

Interviewer: Okay you can start.

Anderson: (The tape begins with MS. Anderson reading from a piece of paper) I was born in Stuttgart the capital of Wurttemberg which is one of the 16 states of Germany. My parental home was in Ludwigsburg about 10 miles north of Stuttgart. My father was a governmental official the director of the national health insurance organization of Ludwigsburg and its district. My mother was a house wife and I have a brother and a sister who are older than I. World War II started when I announced my arrival of course I was not aware of it until I was about four years old. My brother was drafted into the army at age 16 and was captured by the Russians at age 18 and was sent to the concentration camp in Siberia. He was a prisoner of war for three years. My father, who like everybody else in a prominent position, was forced to join the Nazi party. I know he never condoned Hitler's philosophy of concurring the world and extinguishing the Jewish race. He was patriot and joining the Nazi party was the thing to do. We all know if somebody rebelled the régime the person disappeared. After the war ended and a new party evolved my father paid dearly having been a Nazi and he was forced to perform street repair for about two year. Towards the end of the war I can remember daily air raids it seemed like they occurred around 6 p.m. We had a coo-coo clock and whenever the door on the clock opened at 6 p.m. and the coo-coo did its thing the air raid sirens went off and everybody ran into the bomb shelter. Ludwigsburg was spared from severe bombing most of the bombing efforts were directed onto Stuttgart which was a large industrial town. In fact there was a ball bearing company in Stuttgart and especially the Americans tried to destroy it and they never could find it because the company was built inside of a mountain. And now a days it's a great big tunnel when you go through Stuttgart and I'm sure a lot of people that were born during the war they keep thinking about. Lucky how smart the company was to build there. Mother was always hoping for better days and every night when she put me to bed we prayed for my brother's safe return. And he did in 1948 ironically he had crossed the Bulregard River on his 18th birthday going to Siberia and he crossed it again on his 21st birthday coming home. My parents' had been notified by the Red Cross that my brother might be on a certain troop train. My parents and I waited patiently at the railroad station in Stuttgart and there he was. I didn't even recognize him he had been gone too long. He would tell us hair raising stories of his captivity he certainly was not treated according to the Geneva Conventions. And I have some pictures here that through someone's help in the neighborhood there lived a Russian lady and it seems mom would take letters to here. And these four pictures they had been sewn in a letter and they went to the concentration camp to my brother. Back here you can see the holes from the needles and then if I remember right this picture was made shortly after we had been notified that he was captured. And we gave this to the Red Cross to see if they would let it get to him and the picture had to be without any background. Nobody was to see you know where we lived and what we had and so on that's this picture here. Some of those hair raising stories that my brother would tell every morning the Russian guards would have the German prisoner stand in front of a wall and if they felt they couldn't do a day's work they were eliminated. After the war came the depression my parents from one day to the other completely were wiped out. New money was made it was called the reichsmark and it was issued to each person 50 marks so we started with 250 marks our life after the war. Which was about at that time I would say probably about \$60 for the entire family a month. Something's that we did to survive my mother let's see I'm we had ration cards I think I have it in here we had ration cards for food we knew some farmers in the country and we would take shoes or clothes we could do without to exchange for food. Mother and other women would walk to the wheat fields outside the town and pick the wheat which was missed during harvest taken to a mill and exchanged for flour. On weekends the whole family would walk toward areas where there were beach trees and gather beach nuts to exchange for oil. We also grew vegetables in our garden and we had plenty of fruit trees and berry bushes to supplement our diet. There's one incident that I shall never forget I was probably six or so and my mom and my aunt we walked to the country. We walked at least over an hour and my

mother said now if Mrs. so and so I can't recall the farmer's wife if she says are you hungry you say yes. So we got there and it looked like farmers did rather well because all the city people would go there to exchange food for certain items that they didn't need anymore. Anyway so we got there and this lady said are you all hungry and I said yes and I remember she had a loaf of bread that big that she had baked and she cut this big hunk of bread off and put a lot of butter on it and man it was something for me. But then what happened she gave us two eggs and I was determined I was going to carry those eggs home and it was it rains quite often in Germany and we had raincoats on and a rain cap. And so I guess it quit raining and mother took off the rain cap of my my rain cap off and put the two eggs in that cap. And wouldn't you know I dropped those and I can still see those two eggs running down the street. And I was sure that was my last day on this planet. I knew I was gonna get really really spanked for it and I started to cry. And my mother said let's keep on walking we need to get home that was the end of that. I was saved.

Interviewer: Nice keep walking you were saved.

Anderson: Anyway these were hard time but nobody complained because everybody was in the same situation. The upside of it all was that nobody worried about being overweight or cholesterol problems.

Interviewer: That's true you can see the bright side.

