, what was it? It was a ritual murder. Mazaryk, they made him President of Czechoslovakia was the defending lawyer for the...

L.B. There was a famous Czech case, in Moravia was it?

G.W. Yes, in Moravia. It made Mazaryk famous as a lawyer.

L.B. Now you heard of that. The Jews that you knew had heard of it?

G.W. Yes.

L.B. Were you part of a Jewish community at any part of your life in Vienna?

G.W. What?

L.B. Were you part of a Jewish community?

G.W. We had to be if we want it or not. Because, there was, it was called Kultus Gemeind. Gemeind is unity, Kultus is religious... And they were not, it was not like here, that the synagogue was ...

J.W. It was centralized, the religious organization.

L.B. No, I don't understand.

G.W. We had to, my parents had to pay besides the regular income tax, they had to pay a....

L.B. You didn't have a "kehilla" there.

G.W. What?

L.B. A Kehilla. (to J.W.) you know what I mean. That was in Eastern Europe. I didn't think there was one in Austria.

J.W. I know what it is. It was sort of an emancipated thing. Namely, that if you, that what are considered civil functions now, like registering births, marriages and so forth, they had to be done through this Kultus Gemeind.

L.B. It was like the kehilla then?

J.W. Except that it wasn't really it didn't perform all of the Jewish functions.

G.W. They had to pay a tax, a rather high tax. And the people who didn't pay the tax to the Kultus Gemeinde, the state could make them pay the money, as any other state tax. My parents had to pay for their seats. They always had the same seats in the Temple. And they had to pay for their seats.

L.B. So what else did they do? Pope (to J.W.) you said they registered births, deaths, marriages, what else? Collect money for its own support?

G.W. to support a hospital.

L.B. They had a hospital?

G.W. Rothschilds, the family of Rothschild as you say also supported...

J.W. But it was a time of emancipation really, cultural ferment, as a result those who would not attach themselves closely to the religion, could start disappearing into the general mainstream.

G.W. Whether you went to the Temple or not, as long as you considered yourself to be a Jew you had to pay the tax. If you didn't want it any more you had to resign, as a Jew and say you had no "confessione", you didn't belong to any religion.

L.B. We knew such a one. He was a Reichsdeutscher. He would put down "No affiliation."

G.W. And there was no civil marriage. It didn't exist at all. For anybody. Neither for Catholics, Protestants or Jews. So there were no mixed marriages. Either both parts you could get married in a church also.

J.W. You had to convert first.

L.B. I was going to ask, what happened to these people who were emancipated. How did they get married? Or didn't they bother.

J.W. They were assimilated.

L.B. They were assimilated.

G.W. My husband was in the Army. *you know how I got married? In the Army*

G.W. Which army, the Austrian army?

L.O.

He was in

L. BROWN

G.W. But he was not at the front./The Department of war...he knew the import export business and it was very important for the government to get some imports. At that time we imported a lot from China, dried eggs and all this stuff. We didn't have any eggs, we didn't have any flour, any sugar any butter, nothing. And so he got the job there. But then towards 1916 the whole situation got really serious, the whole situation for Austria, so he had to do some service in the Army, already. So he was in 1917, he was in the Army when we got married. And we got married in the barracks. In the barracks.

L.B. Who married you?

G.W. A rabbi, who was a chaplain. And I remember it so well when I got there and he heard my name he asked if I was related to Dr. Kulka, Rabbi Kulka. And I said yes, my grandfather. And I was very proud that everybody knew of him. And then at the same time the same day, right after we got married, they looked for more and more soldiers, you know, he had to go to a physical, a medical, and I saw him again in the afternoon.

L.B. Now did he go off to fight or did he still stay in Vienna with you?

He still stayed in Vienna with you.... Now in, during, by 1917 in May February, there was a Revolution in Russia. And the Kerensky government came in? * Were you aware of this?

G.W. Of course. I had a student. A girl, a very nice intelligent girl and her home life wasn't too nice. Her father and mother were quarreling all the time. And she ~~xxx~~ went to Russia at that time.

L.B. She was caught up in the revolutionary spirit, is that it?

G.W. But she couldn't go during the war. Right after the war, remember the war got finished, and in December she went and nothing was heard from her. And another couple whom I know ~~xxxx~~ also.

J.W. My uncle was a prisoner of war in Russia.

G.W. My elder brother for a long time. He was in the Austrian army and he was wounded...

J.W. He walked across Siberia...

(daughter in law brings out pictures of family members)

L.B. Did he? Now are you on this picture? Which one? Oh, how darling. Now who is this lady.

G.W. (laughs) I always was a heavy, tall girl. My elder sister.

L.B. And this one?

G.W. My younger brother, the only one who is alive now. He ~~did~~ died.

L.B. And this one.

G.W. My father.

L.B. He doesn't look unhealthy. He looks very healthy. And this.

G.W. My brother...my mother.

L.B. And this is your oldest brother. Oh, beautiful family.

G.W. The photo was made before he went to study in Vienna.

L.B. Oh he studied in Vienna too?

~~Yes, he studied in Vienna too.~~

G.W. Yeah.

L.B. Did they all study in Vienna?

G.W.. No. My sister didn't go to University. She should have gone. She was the most intelligent of us. But she didn't go. She...When she studied for some time in London, because she ~~was~~ concentrated for some time in English and my brother studied, it was already after the war, so he studied in Czechoslovakia, in Prague...

L.B. Why didn't you go to Prague? Why did you go to Vienna?

G.W. Prague...We always went to Vienna.

L.B. I know. Why?

J.W. It was closer

G.W. Yeah, it was closer. But I knew at that time not a word of Czech.

J.W. But there was a German university in Prague too. The German language university in Prague.

G.W. The oldest university that was founded in 1348.

L.B. What was this one now?

G.W. Charles University.

L.B. I don't know that one.

Grandson: Grandma, what did you concentrate on in your doctoral studies? What did you study in university, what did you do your doctoral work on?

G.W. German ~~big~~ Literature.

Grandson: Did you have to write a thesis? You never told me? A dissertation?

G.W. Oh yes, of course.

L.B. On what did you write it?

G.W. I was desperate. I didn't know what I should write. I remember it. And I met one of my professors and he was a young one, a younger one, not one of the old professors. And I told him I didn't know what to do, and he said "I really can't help you. I know how difficult it is to find a good theme in German literature. But the other day, he said, I read something in Goethe's "Dichtung und Wahrheit" partly autobiography by Goethe and he speaks ~~and~~ about an uncle, a great uncle, of whom I've never heard and I don't think there is much published about it. Try to find something about this man on which you can go on. But I really can't help you. I don't know anything about him." He was a professor of German literature. So I did and I really managed to do it, to do it quite well.

L.B. You know, I'm going to stop this for a while and let people...

.....

G.W....In the high schools...in Troppau, the Jewish students for a long time weren't spoken to by the Gentile students. They didn't speak to them at all. And when they spoke, you know, in German is "du"...?

L.B. "Du" is the familiar, right?

G.W. "Du" is the familiar and of course in the schools, everybody, the students always said "du" to each other but ^{they} they said "Mister so and so" when they said something and "Zie", you know. Because they didn't consider them their equals.

L.B. The people who lived in your little town, in Troppau, the ones who were not Jews what did they do for a living?

