

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Paul Mark John Wolff

October 16, 2010

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PREFACE

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Transcribed by Lois Simonds, RPR, National Court Reporters Association.

PAUL MARK JOHN WOLFF

October 16, 2010

Question: The lights are on so it should be working. This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with?

Answer: Paul Wolff.

Q: Conducted by Alda Velatis (ph) on the 16th of October 2010 at the Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia: Let's begin.

Q: I'd like to first start off by asking you to state, again, your full name, if it's different now than your name of birth, date of birth, parents' names, siblings, family, place, all of that.

A: All?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay. My name is Paul Mark John Wolff. For some strange reason or other my parents gave me the name of three saints.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I have no idea why that is. I was born Hamburg, Germany on the 27th of December 1929. My father and mother are deceased. My father was Carl Wolff or referred to in this country as Charles Wolff. My mother was Erica Wolff, born Abeles. The maiden name was A b e l e s, Abeles. My -- I have two -- two sisters; Susan Barbara Wolff living today still in New York, and Eva Berta Wolff who died of -- of multiple sclerosis in San Francisco many years ago. My sister in New York's name is Fogelstein, by the way. It's not Wolff anymore. She's married to Henry Fogelstein. My

sister in San Francisco was Hertzfeld. Both married, incidentally. We were just talking about that in the conference. Somehow there is a connection of survivors. They both married survivors. What else can I tell you? My children, do you want that too?

Q: That be great. Sure.

A: Okay. I have three children, all of which are, I think, are registered as K2s. Karen Wolff Kirschenbaum in New York, the oldest; Linda Wolff Dorjee, married a fellow from Boughton and therefore the name Dorjee; and my son, Charles Wolff, in Berkley -- in Berkley. I was going to -- oh, interesting aside. Interesting aside that all three just recently in the last couple months became German citizens. Germany has offered

Holocaust -- children of Holocaust survivors citizenship if they want. Sort of -- it was very weird for me to have them become German citizens, but they did it for specific reasons. They thought if -- if education gets too expensive in this country -- they all have country -- that they want to be members of the European union in order to be able to attend any university within Europe --

Q: Great idea:

A: -- which is -- you know, they have no intention of going to Germany but this is an open door to the EU --

Q: Right.

A: -- which makes sense, really.

Q: Wonderful. That's a really good idea: Great.

A: Okay.

Q: Let's talk, if you will, about your earliest memories in Hamburg.

A: Okay. I lived in Hamburg for the first nine years of my life. I clearly remember a few things about school. I can remember being stoned, finally, on the way home from school one day by children that I played with just the previous week. They were, obviously, put up to this by their parents, but that was sort of our -- my message to me and to my sisters to not return to school. So that was my end of my schooling in Germany. I was nine years old. I was, I remember, being angry at my father for not allowing me to join the Hitler youth, which you got to go on outings, camping trips, and hikes and like the Boy Scouts.

Q: Right.

A: But of course as a Jew they wouldn't have taken me anyway. But I really didn't understand too much of that at that time. It didn't become really obvious to me as a nine year old until Kristanant (ph) when I can clearly remember them, the Gestapo, knocking at the gates of our house in Hamburg to arrest my father as it was common on the night of November 9th, 1938 to arrest all male Jews above 13 or 14 years old. I was too young, but they were after my father. My father knew he would be arrested, but wanted to go together with his brother-in-law. So he went over to his brother-in-law's house and thought they would be arrested together. My mother greeted them at the door as they came in, in her housecoat. It was about Midnight, full of -- the housecoat, I remember, was full of my -- the medals that my father had earned fighting for the Germans in the first world war. He was a much decorated major in the artillery, in the mounted artillery, actually, and was heavily wounded. And she thought somehow that that would exclude him from being arrested, but of course it didn't. They didn't really --

weren't interested in the metals. And they wanted to know where he was and they went and got him. Luckily enough, he was released about a week later, because one of the arresting officers actually had fought under him in the first world war and knew him personally from that. And many people were kept for months some were never released. But that finally opened his eyes that, gee, maybe we should really do something, try to get out of here. He has two brothers, incidentally, who are married and had families. One went three years earlier to France and one went two years earlier to London. But my father -- I discussed this with him many times -- thought like so many German Jews that this guy -- this upstart Hitler would blow over. It's a passing thing. We've just got to tough it out. Things will get back to normal again. And a lot of -- a lot of Jews, German Jews, felt almost more German than Jewish in that respect. You've probably heard that before. So he made -- he made moves to -- after Gustalac -- opened his eyes and he made moves to try to get out. We had a very distant uncle in New York. You had to have -- America had no Open Door Policy and you had to have somebody vouch for you over here that you would not become a burden to the States or -- to the state or go on the welfare rolls.