Anderson: After the capitalization on May 8, 1945 Germany was divided into four zones governed by the USSR, England, France, and the USA. And we were so fortunate to be in the American zone and I remember the meals we received in school. We called them Hoover meals.

Interviewer: Hoover oh wow.

Anderson: This was my first experience eating creamed corn and I still don't like it but it was filling and nobody complained. I can remember we would open the doors from the classroom to get in the hallway and down to the foyer where all these big cans of food were and I thought oh no corn again. But we were so hungry everybody ate.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: With the war and the depression behind us my father was reinstated with the national insurance organization in Stuttgart and things started to look up. My brother graduated from the University of Hartlebrug as a dentist and my sister and I completed college. I always liked languages and I had studies French for six years and English for nine years and I became employed by the American Army in Ludwigsburg. The most interesting job I had was translating for the German American advisory group and later for the Stuttgart post transportation division and that's where I met my husband. Now there is a little bit about that's more of our about my town would that be okay?

Interviewer: Yeah I'd love to hear about it.

Anderson: Okay I also met my husband there and in 1964 I immigrated legally to the United States. It took five long years until I became a united citizen and I was then able to work for the U.S. government. My husband and I went back to Germany on two occasions the death of my mother in 68 and in 1974 just for a visit. Now I want to tell you a little about my hometown. It was founded in 1750 and we call that a young town because Germany is so much older. And it was names after the Duke Abraham

Ludwig. There are three beautiful rock castles one resembling the castle of Louis the 14th in Versailles outside of Paris. Napoleon spent three nights in this castle on his military campaign to Russia. Ludwigsburg is also famous for its beautiful gardens and parks around the main castle. A china manufacturing company was founded in 1758 still in business and is still producing beautiful china. In fact I have some pieces here. Perhaps it's not as well-known as the mice in China but it's just as delicate and artistic. Ludwigsburg was also a military town and concerns were later utilized by the American army. The last king of _____ was Will Hound the second had a summer home in Ludwigsburg and his daughter raised horses on the estate. In our neighborhood everybody knew each other and everything of each other and everybody spoke the same southern dialect it's called Swabian. We decided last September that would be September in 12/06 we went home and I was surprised hearing all the different dialects because after the wall had come down all of the easterners came to the west because that's where the jobs were.

Interviewer: Okay

Anderson: Let's see I don't believe that's interesting enough. I have some pictures here I thought you might like. I showed you the pictures in front of the house. This was the house my father had that built. The insurance company over which he was the director is in front of the house, I think it's an ugly house. And then this is my father and he's said on the back 25th jubilee but I don't even know about what. About you know what kind of celebration it was but that was my papa. And this is mother this is my mom and that's my mom's sister my aunt. And that was a nephew of theirs and he never came back from the war. That's momma again I have some other pictures but I thought I would show you these. They are old pictures for sure and that's my grandfather on my dad's side and that's me.

Interviewer: Oh how neat

Anderson: That's I as a baby. And this is I assume we were about 8 or so we went back here that's the castle and we all had a group picture made. And I just wanted to show how simplistic our little dresses were and nobody wore slacks or anything like that we always wore dresses.

Interviewer: So cute look at them. Did you go to a girl's school?

Anderson: Yes oh yes sure did now college we were what do you call it I can't think of it co-ed.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Anderson: But even high school we were all girls.

Interviewer: College must have been quite the new experience.

Anderson: You bet you bet because and you didn't want to appear to be a symbol and you really studied hard.

Interviewer: Right we have to look smart.

Anderson: That's right this is my brother at his wedding day.

Interviewer: Oh wow

Anderson: You have a I guess you have it here too you have a dressed up wedding or church wedding and this is where you get registered as a married couple.

Interviewer: Right to go get your license. So cool

Anderson: And that this is me on my confirmation day I'm protestant so we get confirmed at age 14 and I have to say now during the war there was no church Hitler did not allow that. And so when I was baptized I was six years old and I can remember that rather well because after the war you went back to church.

Interviewer: Do you remember your family missing church was that like a big void?

Anderson: Yeah because I think yeah I'm especially my father we were raised religiously. In fact he had a special church we would walk to we always walked a long way to walk. And it was a small church and it belonged to an orphanage and so the orphans they were also there on Sunday. And the orphanage they were self-sustaining they raised animals that they slaughtered and they raised their own food. And my father liked it especially because the minister spoke freely they didn't read their sermon.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: So

Interviewer: Did you do anything during obviously during the time you weren't allowed to have church just within your home?

Anderson: Well we would pray we would pray but no I you know we wouldn't have gatherings like you have here in the states no. And another thing in Germany the denominations are not as strong as they are here. We belong to the protestant church of my hometown even though there are we call them sects like you have Baptist you have Adventist and so on but they were rather small groups.