G.W. Oh, everything. Some were teachers, some were engineers. It was a town where the officers who were, lived on pension, retired. Oh, there was so much military in the streets. My brother, my eldest brother, after his matura, did one year military service. He didn't have to take more because he had the matura. And there was a little business, craftsmen, artists also.

L.B. But there were not just farmers or poor people living around you? How was their standard of living compared to yours?

G.W. Some of them maybe higher, other lower, like everywhere. Everywhere else.

L.B. Now let me see, there were some questions?...~~Was~~ Was there a doctor in your town? (louder) a doctor?

G.W. Oh, of course. With hospital.

L.B. Now was this one Jewish, run by the Kultusgemeinde?

G.W. No, that was not in Troppau, that was in Vienna.

L.B. There was no Kultusgemeind in Troppau?

G.W. No. No Jewish hospital.

J.W. It was too small.

L.B. So, who ran the hospital?

G.W. I think the town, the city. And we had a doctor you know, that was the custom in many families, who was paid for the whole year and he came regularly, when he came to our neighborhood. He came like a visitor and looked at us or asked how we were. And you could call him of course when something special was. He was a very nice man. But there were good eye doctors. There were ~~good~~ good specialists in Troppau.

L.B. Now were there any Jewish doctors?

G.W. That was a Jewish doctor. The doctor was a Jew. The Jews were mostly the doctors

eye you knew. Some were lawyers. Exactly like here.

L.B. What about the police? You had a police force.

G.W. Yah, but there were no Jews.

L.B. No Jews on the police force.

G.W. A Jew wouldn't become a policeman at that time. I don't know if they would have taken him. I was not interested. But there were no Jews in the police.

L.B. What was the population of Troppau altogether, do you have any idea?

G.W. How many? 25,000 at that time.

L.B. 25,000. That's a good size. Now there's one thing that we want to know. You know, ...did you know all the Jewish families in Troppau?

INTERVIEWER

A. BROWN

G.W. No.

L.B. You didn't. How come?

G.W. Oh! How come! I told you, we were not going out so much. We had our friends and we children made friends in school and then the parents became friends of the parents of our friends.

L.B. How did you choose your friends?

G.W. The women stayed at home and sometimes to the theater to a good concert. We had good, really good pianists and violinists, the best and singers, they, all these men came and gave concerts. And my parents always took tickets and went with us. My mother went. My father didn't go, at night. My mother and father went with us children to the concert. They didn't spare the money for us.

~~But~~

L.B. How did you pick your friends? For example, how many close friends, can you remember, did you have?

G.W. I had quite a few. My sister, she and another Jewish girl were in her classes only. There were no more. And she didn't like that girl too much. I remember her name too, Trudi, very well. But she didn't like the girl. She stayed mostly by herself.

L.B. But you had several friends?

G.W. Several friends.

L.B. What did their fathers do?

G.W. I have to think now. One was a manufacturer of textiles, they were very well off. The other one had a "Maltfabrik", how do you say?... Making malt for beer from oats, from barley he made the malt.

J.W. Mostly for beer.

L.B. Were any of them poor?

G.W. No, they were not poor.

L.B. Were there any poor Jews in Treppau?

G.W. There were poor Jews I knew. There was a shoemaker, you know mostly shoes repairs. One daughter went to class with me, and they were poor.

L.B. Were you aware of this difference between rich and poor?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. You were. Were you friends with any poor?

G.W. ~~Remember~~ Yah.

L.B. You were. Did they come to your home?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. And you went to theirs?

G.W. Yah. But I had also Christian ... two friends were orphans, in an orphanage.

L.B. Christian or Jew?

G.W. Christian. And they were also my friends. They came to my birthday party.

L.B. So they were an exception then among the Gentiles, because you said before...

G.W. They wouldn't have come if I hadn't invited them. They were very glad to come because that orphanage supposedly very bad. They told that, I don't think that, especially one, was not lying to me. She was very good friend.

L.B. So these two Christian girls came to your home. You see, what I'm trying to get at... Were the Jews stratified? By class? Did they mix by class?

G.W. Yah. It depended on...

L.B. Right, but where? For example your father and your mother went to synagogue occasionally. Did all the Jews go to the same synagogue or was there more than one synagogue?

G.W. There was more than one. There were several.

L.B. What kind did you go to?

G.W. At that time I didn't know any other one, I think it was the Conservative?

L.B. Conservative?

G.W. Yah. Because the women were sitting up in the gallery you knew. But I don't ... my son said it can't have been a Conservative because we had an organ already.

L.B. Well, it might have been in transition, you know, turning.

G.W. I don't know. I know there was a reformed Temple in Germany, not in Austria. I have no idea. I didn't know then.

L.B. Now, who came to your synagogue? Did poor Jews come also or only middle class and upper?

G.W. There didn't exist an upper Jewish class. I didn't know. They didn't live close

A. BROWN

by these ~~people~~ maybe then went to another....I remember, I was only once, I was invited more often, but I remember only one girl's house, Christian girl, Christian family, they had many children, but there I was only invited because her father was a partner, a business partner of my maternal grandfather.

L.B. So you were on the acceptable list? You were accepted because he knew your maternal grandfather?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. But to go back to the Jews in Treppau, what synagogue did the poor Jews go to?

G.W. I don't know.

L.B. You don't know.

G.W. They went in the second district...

L.B. This is Vienna now. I'm talking about Treppau.

G.W. Oh, in Treppau. In Treppau...I don't know if they came to the synagogue. There were not many poor people, not many, maybe two or three families.

L.B. You see, what's interesting, when we first asked my father this question he said there was no difference. This is in Russia. It turned out there were four synagogues in a little town of 500 families. And there was a very distinct difference who went to which synagogue. And then finally he said, Yeah, there was a difference. So this is what I want you to understand.

G.W. I suppose they came if they went to synagogue at all. I don't know.

L.B. I understand what you're saying. You don't even know if they were religious. You had no contact with them, essentially. Right? Is that what you're saying?

G.W. Pardon?

L.B. You had no contact with them, really.

G.W. In school with the girls.

L.B. What did you talk about with these girls?

G.W. Which girls?

L.B. The poor girls, the Jewish girls.

G.W. Listen, I'm 82 years old. How should I remember what I was talking about? (Laughs)

L.B. Right. Do you remember?

G.W. (Still laughing) No, I don't remember. Regular things, school books, boys and other things.

L.B. ...All right now let's go to the time after you're married. Are you too tired to continue?

G.W. No. I'm not tired. But I don't know what you want to know more.

L.B. You know if I didn't want to know more, I would stop. But I'm not really quite finished yet, O.K.?

G.W. O.K.

L.B. Now, when you were married and you lived with your husband and you had your two children you were teaching, right? What kind of a school did you teach in?

G.W. High school.

L.B. You taught in a high school. And there was no problem about getting a job being a Jew and a woman?

G.W. At that time it was very hard to get a job at all. There very few...there was only one co-educational high school. And that was a private school. At that time there were already in Vienna, one real high school for girls, one complete real high...

L.B. Where did you teach, at the coeducational?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. What did you teach?

G.W. German.

L.B. Oh, from your doctorate. Right. Now could you tell me just a little bit about your social life. Your husband was in the export import business. Who were your friends? Really. I asked the question before...

M.W. Didn't you have an American?... The Nicholasbergs (sp?)

G.W. No, they lived in London. They were the partners of my husband. One was the ~~son~~ son of a very rich man and he was...oh, we were friendly, but I couldn't consider his wife a friend although even his parents invited us all the time and so on. And the other partner was an old bachelor, almost 70 years old, who had a Christian girlfriend, and I was very ~~friendly~~ friendly with his Christian girl friend.