Q: Right.

A: So we finally did get an exit visa to England. And we -- and on April 20th -- I remember April 20th, 1939, happened to be a -- that's the date of Hitler's birthday. We left for England. Stayed two months -- two months in England waiting for some kind of transportation to the States. We only had a transit visa in England so it wasn't -- wasn't a -- couldn't be a final destination. He stayed -- my father and mother stayed with his brother in London. I was -- there wasn't enough room, so I was put on a farm somewhere in Devonshire where I remember being very, very lonely. Couldn't speak a word of language -- couldn't speak a word of English at the time. Had to point to food and things like that and had to -- never really lived on a farm before.

My sisters, incidentally, went on the Kindertransport a few months before we left; about six months before. They both were adopted by British families and they were on the Kindertransport. Both sisters. Okay. Then we finally got the -- on the SS Dinzeldike (ph) Dutch freighter with -- had room for 30 passengers going from London to San Francisco through the Panama Canal. Thirty days on the ocean. Very exciting for a boy of 9.

Q: Right.

A: Get lost on the ship and go to places where you're not allowed. And -- and I remember it as a very exciting -- exciting voyage, except we were told we were going to San Francisco and the only thing I ever heard about San Francisco was the earthquake of 1906. So I figured, well, probably going to live in a cardboard shack there because they

can't have any permanent houses. It must be all black lava sand. I had this weird idea of what a -- what an earthquake country would be like --

Q: Right.

A: -- until the day we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Q: Right.

A: You know, and then of course, it was -- it was quite -- quite different. But it was a very weird expectation of where we would go. At this time, my father was the only one of our family of five that spoke English. He had been to England as a young man. And my sisters had picked up a little in their couple of -- in their six months in England. I spoke practically none at all, because during my time in England I wasn't there long enough to go to any kind of school. Schooling or anything. So basically I grew up in San Francisco. And we arrived during summer, so by the time school started, I pick up a lot of English on the streets already. For a nine year old it's very quick. I was supposed to be, by my age, in fifth grade. So they put me in fourth grade because I didn't speak enough English. And then they let me jump from fourth to sixth later on to catch on with my -- to catch up with my age group. But, what else can I tell you?

Q: Well -- so, this is wonderful, because, you know, it gives an overview --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- of the time. So if it's okay, if we just go back then and then maybe highlight some of the moments, you know, and talk --

A: Okay.

Q: -- about any -- any other memories --

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: -- related to that. So, again, in Hamburg and then before the stoning incident, had you experienced anything else, had you seen anything else? What was going on?

A: Okay. Well, this reminds me of, as you know, Germany has a policy of inviting Holocaust survivors back to their original birth city. Right?

Q: Yes.

A: So several years ago -- that's been about eight or nine years ago now -- we were both invited back; my wife to Berlin and I was invited to Hamburg. And they show you the - - the city. But during that time while I was in Hamburg at the hotel, someone from the archives, much like you, came by to interview -- have a personal interview, get the story of each one.

Q: Right.

A: Okay. So I did that interview. And then several years later I was called by a movie producer in Germany, Nina Koshofer -- who was Nina Koshofer, who was in the process of doing a very, very ambitious project of a documentary on the Jews sponsored by German television and French television stations. That's called -- do you speak German at all?

Q: I don't speak German. No.

A: It's called -- in English it's *The Jews, History Of A People*. In German it's (speaks in German). And it was running for -- it's a five-hour documentary. It was running for five consecutive days on television, an hour each. It was sort of -- it ended up sort of a little bit like *Roots* was in this country, which was the history of black slavery.

Q: Right.