Interviewer: Do you know of anyone from your town or anyone that your father might have known that got in trouble for trying to go to church?

Anderson: No no you know the thing about it it was almost like a police stay you were scared.

Interviewer: Oh of course.

Anderson: You were very very scared. And you would never make comments about what the Hitler regime was doing. And I remember one time I had come home from school and we had just very briefly spoken about the Hitler regime and I said to my father did you know there was a concentration camp outside of Munich where they gassed people. My father said ___ you are too young to understand that and that was the end of the conversation. So I'm sure people were aware of what was happening but you were just too afraid to rebel because like I mentioned earlier you just disappeared.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: You know and like a lot of people think in these concentration camps only Jews were eliminated. There were lots of Gentiles there too the ones that spoke out against Hitler.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: So ask me some questions.

Interviewer: Okay great okay I'm gonna start off asking you some questions about when you were a kid you would have been a kid. You already said when you were born and where you were born in 1940. And you talked about your dad and can you tell us a little bit about what his job at the health insurance department intelled?

Anderson: Yes he Germany had already socialized health insurance we called it a national oh what did we call it National Health Insurance or universal health insurance. Some people call it socialized health insurance. Anyway he over saw a big company where for instance when you became ill you went there and you paid like converted into American money about twelve cents and you got a slip and you took that slip to the doctor. Now the doctor put the diagnosis on there as well as the services and he later every three months, I did it for my brother sometimes I took it to the company in Stuttgart. Anyway then they would send these slips to the insurance company for payment. And so he oversaw that payments were made correctly punctually and any kind of regulations that the government made change whatever he made sure that it was implemented.

Interviewer: Okay

Anderson: So he just he oversaw that.

Interviewer: Okay did speaking about your father do you remember your parents and your older siblings being prewar and then during the war being political or did your dad belong to any specific political party?

Anderson: Well see he joined the Nazi party before he never joined anything. And another thing I had mentioned Hitler started the they call it Ugen Via it's all the young boys and girls they formed clubs.

Interviewer: Like Hitler youth?

Anderson: That's right that's what it was it was the Hitler youth.

Interviewer: I was gonna talk to you about that.

Anderson: And they supposable became a certain blessing but I'm sure it was not God's blessing that they got. But that's what it was it was Hitler youth and he instilled the patriotism they sang wonderful songs.

Interviewer: Were you a part of that?

Anderson: No no I was too young.

Interviewer: Right do you remember your siblings telling you about it?

Anderson: I remember I remember seeing pictures of my brother and my sister in uniforms. They were not really well like a black skirt and white blouse and my brother had a white shirt on and a knob and a

tie and they were all uniformly dressed. And they were athletic also they had athletic games to play. So in a way that was good because they didn't hang around on the streets they were taken care of. Because it was more or less for an indoctrination in his way of thinking.

Interviewer: Do you remember if your parents were happy that they had somewhere to go and an organization to be a part of or was your father and mother were they resistant? I mean obviously they had to go if they said go.

Anderson: Yeah I think well I think they went out of fear and because everybody did it.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: It was just a joint effort because that's how he brought up the you know his indoctrination everybody went.

Interviewer: Right do you remember talking to your siblings or in school, you were too young, but about Hitler in school and about the Hitler Youth in school? Things that teachers would have said about it?

Anderson: Not much but I'll tell you my parents they went to the Olympics in 36.

Interviewer: Oh wow

Anderson: And they saw Hitler there he was then, if I remember right, he was then chancellor and Jessie Owens did not lower the flag when he walked it front of Hitler and his group. And it made him extremely angry I remember my parent's mentioning that because every other flag was lowered every other countries flag but the USA was not.

Interviewer: Yep I like that I kind of like it.

Anderson: I liked it too.

Interviewer: Did your parents read a specific newspaper do you remember that they would read every day and?

Anderson: Yeah we had a newspaper every day. I'm sure it was very much politicized you know.

Interviewer: Right okay did your father fight in World War I?

Anderson: Yes

Interviewer: He did

Anderson: Yes

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little bit about that did he ever talk about his experience?

Anderson: I don't know a whole lot about it. My father he was something like quarter master and he was in World War I for two years. And he would make arrangements like logistics you know the food

was available when the soldiers would move in. And he spent time in Belgium as well as in France. But most of it in Belgium and he always said and his chin would start quivering he spoke French. When they would purchase you know food someone would say like the store keeper or whoever it was in Belgium. Who's going to pay for that and then he would say he who wins the war. They just confiscated they confiscated the food supplies and all of that there was never any money exchanged. But I remember as a little girl he would his chin would quiver and he would say he who wins that war and of course it was lost by Germany too.

Interviewer: Right by Germany too.