L.B. He was a Jew and he had a Christian girl friend?

G.W. Yah. But he was not practising Jew. And, that was a very interesting family...his

...he had, his partner lived with one brother, three old sisters and ~~none~~ of them was married. They were really my friends. ^{much} Older than I and they had their so called "jeur" as we called it, "jeur", the day, ...

L.B. Oh, le jeur, yes, yes... ^{the old ladies}

G.W. Wednesday they stayed home, and they received visitors and God forbid I wouldn't come on a Wednesday, you knew. They liked me very much and they were very angry at me when I didn't come. And they had all (of sic) them old friends, it was not very entertaining for me.

M.W. What time did you visit on a "jeur"?

L.B. Tea, I'll bet.

M.W. Only tea time?

G.W. What we called (yaset)? and very good cakes.

L.B. Now, did you think of yourself as a Jew?

G.W. Pardon?

L.B. Did you think of yourself as a Jewish woman?

G.W. Always, always. All my childhood, I was always very proud of being a Jew. It started when my ~~my~~ school friends, Gentile school friends, had to go to their first confession and communion when they were eight years old. And some of them, I saw them standing, that was done always during school time, we stayed in school and they went to church and I saw them standing together and talking, talking and some of them came to me, "Please tell me some, give me some sins" they said, "We have to confess and we don't know anymore." So I said, "Oh God, is that a stupid religion."

L.B. Did you give them some sins?

G.W. (Laughs)

L.B. You didn't have any either, huh?

G.W. And of course the Jews children were always better in class.

L.B. The Jewish children were better in class?

G.W. Always better, whether they wanted it or not, I don't know, whether they studied more or not.

L.B. Is this something you saw or you just heard?

G.W. No, I knew it. And also later, when I was married then and friends, younger friends had little children, the little boys went to school and on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the first grade he didn't arrive in school, he didn't (sit) in school, and then the teacher asked their questions, and they couldn't answer it and he yelled at the kids "Why are you so stupid today?" We always ~~was~~ made like this (gestures) when we wanted to talk, and one of them got up "Teacher, Jewish boys are not here." That was a real story.

M.W. Incidentally I met one of her college friends, Jennie, in New York...

G.W. You want me to tell about the duel?

M.W. No, your college friend Jennie, I met her. Your college friend, Jennie. Yes, and she had a very interesting brother, right?

L.B. Now let me take you back. You're married, you have this circle of friends. All of them know they are Jews, right? But it's a kind of a closed circle.

G.W. My best friend got married to a gentile.

L.B. Ah, what happened then?

G.W. He was a colleague, he was a teacher also and his wife died very young and he had a little baby, a one year old baby and they got married, in church, in one of the biggest churches and I wasn't invited at all. I only heard much later. And you know, I think he didn't want me to see her or her to see me, because for years I hadn't seen her.

L.W. After she married you did not see her?

G.W. After she married. But then we met again and again... ~~she~~ she roomed with me. We roomed together, we were roommates and we took our examinations, the first, the same day, the Ph.D. the same day, you know. And then she met this guy you know...

L.B. And so she became Catholic?

B.W. He was a very nice man otherwise. He died very young.

L.B. Now, here comes the...we'll go back to the Russian Revolution, O.K.?

G.W. O.K. At that time my brother...

L.B. 1917.

L BROWN

G.W. My brother was a prisoner of war in Siberia.

L.B. Right. Now did you want to tell us about him? He walked across Siberia?

G.W. Yah. He walked across Siberia. I mean the war was over in November '18 and he came home in August '20, 1920. He walked and he was working on his way and in Vladivostok he got on a British ship, he did some work on this ship so he didn't have to pay.

L.B. So he went east? From Siberia he went East, he didn't go west back to Austria?

G.W. Of course.

L.B. Of course. He would have crossed the armies, right.

G.W. Russia and Poland. There was no possibility.

L.B. There was Civil War raging. That's why I was wondering how he managed. So he went east to Vladivostok and then took a ship back, is that right?

G.W. Of course, the ship took much longer than usually. He was afraid that my father was not alive any more. So he didn't come home straight, to our home. My parents were very worried. My sister was married before me. And he went to a friend of my parents and she came to tell my mother that he's home. And then we all went from Vienna to my parents and I remember he came with a full long beard. And for some time he didn't want to shave it. But then my mother asked him to *But then he shaved*

L.B. Did you know during this time that he was alive?

G.W. Yah. Yah. But you know, it was also very terrible. My younger brother wasn't quite fourteen years old when the war started and he knew Czech and German very well. So, he was in high school and one day, from here one day, like here, from the county, from the county government... they had the house next to our house, came to my parents and asked if my brother couldn't help....

End of side 2 Part I

....
G.W. Because the official language was still German, all the written things had to be in German and my father said, He has to go to school. And he said, "We talked already to the teachers!" He could go in the morning to school and in the early afternoon he will miss a few classes and come to work, without payment of course. Now a boy who isn't fourteen years old, to get paid? And that he did. Besides that because my father was sick and ~~was~~ he was afraid that if some bad news from my brother would come it would be bad for my father. So with the mailman he had an agreement. He wouldn't deliver the mail. He would wait until, would wait until he came from school and would give him the mail. And there was really one, a card, from the Red Cross that he was missing, my brother, missing in combat. So my brother, my younger brother Hans, didn't tell my parents. But unfortunately, one or two days later my father got a package and when he unpacked it it was a gun, and a short letter ~~from~~ of a friend from my brother that it belonged to my brother. So my younger brother couldn't tell him any good news. He got the news he was missing and here came, they saw,... my parents really thought he was killed. But then after six weeks, came from the Red Cross also the news that he was made prisoner...

L.B. By the Russians?

G.W. By the Russians, yah. At the Russian-Galician border was a big fight.

L.B. Now, what year was this that your brother was made prisoner?

~~L.B.~~ G.W. 1916.

L.B. 1916.

G.W. Summer, 1916.

L.B. The first revolution was in February and then the second... you paid attention to the Kerensky, to the Provisional government didn't you? Did you? You Jews in Germany, you knew ~~was~~ what was happening in Russia?

G.W. Yah, everybody...

L.B. And what did you feel about it? Anything?

G.W. You know, we had so much with our own (stuff?) to do, really...

L.B. Well, did you think it was a good thing for the Central Powers or did you think it was a bad thing or were you in favor of the revolution?...

G.W. The first time when the revolution came in Russia we knew that Austria and Germany were lost.

L.B. You thought that?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. Why is that? You should have thought maybe that...Why did you think that?

G.W. Well, we saw what was going on. For instance, when my children were born... one was born after the war, but my older one, during the war, I didn't go to the hospital. I had the child at home, because I was told that it was terrible, the situation in all the hospitals. The soldiers and not enough nurses, more nurses had to go to the front, more and more wounded and injured people came back and the nurses didn't even have time to wash their hands properly. So much work to do.

L.B. But why should a Provisional Revolutionary-partly revolutionary government in Russia make you feel that the end was near for Austria-Hungary?

G.W. It's not that way. The revolution didn't make us feel but the progress of the war.

L.B. Ah! I thought you said it was...

G.W. The German--French...the other front.