A: Here you may have seen it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Which also ran about four or five days in a row. And it was a very thorough documentary. She spent three and a half years traveling to Israel, Lithuania, France, Germany, everywhere to film this thing. So she had some good funding from these television stations. And believe it or not, she brought her whole -- whole camera crew over to San Luis Obispo, California and filmed us, and filmed the Shabbat, the evening meal which we had to stage on a Sunday night, instead of Friday, because she happened to be here on Sunday --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know. And did quite an extensive interview. So this -- this documentary ran. I have a DVD of it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It ran both in Europe and it has not run on PBS yet but it's scheduled. It's scheduled to run on PBS.

Q: Wonderful.

A: So it really starts sort of with Moses and ends with our family in San Luis Obispo.

Q: Wow.

A: So it's really long. It's interesting. But she -- the reason I was picked for this is because of this interview that I did in Hamburg. She ran -- she read through all these archives, all these interviews --

Q: Right.

A: -- and said, I need somebody who has been kicked out of Germany who was a hero in the first world war. They really wanted to interview my father, but because he wasn't alive anymore, so they settled with me. And one of the -- one of the episodes of my life that they -- they staged in this film with somebody portraying the young kid -- nine year old kid portraying me, which might be interesting here, was because -- you asked me to go back to remember things. I remembered very clearly the Gestapo coming in and surveying all our belongings, which they did. I still have a list of -- a very, very detailed list. So many handkerchiefs, so much linen, so many knives, forks, and spoons; all the inventory. Most of which was confiscated. Ones -- we were allowed to take one knife, fork, and spoon per person. For a family of five we could take five things with us. And anything of value that they wanted too, any ornamentation that we had around.

And we had a large vase, vase, a carved glass vase with a gold rim on the top. And I noticed they were going through getting anything -- any metals of any value, silver or gold, or anything that they were confiscating. So while they were rummaging through the house -- I was watching this -- I took this vase and held it under the kitchen faucet under hot water and wanted to see if the rim would come off. And tapped it, and believe it or not, the rim came right off. So they took the rim and they left us the vase. We still have the vase in our living room at home now. They were only interested in the --

Q: Right.

A: -- in the metal part. Not the vase. It's a large carved glass vase. I thought it was quite handsome. Anyway, that part they staged in this -- in this little film, the history of the Jews there, and -- and a lot of my father's exploits in the first world war as a major.

I'm not sure what else I can tell you except the thought of this has never -- the thought of our background is somehow never very far from -- from my -- I've been a Professor of Architecture at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and I've concentrated on minority populations. I guess -- I'm guess it's related to the background of minorities. And we do talk to high school groups and college groups and various groups in -- in California: I would like to do that. I haven't done that yet in Germany.

Q: Right.

A: It would be interesting to do that in Germany. Go ahead. Now ask me something else.

Q: No, no. That's wonderful. Thanks for sharing. If it's okay, can we talk about your sisters and the family's decision, you know, the process of making the decision, what happened, how it happened, to get on the Kindertransport?

A: Yeah. I've never quite figured out. And you know, it's -- it's interesting that after your parents die you think of all the millions of questions that you wish you would have asked them, which of course, they are not ask-able anymore. But I was relatively frail, underweight and very skinny. And for some reason or another, my parents decided to keep me with them and put them on the Kindertransport rather. Maybe they felt I was too young. My wife was six months younger than I am when she was put on the Kindertransport by her mother, you know. It's also very, very hard for me to conceive, as a parent, to conceive of what you must feel like to give your child up into the unknown, because you generally prefer the devil that you know that may be existing with you than the devil that you don't know and you have no idea what you're giving your child to this... In the -- in the film, what is it? The -- "Into The Arms of Strangers" there is this one very emotional scene where a father just simply pitches his baby through the train window and a teenager catches the baby and saved its life.

Q: Yeah.

A: But for a parent to give up a child into the unknown like that is very difficult.