L.B. Oh, O.K. Then I misunderstood you. I thought it was this Kerensky government that made you feel that. By that time you were already feeling that the war would come to an unsatisfactory end. This is what you're saying. Now, did you follow events in Russia at that time?

G.W. We read it in the paper of course.

L.B. You read it in the paper, that there was a Bolshevik coup, right? Were you interested? Did it matter to you, personally? Or to your friends? What did you think about it?

G.W. (Long pause) It's very difficult to say.

L.B. Why? It was a world shaking event.

G.W. I really didn't like revolutions at that time. But I knew that in Russia that was different.

L.B. So you did think about it? It wasn't just something that you - "Oh, look, they had a revolution in Russia today." You didn't just say that?

M.W. It was probably in the paper. I'm sure she read it every day.

L.B. I'm saying, Mrs. Weininger, did you have any feelings, or did your friends express any feelings, or did your husband express any feelings, either for or against...

G.W. We had so much with ourselves to do. When you are hungry and when you are ...and when you have relatives, close relatives and you don't ... of course we ...because of my brother...

L.B. You were concerned?

G.W. We didn't know what will happen to him now.

L.B. Would you say you were political people? You and ~~was~~ your husband's family? In his circle were they politically oriented or not?

G.W. No.

L.B. Yah. Yah.

G.W. My father was politically oriented, you know that's very hard to explain.

the Czech farmers, you know, they all had planned already that they would go over to the Russians. And but they had to go to the Army to fight, in the Austrian army. And before they went they came to my father and asked him if he would do that for them. And they said, they don't want...if anything happens to them or if they had to write something to their wives, or they had to write something to someone and they wouldn't want their wives to know about it, if my father would accept the letters. They would address the letters to him, and in the letter there be the letters. And my father was very naive at that time and said "yes" and he did it. And one nice day he got a letter, a summons, from the Department of War, instead of a Defense Department, we had a department of War, to come for a hearing to Vienna.

G.W. And he went, and he was told that all these people had been traitors, traitors for the Austrians; he didn't consider them traitors because he knew the Czechs were oppressed. And they had gone over to the Russians and how come that he accepted the letters? And he had to go two or three times. Nothing happened to him. But it was very unpleasant because he really was already at that time a rather sick...

L.B. Mrs. Weininger, are you too tired?

G.W. No.

L.B. You're sure?

L.B. Did you people expect the war to happen or was it a surprise?

G.W. Yes, yes.

L.B. You did expect it?

G.W. Yes. But we expected it for the wrong reasons. I remember when the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were murdered in Belgrade (sic) in Yugoslavia, it was a holiday, a Catholic holiday so it was...we went swimming. I remember very well, when we ...out in the street there were there "Extra", what do you call them the...
came

L.B. The newspapers.

G.W. The newspapers. And that they were murdered and I said "That's the beginning of the war." I remember it very well. And the 31st of July war was declared.

L.B. Well why did you feel that would be the beginning of war? There was still time for there not to be war after that. Why did you think there would be war?

G.W. Because, if you grew up in a monarchy, and the emperor and all the court, you would know that if anything like that happened to ~~the~~ a member of the governing family and he was his successor, he was the successor to the emperor, but now I really know that Germany had planned it for a long time. Kaiser Wilhelm and...you know...

L.B. You know there's a question about that.

G.W. At that time I didn't know it. ~~There~~

L.B. There's a question as to whether he did plan it.

G.W. I remember when the trains went through with the soldiers to the east to the Russian border, we were, we young girls were at the railroad ~~station~~; we bring ~~them~~
station
them sandwiches to give the Russians...

L.B. The Germans...

G.W. I was also...not the Russians, the Austrian soldiers, and it was hot that summer that August, and I stood in the sun for a whole afternoon, and...

jL.B. And did your patriotic duties, right?

G.W. It was...

L.B. You were a young girl...

G.W. And even you know, some hope that we hadn't lost yet completely was when my, when Carl was born, I ~~then~~ remember and my husband came one day, oh, everything is turned around. The Big Berthe, that was a big...cannons, shooting Paris, outside of Paris, so not everything is lost...even at that time, we thought maybe, really, something will turn up.

L.B. Well, if you didn't like the emperor and you didn't like the Austrian government why did you want Austria to win?

G.W.. Pride.

L.B. O.K.

G.W. Pride, really. Pure pride. You grow up in a country you know. Especially when you are a child and when you grow up.

L.B. That's very true, and very natural too. So we got you through the Russian revolution. Let's see, did you hear about the Beilis trial in Russia? Before the Russian Revolution there was another ritual murder trial in Russia and this man was accused of murdering a young boy, again, you know, to make the matsox with...

G.W. We always heard these things.

L.B. You did hear them?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. So to that extent you were rather Jew oriented but not politically oriented?

G.W.....there was also a pogrom in Kishinev I remember, I was very young when this happened. The pogrom in Kishinev. That was really terrible....But the eastern...

G.W. in the east of Austria was an unknown, I didn't know.

L.B. I understand that. That's why I say you're very different from anyone else I've spoken to. I'm very grateful to you for talking to us. Because you'll be something "way out". You're very different. Is there anything that you'd like to add? Is there anything you would like to say for yourself?

G.W. What should I say? It was terrible, the Nazi time in Vienna.

L.B. When did you leave?

G.W. We left early. We left in July 1938. They came on the 12th of March, but these few months were enough. I don't want to talk about it.

L.B. No, no. I don't want you to.

G.W. Although we didn't suffer too much. But later on my brother was in Dachau, died in Dachau and my mother and my...

L.B. No, don't please.

G.W. ...I was happy that my parents didn't live any more. They died young. And my sister and her son...

L.B. Mrs. Weininger, no! O.K.? No! We're going to just deal with the first World War. You came over in the 30's and your husband got established here, your husband was living then, you came over in '38 '38...

G.W. What do you mean?

L.B. You came to the United States in 1938?

G.W. No, not in '38.

L.B. When did you come here?

G.W. Not in '38. We couldn't come here. The Americans didn't *make it so easy for us.*

L.B. I know, I know. It's tough for Jews to move. Where did you go?

G.W. We went to Czechoslovakia at that time. Because there was my parents house. We always went in summer to be together to this house and stay together, part of the summer...

L.B. But then you had to leave Czechoslovakia? ~~At that time nobody knew what would happen to Czechoslovakia.~~

G.W. At that time nobody knows what would happen to Czechoslovakia.

L.B. No, but you had to leave. When did you leave Czechoslovakia?

G.W. We came to Czechoslovakia, as I said, into July 1938 and in March '39 we came to Prague. Under our windows we heard the motorcycles coming all night long. And then we tried to leave but couldn't get the visa. No, and we had a very good affidavit, from Percy Straus then owner of Macy's, you know. Because my husband had business connections with him, he gave us his affidavit. And we were lucky. All the consulates were already closed. Only in Vienna that was open. We had to ask the Gestapo for permission to go for one day to Vienna to get the visa at the consulate and then we had to get the transfer visa, transfer..., to go across Spain. And everything was ready to leave and suddenly the Gestapo came to where we lived in Prague, asked for our passports with the visa. Without explanation! Without telling us if we would get them back. For three weeks we didn't know. My husband didn't sleep one night. He was pacing the floor, up and down, up and down. And I had everything ready, packed. But I couldn't take everything what I wanted. We had to give them a list of everything... I took a few towels, I didn't know what would happen and we were allowed to take two ^{sets} sacks of cutlery, you know, silver for the table, two ~~sacks~~ sets of forks, soup forks (sic) tablespoons, knives sets and tea spoons, that was all allowed.