But anyway, my sisters both went out, I think about four months before we did. Actually, on separate Kindertransports. And my oldest sister, Susan, stayed with my -- stayed with my father's brother. My younger sister Eva was adopted by a Jewish cab driver in London with whom she corresponded with for many years after she came back here, and was treated very well. Some of the children had much worse experience, as you probably heard. Some were taken advantage of, some were used as domestic servants. But my wife's -- my wife was adopted by a Quaker family and grew up as a Quaker and also was treated very well. A lot of Quakers came forward to adopt children. Okay. My sister in New York, for example, I've tried to get her into the Kindertransport organization or such. Well, she's listed in it, but she really is a denier. She never would want to step foot on Germany. She would never -- she hasn't told her kids much about this. She doesn't -- she really -- and she's -- she was the oldest. She was actually -- I was -- yeah. She was 16 at the time, so she would have a better memory than anything and she's forgotten everything. She's forgotten everything. She remembers nothing about the voyage, the trip, or anything.

Q: Right.

A: So, it's very interesting.

My wife just recently published a book about her experience. *Shedding Skins*. I don't know if she mentioned to you, but she had -- she worked very closely with a Jewish editor in our -- in our city that proofread the book and would give her pointers on it. And shortly after that -- her publication -- this editor died. And we went to the funeral service and learned through the editor's daughter that she was also a "Kind" and she never mentioned it.

Q: Really.

A: She never mentioned it at all. And you know, they worked together for a couple of years. And my wife was just blown away that somebody would just totally --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know, deny that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Okay. What else?

Q: Is everything okay?

A: No. I wanted to show you something.

Q: Okay. Great.

A: But -- well, go ahead. You have some more questions probably.

Q: Sure. Absolutely. So maybe we can talk a little bit about your time in England, about adjusting a little bit to life there. Any friends, any --

A: No. I wasn't -- I was there two months. I was living on a farm. I thought I had been abandoned, sort of thing, because I -- I couldn't speak the language, and I was -- I remember being very, very lonely. And not speak -- and people didn't speak any German. I have no idea how this family was ever picked. But finally, when we met at the dockside that was my first reunion with my sisters also where -- in England so that we all -- we all finally did get on the boat together. But otherwise, I -- I remember relatively little, little of that time in England. I remember in San Francisco also nearly being kicked out of school because I got in a fight with a guy that called me a dirty Jew. Teacher sort of picked us up by our scruffs of our necks and was going to kick us out. But I realized that -- that you know, the prejudice wasn't just limited to Germany. Why would -- it happened here too. I am the keeper of our family passports so I still have my -- my Nazi passport. We were all given the middle name of Israel, as you probably know. I had hair once too.

Q: Just so that -- your posterity's sake, I am being shown a passport. People listening wouldn't be able to see it. Oh. And here's your photo. Wonderful --

A: Yeah. Actually --

Q: -- that you have it.

A: -- all except Susan's photo. I have even my parents' Nazi passports. When we went to Germany and -- recently --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- you have to show you passport as you enter the country. I showed them my -- my Nazi passport.

Q: You did.

A: And the guy did not have much of a sense of humor. He said, "You know, sir, I can have you arrested. I have to confiscate this because it has a swastika on it. Any documents with a swastika on it are illegal in Germany."

Q: Right. Right.

A: "And so you could be arrested. And this can be confiscated." I said, "Okay. Forget it. Here's my American passport."

Q: Right. Right. Thank you for showing those to me.

A: Sure.

Q: And thanks for, you know --

A: I don't know what else.

Q: We can talk about other -- you know what? Maybe about your parents, if you wanted to talk about them.

A: Yes.

Q: That would be wonderful.

A: Yes. Okay. My father was a -- started a coffee firm in Hamburg, importing coffee and processing it from Guatemala, so that's all he really knew was coffee. So when we came to this country he started peddling coffee house -- until he found a firm here, he started peddling coffee house to house, selling coffee by the pound from house to house, by foot, because he never learned to drive in Germany. He had a chauffeur. Over here he just never learned to drive, even all the years he was here. But after about, oh, I'd say six months approximately of peddling coffee he realized he could not support a family