L.B. Now let's drop that part. Forget that.

G.W. But it was not so pleasant.

L.B. No, I know. That's why we won't... it's getting too late to talk about that now. O.K.? You hear me? Now, did anybody have any other questions? Peg did you have?

G.W. My sons left earlier. They left earlier. They left a couple of days after the Germans came. And that was really only to the credit of my husband. He went to the greatest risks to get them exit permit, you know from the Gestapo...

(Machine is shut off and the conversation is picked up again as Mrs. W. cannot get off the theme of what happened to them.)

There was nothing to be had of baby things anymore. No diapers. I got only a certain amount of paper diapers, real paper.

L.B. You mean, like newspaper?

G.W. No, no, no, no. From the city.

INTERVIEWER

A. BROOK

L.B. Because we use paper diapers now.

M.W. They used good linen, table cloths.

L.B. No, she said she used paper diapers.

G.W. So my mother tore up her good sheets, washed sheets, for diapers and my sister sent me, she had twins, and kept all the stuff, all the things she had, otherwise we wouldn't have gotten anything for...

L.B. You know, Bibi asked a question which I had asked you and I'm not sure you understood it, and it's late and I don't want to tire you, but...I'll ask you anyway. We can't understand how, as a Jew, and a woman, you then entered the university seemingly without any trouble. Do you understand my question?

G.W. Yah.

L.B. You make nothing of it. Why? Wasn't it extremely difficult?

G.W. No, no. I tell you the matura was very difficult. The matura was very difficult and not so many people went to the university.

M.W. May I add that she must have been extraordinarily bright.

L.B. That's right.

M.W. She doesn't say that.

L.B. So it was the matura. But from the administrative point of view, how things functioned, even as a Jew, they had to let her take the matura, these men I'm talking about paid to take it. They had to let her take it and then she had to pass it. Then once she did that then apparently there was no problem. Now these men, if I recall, said there was something about paying to get into the university once they passed the exams, they had to take other exams in a major and a minor, or something, to enter the university. Is that correct? And they said the German students all passed. Those who were Austrian nationality or those who were German nationality. But those who were, let's say of Jewish descent, let's say Jew versus non-Jew. The non-Jews had no trouble passing. The Jews had trouble.

G.W. In Austria?

L.B. In Vienna. They had difficulty getting in. And these were not ~~stupid~~ stupid men, or uneducated.

G.W. As I told you, medical school maybe you're speaking about the medical school. There was always trouble. Also the best students, I mean high school students had trouble. And you know, you say the women, the women were restricted as women, they couldn't study law, for instance, that was quite out of the question.

L.B. Could you study medicine?

G.W. Medicine you had the same trouble as the male students.

L.B. O.K. Now I think we're really (finished)

~~SECOND~~ SECOND DAY -- RETURN VISIT

P.B. When you were born...

G.W. You have to speak louder, my hearing aid you know.

P.B. O.K. Is it O.K. this tone of voice?

G.W. No, louder.

P.B. You were born in Troppau?

G.W. No, I was born in Witkowitz, (?) it was a really little village but it was very important to Austria because it had big iron works. You ~~knew~~ knew about the family of Rothschild, don't you? They and another family, Jewish family, the name Goodman, all were incorporated. The two owned this big work and the workers, I saw the workers going every morning to work. They were very, very poor. There no Jews among these workers. They were Gentiles without any education. They had gone to school because everybody was obliged to go to school but only the minimal and they really were so poor, they took, they came home at night from the whole day, they had like a jar, not a glass jar, a metal jar of very bad coffee, they couldn't afford good coffee, and dry bread. That was all they got to eat. And there was of course the director, and the president of the company who lived in wonderful houses,...I was very young, when I left Witkowitz, I was seven years old, but nevertheless it made a terrible impression on me.

P.B. What kind of a house did you live in?

G.W. In our own house. It was a very plain house in the beginning. I don't know if

my mother came from a ...my maternal grandmother was much better off than my paternal grandfather but both worked very hard and saved their money, but the children we got everything that was necessary and especially, especially good schooling. The four children of us.

P.B. You all got good schooling.

G.W. But in 1899 I left this place because as I told your mother, my father got very sick and the doctor said he was not allowed to do any work and we went to Troppau only ~~because~~ because my mother had grown up in Troppau and her parents, that means her father and her step mother, but she considered her like her own mother, lived there and other relatives, and she had always been very happy there, so we ~~went~~ went there and that was a very nice town. Small town but very nice.

P.B. How old were you then?

G.W. I was nine years. From nine to fifteen years I lived in Troppau. That was a very important time for a girl to develop you know. Good schools and what we didn't get in schools we got in private lessons. Learned to play the piano, went to concerts, I had everything. And, but now a young girl would say "too much relatives"...

(All laugh) (From background - Why is that? Who was too many?)

G.W. Because our Sunday pleasure began in the morning when we had to dress nicely very nicely, and go to see one old aunt of my mothers and the next Sunday we had to go see...really and I still remember, this old aunt was very nice and I liked her very much but she...a young kid you know, don't forget we had also Saturday school, Saturday morning, but she always made chocolate, I told you already, hot chocolate for us and so thick...and the other one had again very good cookies.

M.W. You went to visit two aunts?

L. W. On different weeks, one day one aunt... another day a different aunt, right?

G.W. And then, the afternoon, not always, we went to our grandparents. My grandmother, she was not, I think, you know she was a very nice lady this step grandmother but rather cool.

M.W. Would you like to tell them the maternal ~~name~~ name, Sonnenschein?

G.W. Yes, Anna Sonnenschein.

M.W. Anna Sonnenschein, that means sunshine.

P.B. Pretty name. Did they live within walking distance of your house?

G.W. Of course. There was no other possibility than walk. Later on, after we had left, they got trolley cars there and I was laughing when I heard that. When you got into the trolley car after a minute you must have gotten out. There were two railway stations in this small town in this small town because there were two different trains and they were really, one was, both were almost at the opposite ends of the town. Maybe they got the trolley car because of that. We always went on walks, we went walking as children. But it was very nice. And I liked the school. After I left and they certain elementary school, I was in a Jewish parochial school. But we didn't learn any Hebrew. And my parents only put me there because it was a very good school, we learned much more than in public school.

P.B. What kind of teachers did you have?

G.W. Oh, Jewish teachers.

P.B. Did they have men and women teachers?

G.W. Yes, but only in this school there was co-education, we had boys and girls. All the other public schools were strictly separated. Not in the same building.

P.B. What about the teachers, were there both men and women?

G.W. Later on, yes. Not in the Jewish school. There were only men. They had very good female teachers later on at the other schools. and one school we had to go, my sister and I, there were teachers, old teachers, who had been the teachers of my mother.

P.B. Oh, really,

G.W. I told you she grew up in this town and she always had told us how strict they had been and when we came there they were already very old, nobody was afraid of them.

(General laughter) I liked school very much.

P.B. At home, ...

G.W. ...We didn't learn any French in school but I got private classes.

M.W. Did you. I didn't realize you got private tutoring.

G.W. Not in ...that was a public school. It stopped when you got fourteen years old.