of five by selling coffee, and yet that was about the extent of what he knew. So he found a job on the San Francisco waterfront and became a stevedore. And for the first time in his life really did -- did physical eight to five. He was a union member and working on the waterfront. And told me, I remember, that in many ways he preferred that because at 5:00 he could no longer -- he would no longer have to worry about his -- his business. He was -- his time was his own. He worked strictly from eight to five. It was tough physical work, but he was free of any -- any kind of other concerns and obligations. And my mother started being a saleswoman in a department store. No. She started -- first of all, she started cleaning people's houses. She was a domestic house cleaner cleaning people's house for many years and then she became a sales clerk in a department store. And so we all -- we had pitched in. We all had some kind of jobs. There was a Jewish Council of 1933 which helped us get an apartment in San Francisco. It helps you get settled a little bit. I still spoke, always, German when I came home, and English in school. So my sisters also had jobs. I started sweeping out -- I remember my first job sweeping out a plumbing store and a grocery store for eleven cents an hour. I remember that. When I finally figured out how much I was making an hour, I quit and got the job at 20 cents an hour somewhere else. But that was -- yeah, that was in San Francisco. So I never really had a much -- through junior high and high school, I never had any much social life at all because I had a job after school almost all the time. So we all sort of -- we all sort of pitched in. I was the only one of the -- I was the only one in my family fortunate enough to go to a university. I went to U C Berkley and studied architecture. And got drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean War, which was -- they sent me to Germany, which was a good place to be during the Korean War. And it was very interesting for me, because I would -- this was 1955, ten years after the end of the war. And I could very easily put on civies and go into a bar and sit down and have a beer and listen to everybody refighting the Second World War which was fascinating for me, you know. And an awful lot of denial going on. Hitler, who was he? And you know -- sort of thing. Or I -- I was not a Nazi. And I always would ask what time -- what point they joined the Nazi party, because if they joined in the late -- in the -- '44, early '45, '43, then they probably weren't convinced Nazis because by that time they had to join in order to survive. But those who joined in the early forties, and even the late thirties were pretty -- pretty convinced of that, you know. So anti-semitism was not that -- I had no desire to -- to live there. I was glad, glad to be part of the US Army. That was --

Q: (Inaudible).

A: Yeah. It was very interesting. In fact, I was there during the time when the Germans were being asked by NATO to rearm and develop their own Army. And I was a corporal. And we had -- we started getting orders that when we meet German officers we were to salute. I could never bring myself to do that. So I'd go down the street and a

German officer would start approaching me. And of course, the -- the lower rank is supposed to salute first.

Q: Right.

A: And the upper rank then returns the salute, but with me it was -- I was -- I teased them to call me, but they never really did. But I would never, never salute. Finally, when the officer gets up to me, he salutes --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know, and then I would return the salute. Or I would not -- no. Actually, I did not return the salute. But as far as expecting to be called out on this, and never did. Never did. They probably suspected, oh, this guy's Jewish. He's not going to salute me.

Q: Right.

A: And it was interesting at that time. I did a little research on my own and found out that in schools nothing was -- at that time, nothing was being taught at all about the Nazi era. They did -- they do now. They have picked it up a lot, but at that time, ten years after the war it was just total denial.

Q: Right. Right. Great.

A: Okay.

Q: If you'd like, we can definitely keep talking and I could probably you know keep you here for hours.

A: Well, no. You might want to check out this -- this video.

Q: Absolutely.

A: This -- that is very interesting. And I think the Holocaust -- you guys either would have one -- have it already. I don't know how you -- if you research other -- what other countries do.

Q: Yes. Yes. We absolutely do.

A: Or I have some extra copies. I can send you one.

Q: We will -- I will definitely talk to somebody about that.

A: It's available in English now and in German, and I think in French too --

Q: Wonderful.

A: -- now. So it's a -- it's a good thing to have. Yeah.

Q: And maybe if we could talk about your children. And you talked to them about -- I mean, obviously, you're the keeper of family histories and --

A: Yeah. We're trying not do the same mistake that I did with my parents by not asking enough questions. And now as our children are -- are getting older, you know, they're what, 46, 44, and 42, so they're -- and they have children of their own.

Q: Right.

A: So particularly my son is very, very -- I took -- I took him along when we were invited to Germany. Did I -- Oh. I'm sorry.

Q: -- really quick. No. Actually, we can just...

A: Put this back on me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, that's -- get my handkerchief out. I undid that.

Q: Put it on a little tighter. Great. Okay.

A: What do you want -- you want me to repeat something?

Q: Just, if we could just go back a little bit about --

A: Okay.

Q: You were speaking about your son.

A: Okay. My son is probably the most, I'd say the most Jewish of the three of us -- three of my children. And we took him with us to Germany for this visit to Hamburg and Berlin. And he's also a member of Kin 2. He did a stint in Israel. He speaks fluent Hebrew. He joined the Israeli defense forces for a short time to free -- to free natives for fighting -- for fighting. They train foreigners to be sort of domestic part of the IDF. He teaches Spanish in Berkley. Interestingly enough, it's part of, I think, our effect on our children that they have all gone into professions, non-entrepreneurial professions, but they are more -- much more interested in working with and helping people.

My daughter is a physical therapist. My other daughter in New York works for the Innocence Project with Berry Scheck. She's a lawyer by training. Works with the Innocence Project. And Charles teaches Spanish. And I've been teaching, primarily trying to sensitize architects, architecture students to designing for disabilities, working with disabled people. And most 20 year old architecture students feel they're totally indestructible so they don't really think about accessibility within a building. So that's more or less what I'm concentrating on, and dealing a lot with just diverse populations, designing for diversity. So I think it's had an influence on teaching and on our value

system and in general. I think, you know, most of the people there have gone -- in the conference I noticed too have gone into some kind of -- of a field in the humanities rather than business, which is very interesting sort of a side effect on it --

Q: Absolutely.

A: -- on what's been happening.

Q: Absolutely.

A: Otherwise, we've tried to share things with our children, tried to answer their questions as much as possible as what we remember. We wish we remember more precisely. That's about it.

Q: Wonderful. Well, thank you, thank you, thank you so much for --

A: Okay.

Q: -- for the interview and for sharing with us today.

A: I'll probably think of a lot of things that I didn't -- I didn't mention, but -- in fact, you know --

Q: Actually -- yeah, actually, maybe that would be a good idea if we can take a minute. I can just pause it and then if you want to just sit. I have the time if you have the time and we can -- if you have --

A: 12:30, I guess. Yeah.

Q: If there's anything that, you know, you want to just think about and then --

A: Yeah. We can go ahead --

Q: Let's just do that. So I'm going to just pause it and then... Great. So we are recording again after a pause with Paul to collect our thoughts. And once again, we discussed you would like to tell us about your grandparents.

A: Yeah. I was unfortunate to know -- only one of my grandparents was alive when -- when I was born. And that was my mother's mother; my grandmother, Rosa Abeles, or Omas (ph) as we called her. She -- we tried very hard through the Red Cross to try to get her out afterwards because she refused to come out with us. She was old, elderly, overweight and -- and devoted only to Germany, really. Didn't have -- didn't -- would not leave Germany under any circumstances. And we tried very hard through the Geneva Red Cross and finally learned at the end of the war that she had died in Theresienstadt in the concentration camps in Theresienstadt where a lot of older people were taken. After doing some research at Yad Vashem when we went to Israel years later, we looked up the date -- the dates that she was there, which Germany is of course

incredible at recordkeeping. They keep records of everything. And we found that she was at Theresienstadt for about six months period until she died, probably of starvation, at the -- at the same time that my wife's grandmother was also at Theresienstadt. They could have possibly known each other years and years before we ever met.

Q: Right.

A: You know, I didn't meet my wife until 1960. So it's very possible that they might have known each other, as it is just one of those very strange coincidences.

I'm often asked in talks in school what affect this has had on -- on my faith. And I have to admit that the whole experience probably made me more Jewish than I would have been in Germany, because we are relatively secular Jews and am still -- I do -- we do belong to a synagogue here as we did in Hamburg, but it's reformed. As you know, Jews have reformed conservative and orthodox. So it's very much on the liberal or reformed side here. But certainly, I felt more Jewish because of what's happened there.

It was interesting when we first came to America -- this was almost a couple years before Pearl Harbor, but only -- we arrived here 30 days, directly 30 days after the war in Europe broke out. We arrived on August 1st. The war started September 1, 1939. And we were treated as enemy aliens here. We were considered German.