I remember we had very good teachers and I learned a lot but not in foreign languages.

so, my sister and I had private lessons. A French woman, an old woman, I don't know how she had come there. I don't remember. And I must tell you I was terrible as a child. At the slightest remark of someone, I started crying. I was a crybaby. She tried to get me out of that habit. She scolded me.

P.B. How old were you then?

G.W. When I came to this school, I was not quite eleven. And when I left this school I was not quite fourteen. But I continued school, and I told your mother that was a private school and there were only three years in three classrooms. ~~As~~ We didn't learn, before that I had learned a little bit of chemistry and physics, in the public school but there we didn't have these things really. There we had only French and English, German, much German literature and we had a wonderful French and English teacher. I still think of her. She was wonderful. A good teacher, very good teacher.

L.B. Did you want to ask Mrs. Weininger about home...

P.B. Yeah, home life. But I want to ask her about school. How long a day did you spend in school? How long did you spend in school during the day? What time did you go?

G.W. During the day, we had school from eight to twelve in the morning. Eight, sometimes in winter you know it was very hard walking so early to school and then we went home. Because the main meal was at noon, not at noon time, exactly noon time, between twelve and one o'clock, everywhere, every house. And then we had to go back to school.

P.B. Until when?

G.W. From two to four. And Saturdays we had only in the morning and Sunday, even I left after I left the Jewish school we religious instruction. So I had all to go...but it was only one hour.

P.B. For that mid-day meal, that was the biggest meal of the day? (Repeats) The mid-day meal was the large meal of the day?

L.B. The noon meal, was that the big meal of the day?

G.W. Yah, that was the big meal.

M.W. What sort of things did you have? Soup? ...

G.W. Big meal. My father liked soup, my mother liked soup. Everyday soup...

L.B. She would like to know what you ate, probably.

G.W. Yah. Everything, turned around my father you know. So also what we ate. I remember until Friday evening we had every day boiled beef, and when you ask me I tell you the details, very soft boiled. My mother at eight o'clock in the morning she put the beef on the stove.

M.W. It was soup meat.

G.W. Soup meat, yah.

P.B. Did you help your mother around the house?

G.W. No.

P.B. She did it all herself?

G.W. I must say, no, I didn't because there was always a ~~maid~~ maid. And my father really didn't. We studied for school, we were reading. Everybody in our house was reading. In the evening, I told that now to Marion now a few times, in the evenings we had sometimes the light supper and after the table was cleared, we had a round table, a big round table in the dining room, we stayed there, sat around in the dining room, around the dining room table and were reading and I was reading a lot. Because all the books that my older brother and my older sister brought home I had to read. My bad eyes are partly due to that especially because sister we didn't want to be disturbed sometimes in reading, in the afternoon when ~~we~~ we read. During vacation or on Sunday, oh, we went under the piano.

P.B. And it was dark.

G.W. And my mother called me we didn't hear. But we were reading a lot.

M.W. Do you remember any of the books?

G.W. A funny thing I have to tell you which I forgot to tell you. It's really very interesting...to me it was very moving. My father was the only son and between him and his father was a relationship which in my long life I have never encountered. They didn't live in the same town but they corresponded a lot.

M.W. That grandfather was a rabbi right? No?

G.W. ~~He was a~~

M.W. That was the grandfather who was a rabbi? Yes that was the Kulka

G.W. Yah. Sometime it was only a postcard and, but they had to tell each other so much. They scribbled it over and over. And they numbered the letters, the postcards, you know. But I remember, I really found out only after my father's death. Because then my mother showed me a red ~~pink~~ bag () bag, you know what I mean, that she ~~lx~~ as a bride had given to my father and this bag was, well not all the letters they had written my father and my grandfather, but a good part and he had kept the letters, postcards and numbered that . . . I remember far over three thousand. They were not regular correspondence, how are you and so on. It was really, it went much deeper. I loved my grandfather. He was a wonderful story teller all the fairy tales he told, he changed a little bit and put it in words that he...

M.W. How wonderful. I didn't know that. I didn't know that.

G.W. I forgot most of them . . . I can't translate it because it was really so funny. But it was wonderful. I remember, one year when my younger brother, oh not quite two years old and my father had a terrible flu in fall and the doctor said we couldn't stay, he always had heart murmur (?) even if you didn't go out in winter, we couldn't stay there in Troppau. He had to go to a southern climate, warm climate, Austria, you know. So we went to an island, a little island in the Adriatic, part of the Mediterranean sea, a little village. There were more people, peasants and my father played cards with the priest there, so he wasn't...and the doctor said he couldn't come home before May when it was warm, so from November bis May my mother had four children and then when Pesach came I think my grandfather was already retired, yah, I think now two years later he died, he came from Leipnig (?) to Troppau and my mother prepared, had much to do in the kitchen. But we children, four children went to ~~rx~~ the station to meet him. And brother was still very little, the ~~yungest~~ youngest one, he had a nursemaid, we talked about her the other day, Eva...

M.W. Alte Eva....

Side II Part II

G.W. But when they had found the letters, my father and my grandfather, there was one letter of my grand father which he had written to my father who was away and he described his arrival in Troppau. And he said it was almost, because it was Easter, as if Jesus ~~x~~ had come home only the donkey was missing. (Laughter, words lost.) *He came home the donkey*

L.B. He was Jesus and you were greeting him as he came, is that it? Yah.

G.W. He described my brother Hans, his faithful (Eire volz ???) *ayah* you know, Goethe's nursemaid, Goethe's nursemaid...

L.B. ~~xxx~~ Goethe's nursemaid? What was her name?

G.W. ~~Also his~~ mother was called "Aya" ???

L.B. So your nursemaid was "Ayah"???

G.W. His faithful Ayah kept him in his arm. He greeted me as if Jesus had come.

P.B. Did your family celebrate Pesach? Passover?

G.W. Celebrate what?

P.B. Passover?

G.W. Sure.

P.B. Did they celebrate all the holidays?

G.W. Sure. I remember Shavuot when we went in the woods and we brought all the green things home and put it on the walls and decorated the walls. But Hanukah was celebrated only by lighting the candles. We never got any presents. That didn't exist. We were not spoiled with presents. We got some birthday presents, that was all. No other opportunity. When an uncle or an aunt came they brought little things, but never...

P.B. Did your mother teach you how to cook?

G.W. No.

P.B. You taught yourself?

G.W. Because my father had no opportunity to study, so he wanted all his four children to study, to go to the university. And when I was seventeen years old I left my parents house. I had to, I had, when I wanted to study I had to go to Vienna to the university and before that because I didn't have a regular education, there were no schools for girls, I had to take it in private lessons, but the matura I had to pass in order to go to, to be entitled to go to the university. So I really had a lot of work to do.

L.B. When did you learn to cook?

G.W. To cook? (Laughs) I was not too good a cook all my life.

L.B. So mostly you always had help? In cooking?

G.W. We had help also in Vienna and even when we left Vienna when ~~we~~ the Nazis came.

And she was a wonderful woman.

L.B. Did you ever learn any of the usual housewifely...

M.W. Oh, mother's a very good cook. In New York she made huge meals, beautiful. You were a very good cook when we lived in 96th street.

G.W. They said that I was a good cook. When I came here, you know I thought I had to continue how we ate in Vienna. We ate much too much. So I made every day a big dessert or I never bought anything in the bake shop.

L.B. Now she had to learn some place how to do that.

P.B. Yeah, how did you learn to do it?