When the Japanese were deported from the west coast after Pearl Harbor, there was serious talk about doing the same thing with the Germans. They never did it because our skin color was not so obviously different from everybody else's skin color, but there was serious talk about also doing that. I remember the FBI coming into our apartment in San Francisco, confiscating a Grundig radio that we had brought over because they thought it might receive shortwave. It didn't receive shortwave of course, but they confiscated it anyway. So at this time the Deutsch of Bund, the German Bund was marching up and down the streets of New York holding demonstrations. So America really had not a clue as to what was really happening there at all. And I was very instrumental in our little community here. We just finished building the very first LEED certified synagogue in the world. A LEED is an international standard for rating energy efficient buildings. It simply means Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. And so I was quite instrumental in getting that designed and built and LEED certified. So I am active in that respect. I think the effect that this whole thing has had on me more is to -- is to really be very, very conscious of any type -- any types of discrimination. Right now I'm working closely with a Moslem group which is getting a lot of prejudice in our area, and in many areas. Kids are being picked on in school. There's -- there's just a lot of -- a lot of the same kind of ignorant prejudice. It comes really out of ignorance more than anything else, of not understanding and not even wanting to understand. You know, when I went back in the military to Germany I was

the first Jew that many Germans had ever met, or had any contact with whatsoever, you know. But when they said, we had no idea of what was really going on, that was very questionable, because they -- well, maybe they knew enough not to ask the right questions. That was -- but they did see their neighbors disappearing and -- and all kinds of things. One thing I left out is that after I got out of the US Army, I took what was known at the time as a GI Bill of Rights which allows you to study. They give you a small stipend. I think it was \$150 a month, which would make it very difficult to study in the U.S. at a university, but I could do graduate work in architecture in Germany. So against my father's best wishes, I enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and spent a couple of years there doing graduate work in architecture. Had a very, very international class, a master's program in architecture. And a professor, who had fought on the front in the -- Sep Ruf, a well known architect in Germany, who had fought on the front. And one weekend decided to put us all in cars and take us to Dachau, which is just outside of Munich, you know. And he insisted that I ride with him in his car.

And he tried to make a strong case for the fact that he was a soldier on the front, an officer on the front, and not really knowing what was happening back home, as far as the Jewish problem. I still -- I still have suspicions that if they wanted to find out what was happening, not only to the Jews at home but to the Jews of the countries that were -- that they were occupying during the war, they could easily find out. Even an -- even an artillery officer could find that out, what was really going on. But he took us to the memorial. And explained to us all -- the memorial at Dachau had just been built. It was a very -- it was a very emotional trip. I was the only Jew in that architecture group, but the group was -- only included two Germans. The rest were from, really, all over the world. They had students from everywhere that came together and had a chance to experience that very, very powerful visit. And they seemed to -- beginning to really understand what -- what kind of mass hysteria had taken place there, even though this was just ten years after the war.

Q: Right.

A: As far as getting back to the faith issue, there is a -- there is a -- a Jewish saying of attempting to heal the world, of acting in such a way, behaving throughout your life in such a way, it's tikkun olam, which means to heal the world. And in some small ways you're supposed -- ideally, it's to lead a life that would help to do that. So I've gotten very involved in, at home, working with the homeless issue, which is prevalent in our town also, and in creating a sustainable synagogue that does a little bit maybe to heal the environment. And it was -- by the way, it was the first LEED certified synagogue in the world. And hopefully -- and since then -- this was three years ago it was -- it was certified. And since then there have been many others that have also been certified. So if any affect it had on me, it's made me conscious of individual prejudices. When my

wife and I talk to schools we try to get this across to kids as to picking on. Right now there's a big thing all over the news about bullying and what -- what harm that can do. Bullying because of -- you're gay, or because they're Moslem or because you're different from -- from the -- so the idea of differences and how we -- how we treat differences and how we only seem to gravitate to our own kind all the time needs to be addressed.

And I think very slowly it is, but you know, it's very dangerous what's happening in this country right now because when they say that the hysteria of Naziism was only because the Germans are so focused on the fuhrer, on a leader, that they will follow the leader over any precipice. Some of the things we're seeing now, some of the prejudices we see with the mosque being proposed in New York and what have you, it could happen here just as easily I think as -- as having anything happen in Germany in the 1930s. So we're not -- we're not above that. There are an awful lot of -- well, I won't get into politics too much, but -- okay.

Q: That's fine.

A: Okay.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: I think that's --

Q: I think that's great. Thank you so much.

A: I think that's fine. Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you so much. And that's it.

Conclusion of Interview