G.W. Maybe I always was thinking of my mother in law. She had to work and she couldn't do it herself and she had not much money so she had help, usually very unskilled help, a peasant girl, a farm girl from the country. One day she said to me, "You know I can tell every...I wouldn't be able to iron a shirt myself. But I can tell her how to do everything. So that she does it very well." I knew how to cook but I never cooked myself until I came here, until I had, no not only until, because from Vienna we went to Czechoslovakia first before we came to America. It was difficult for me, very difficult.

M.W. And complicated recipes! Complicated! Very, very, you made so many things.

G.W. No.

M.W. Yes. Puree and

G.W. You have all the...all the appliances that women have now here. When I think how we washed the laundry in Vienna. Laundry was boiled in order to get it clean and they got it very clean. Everything was starched. The tablecloth, napkins, everything was starched. So the girl, the maid had really work to do. Oh, I helped of course, I helped in the house, she couldn't have done everything herself.

~~Exc~~

P.B. What kind of a stove did your mother have?

G.W. Stove? In the kitchen? Coal stove, it had to be emptied ~~every day~~ the ashes ~~taken~~ every day taken out in the morning, the fire made and we didn't have central heating in the house. We had stoves also in the rooms.

P.B. What about the water? Did you have running water in the kitchen?

G.W. We had running water, yah. Running water, but I remember when I was very little, we had no running water so the bath tub was brought down, it was a wooden bath tub brought from the basement. I think we took a bath only every Friday night, before we had Friday night dinner. And the water was boiled ~~from~~ ^{on} the stove. I told you everything was much more difficult.

L.B. Where did the water come from if you had no running water?

G.W. We had running water.

L.B. No, before. Was there a pump? or did someone deliver it?

G.W. Somehow a pump. Then when we moved the last time we, there was a kitchen upstairs, yah, and then the kitchen stove and there was some, what do you call it, reservoir,...

J.W. A tank. Water tank.

G.W. A water tank in the attic. But a big attic. We had, we never needed an ice box, we had cellar, a cellar with a ...really it was ice cold and everything kept there.

M.W. Did you have vegetables there and jams and preserves?

G.W. Oh jam we had in the pantry, every kitchen had a pantry, jam and everything, tomato for tomato sauce.

M.W. What did you keep in your cellar? Basement.

G.W. Basement? What we said. The milk was boiled in the morning because there was no pasteurized milk and then it was taken to the cellar because it was cold. Everything was taken to the cellar. But in the kitchen, in this house, when the kitchen stove was working, I mean was heated up, the water came upstairs and the attic got hot water. And then we could take a bath.

P.B. But you didn't have an ice box did you?

G.W. We ~~we~~ never had an icebox in the kitchen. No, I had it in mine, but in my parents, no. I even had a refrigerator already in my kitchen. We (brought) the people to look at it. But only for one year or two years. But when I found out electricity was very

expensive in Vienna all the time, how much it cost, then I sold it to some people.

P.B. Did you have electricity in your parents house? In your parents house was there electricity?

G.W. No. Not first. First we had gaslight. I also remember kerosene lamps and you know this, my mother's only younger sister was married to a country doctor, a real country doctor who had his carriage and horses ~~MS~~ AND a coachman and because in the morning he had his office hours starting at eight o'clock, eight to nine, then he driving his rounds. ...But what was the question?

P.B. (Laughs) Did you have electricity?

G.W. There we had only kerosene lamps. A beautiful house, a beautiful yard, gardens, it was really something, but only kerosene. It was when I was a child. Later on, we had electricity. And then we had ~~cars~~ cars. We had cars you know. They were much different. Instead of turning it, we had a little chain to turn it on the gaslight.

M.W. I believe that Mother had new things when they came out. Like the refrigerator. Because I saw a picture of you and Father near an aeroplane, so you must have been one of the few...you took an aeroplane trip, one of the few people I believe who did take aeroplane trips. ^{first}

G.W.. Very early. '26. 1926.

L.B. When did Lindbergh fly the Atlantic, '29?

M.W. No. '24, '22.

G.W. No, wait in 1926 but we wouldn't have done it but we were in Venice at that time for vacation and at that time the Italian air lines with Austria was opened, was just the first day and my husband wanted it, you know, wanted this experience and right away he tried to get tickets but then I remember when we were driving to the airport he said, "Should we really do it?" "I said, "You spent the money now..." (General laughter- voices lost) "...You go up and prove to me about the airplane."

L.B. Don't forget she put her money down too. If you pay the money you go through with it right?

G.W. But it was not really...the day before it was open and that day Italian journalists were taking all the rides to Vienna, Austria from Italy. And we were the only passengers. And we took along you, you were waiting with your brother (to her son) with your grandmother. He was four years old and his brother eight years old. at that time the airport in Vienna was only a military airport in Oxbande (?) not where it is now and when my mother, I gave a ride my mother, but when she heard later about it she was so terrified... (Laughter) ^{later}

L.B. My mother still hasn't been on an airplane, her grandmother. (points to P.B.)

G.W. What?

L.B. My mother, her grandmother, has not been in an airplane. Won't go. And she's a lot younger than you.

G.W. But you don't think there was an airplane like ... (Chorus of laughter and "no, no.")

M.W. We have a picture. ~~From the time when you were very young~~ You must have been very adventurous or maybe father was the adventurer, in that case.

G.W. But it was very nice. You know, the train rides you always got there quick! in Austria I don't know why. But it would have been a long train ride and you never dressed, during summer, in a light dress because it got so dirty. There I was I remember exactly, the dresses they are wearing now (Dec. 1973) in '26 a short dress was chic, a light, lavender silk shirt dress and to come out clean...

L.B. In the airplane you came out clean. Well the trains probably ~~xxx~~ burned coal didn't they?

J.W. Yah. You kept the windows open.

L.B. So you got all that coal dust on you in the train. That's why it was dirty.

M.W. Could I ask...Did you go to a piano teacher for your lesson, did the piano teacher come to you? For piano lesson?

G.W. If we went to a teacher or if the teacher came to us? The teacher came to our house.

P.B. ~~These teachers came to our house~~ So you had a piano in your house.

G.W. Yah. We had a ~~xx~~ piano. But my brothers didn't learn to play the piano.

L.B. What did your brothers learn to do? Other than studying what did they learn to do?

G.W. They went to the elementary school and then they went to the high school.

L.B. I mean, did they play games with other boys, did they play outdoors, did they work, what sort of...

G.W. My older brother I really didn't know...He doesn't want to have much to do with his little sister. I was five years younger, than he. And you know the little one had already trouble with being Jewish. In Troppau there were not too many Jews. He was born in Troppau already. And when he was six years old ~~he~~, his birthday is in fall, he entered school. And I remember he was the only Jewish kid in class. And maybe, they were kids and they were not to blame, to be blamed for it, but their parents seemed to have been anti-Semites and there was one kid, I remember the name, and his father was a dentist and he was ~~i~~ even our dentist and this, one day my brother Hans came home crying from school, I remember so well, and bleeding from his nose and he said the boys were running after him and yelling, "Zau Yude"...you know...

L.B. That would be "Dirty Jew" wouldn't it?

G.W. No ~~Not~~ ^{My} Pig of a Jew. Such a little kid and he was such a good looking little kid. And he was terribly upset. So he didn't have too many friends. The children didn't have so many friends.

M.W. They had ~~in~~ ^{the} extended families. Could I...?

G.W. I wasn't...My brother, my older brother had good friends, two good friends, and my mother didn't like one of them and she tried everything, and we knew the parents and they were very nice and the other one, the other friend of my brother he didn't study anymore, went working, went to Hamburg in Germany to work in an office and there he was killed, he was murdered during a brawl in an argument in a pub. Hamburg is a big port, German port and all these seamen...nobody knew officially how he died...that was a terrible thing. And as I told you my sister was a really loner. I think she didn't want to have friends. But I had quite a few friends.

~~Yes~~. That's what you mentioned the other night. Since you had help in the house, and you were studying and learning the piano, did you ~~learn~~ ever learn embroidery or something like that?

G.W. No. In school we had some instruction. We had, in school we had some instruction. But we had, not that we learned ~~xxx~~ sewing like the kids do it here, only embroidery, crocheting and my father had very bad eyes, in his family, and he didn't really want us to do that. He said to my mother, and she never did it. She never did it. You know, that was also a custom. Every family had her seamstress. We called them "Hausschneider". Schneider is a seamstress, Haus you know. She came to our house let's say, for a week, for a whole week she slept, she stayed with us and she did at certain times, first she did all the mending and things that were for instance, ...I was lucky, I was always taller, I was once a tall woman. You wouldn't believe me. But I was really tall. ~~&~~ I was always taller than my sister, a little taller but I couldn't wear her things. Otherwise she would have caught up to me. But we always had the same dresses. We wore the same dresses. When she got older she resented it. I didn't. To me it was what I wore. When I was very young, I think we didn't, we had two school dresses.

M.W. Like a uniform Mother? Was it like a uniform?

G.W. No. no uniform. Two dresses which we wore to school. And we wore apron over the dress we shouldn't make them dirty. They were blue, navy blue, dark colors and the apron were often ~~not~~ made from black, we called it a kind of satin, but not the same.

M.W. What's the name?

G.W. I never... I think that disappeared completely, this material. And there were rick-rack you know, in colors to make it nicer. So that was school dresses. And then we had a nice dress for Sunday and I remember ~~my~~ ^{my} step grandmother had at that time in that town it was called "haute couture". She was a very, if you want to hear about it...

P.B. Sure.

G.W. She was a very interesting woman. Her parents died when she and her, she was the oldest of I don't know how many children there had been of the family, and her parents died when she was very young. And she had to prepare, ~~these kids~~ really, to support these kids. So she took any work she could get. Maybe she was 16 or 17 years old at that time. She, there was a little hospital, a hospital just came in existence at that time, so she ~~was~~ became the supervisor of the kitchen. ~~I~~ think she never could cook. (laughter) How she became...I know she didn't know how to sew herself. But all the rich people not only from Troppau but from everywhere came to her. She would, she always had the person, the so called directrice who would lean down and hem the skirt and set fittings.

J. BROWN

Always we never wore ready made clothes. And she had the best customers.

L.B. Well, what did she do? Did she design them?

G.W. She designed them, yes. And she, after this cooking thing, she didn't cook in the hospital, after that ~~she~~ she started with sewing, we called it salon. Everybody called it so.

L.B. And did she have girls working for her, doing the sewing?

G.W. Oh, she had quite a few girls. It was...she brought up ~~her~~ all her sisters, whom I knew of course and she had one, two brothers also who were younger. But of course I said before she was cool. She had to be a little harder after that kind...but at that time I didn't understand it. So we got our Sunday dresses down there. We always looked different, from the other kids and I remember for Pesach we got this ~~Spring~~ suits, and my parents bought hats for us...

M.W. You bought the hats. You didn't have them made with the same material did you? You had the hats bought separately?

G.W. And then for the fall holidays, and may I tell you an episode that goes back as which my mother told me about her father. His parents I don't know, my great grandfather you know what he really did. I think ~~that~~ had a little farm, something like they

that. And when he was fourteen years old, he never learned, he never went to school. At that time there was no obligation to go to school. But when he was I think twelve or thirteen years old he left his parents house, a little boy, and went to another farmer, but big farmer, huge, where he, I don't know, like a handy man, did work like a handyman. And there was, they lived, that was real country, no opportunity to go to a school but these people for whom he worked had a teacher for their children ~~came~~ ^{came} in their ~~house~~ house and he asked the teacher, this man, if he could teach him and he did, my grandfather, and he said "yes" in his ~~free~~ free time if he would do something for him, he would teach him. So my grandfather groomed this man's clothes, his shoes and ran errands for him in his free time. And he taught him and he became a very good business man.

L.B. That was your grandfather?

G.W. My grandfather. And the first Rosh Hashona he had saved his money, little money which he got for his services and bought a dress for his mother and sent it to her. And as long as his mother lived, every Rosh Hashona he sent her a dress.

L.B. This was your mother's father?

G.W. Mother's father. I found it very moving, isn't it?

L.B. Yes it is.

G.W. I mean, the family ties were much closer. Although they couldn't always stay together, the families.

M.W. I'd like to interrupt and say that although they didn't have, stress the domestic skills, because they had help, there were skills they had then that they still have now. Because there were no greeting cards for instance, and you wrote beautiful birthday letters, or letter. There were no greeting cards. Writing was a very great skill. That is one of the skills, perhaps not embroidery or other domestic skills, but the writing...

G.W. Especially for Rosh Hashona, all the uncles, all the aunts they resented it because their children never wrote them, my parents (General laughter) You know much much later, my brother Otto had an argument with an uncle, who reproached him that, my brother was at that time maybe 35 years old, and this uncle reproached him "You forgot your aunt's birthday" until my brother said "Maybe I had some other things to do, and by the way when did your children write my mother?" ^{he said to him}

M.W. And how they wrote, beautiful letters too, ^{because a mother writes a beautiful letter}

G.W. And I remember before Rosh Hashona, it was so many letters to write, letters.

L.B. Not just a greeting.

M.W. Oh no. Letters. Each one was a letter.

L.B. You see, you should write to your grandparents.

G.W. So many letters. I wish, now I am terrible with letters. I hate writing letters. And there were certain expressions which we used always to wish them happiness. There was an expression in German, I wish that the cornucopia of loving would bless you ... (General laughter)

P.B. Say it in German.

G.W. And one of us children ^{used it, the other one} couldn't use it. (Really loud laughter.)

M.W. How do say it in German mother? About the cornucopia.

B.W. Later on my mother was in concentration camp. (She begins to cry.)

M.W. Mother, nowadays children write, they just go out and buy a greeting card and resent writing even one little line, They'll say, what shall we write, all the best wishes, or...

P.B. Yeah, Adrienne and I have...

L.B. Oh you do?

M.W. We have saved some of mother's letters because they're so well written and she thinks she doesn't write a good letter now. And that was some one of the skills that young people in that era...

L.B. It was calligraphy.

M.W. I don't only mean well written...

L.B. You're not talking only about the physical style, but about content also.

M.W. The content...beautiful.

L.B. But they also had to learn...the art of handwriting itself was stressed, wasn't it?

G.W. Hmm?

L.B. Calligraphy. You know how to shape the letters.

G.W. But not so. We had the plain handwriting but we had in public school, it was a subject like any other subject, twice a week only ^{now} writing. There was no typewriter. But as I said (here she speaks very faintly) I had a very happy childhood in spite of my father's sickness. He never let us see it you know. We had very because my father always ^{he} disturbs other people by his coughing. But the family, when the family came, especially his family, it was a wonderful time.

L.B. Well thank you.