Anderson: So

Interviewer: You talked a little bit about when the depression hit and your family lost so much. Do you remember your parents talking about, obviously you wouldn't have been alive here, but talking about the great inflation of the 20s? Do you remember ever hearing them talk about that?

Anderson: Well it was mentioned and after World War I they lost their fortune again.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: And the war was from 1914 to 1918 so they went through the depression at that time too. It's oh it was terribly hard but I guess that's what happens when you lose the war.

Interviewer: Yep that's a good point.

Anderson: Everybody said you know Hitler the worst mistake he made he tried to concur the world. And he started the war on too many fronts. They were still thinking he would have won had he just taken country by country you know.

Interviewer: Right what did your father think about that did he think he would have won had he fought smarter?

Anderson: Probably because he was a patriot.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: Probably so now look here if he had won you would be speaking German.

Interviewer: Exactly maybe I should start brushing up my sister speaks German.

Anderson: Does she?

Interviewer: She does she started learning when she was in second grade so she loves it. She speaks Spanish and German and English so.

Anderson: Well that's great.

Interviewer: Could you tell us a little bit about the earliest memories you have of Hitler and the Nazi army and things that you might remember about thing that your parents said or obviously you brother was gone. The earliest thing that you can remember about Hitler.

Anderson: I see another thing what happened after it got after it appeared that Germany would lose the war we were always told the biggest problem was the liquid gold which was fuel for the planes and so on. And I lost my train of thought.

Interviewer: Oh that's okay

Anderson: Well shucks. Okay some of things that Germany were appreciative of Hitler he built the autobahn which is the we call it the interstates over here. He built that and he put people to work. He also promised everyone a Volkswagen but they never materialized. These people they kept on walking.

Interviewer: Right walking to church.

Anderson: And I remember when we had to turn in radios because we were no longer authorized to listen to the news because the war was being lost. There were no cameras available they all had to be turned in. Oh and another thing that oh that's what I was gonna say. When my father and I would come home from church or sometimes we would go to town. He usually wore a hat and people as you meet the person you would know they held their hand out and said hail Hitler. Now luckily my father always had a hat on he'd lift his hat and said hail Hitler. I never saw him holding his hand out you see that in old movies.

Interviewer: Right do you remember because you were talking about walking through your community and things on the way to church. I know your father was a patriot and he joined the Nazi party. Did he ever run into resistance from people that he was friends with that though that he shouldn't have joined the Nazi army? I know that most people felt they had to.

Anderson: Yeah they had to I didn't think so I think because everybody see if you did not participate in their game you were turned in.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: And they knew what the punishment

Interviewer: Did you know anyone in your community that was turned in?

Anderson: No but I knew a lot of people that left Germany. They went to in fact they went like to Argentina and they left Germany to be safe. I remember one terrible incident my aunt was a she bought fashion for a big department store something like Macy's. She would go to Berlin and it was a Jewish family where she would buy hats from that out they had a big hat store and one day when she went there they were gone. And so I guess it was assumed then that they went to a concentration camp.

Interviewer: Wow

Anderson: It's really when you think back it's just terrible. But then on the other hand this was maintained for a long long time in East Germany where the Russians had taken over Germany. In fact I

remember reading stories where children would talk about what the parents would discuss at the dinner table and the parents were punished. So everybody was just scared to death.

Interviewer: Right towards the end of the 30s which would have been when you were born.

Anderson: Forty

Interviewer: Right do you did your parent's economic situation improve as Hitler had begun to take over and throughout the war effort? Did you find your parents were doing better economically than they had been before? Because I know after World War I they took a hit.

Anderson: Yeah well they took a hit after World War II also. You know after my after we got the new currency everybody started out with the same amount.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: Fifty marks they called it your nose every person got 50 marks. But then like my parents later on when my father he was transferred to the insurance company in Stuttgart and he had to commute everyday things were a whole lot better them. You know he got a decent salary of course that's how he could afford sending my brother to Hartlebrug.

Interviewer: Right you and your sister both went to school.

Anderson: That's right

Interviewer: Were you or your siblings did you ever attend, because I know you went to university, did you know anyone that attended a gymnasium?

Anderson: That's what we call it. Yeah I went to the and people think they only do gymnastics there.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: I went it was called _____ gymnasium Stuttgart. It was college of economics

Interviewer: Okay I didn't know that was the thing I guess I thought there was like a different

Anderson: No once you go to the gymnasium that's well I'll say it this way you also have some of the high schools are called gymnasiums too. Which would be like the preparation to the college.

Interviewer: For college okay. Did you and your sister do that in high school was that the type of high school you went to? Like you were having academic training instead of vocational training.

Anderson: Yes we both had she went more she went to a I don't know I think you call it a humanistic college.

Interviewer: Okay

Anderson: And I went I studied economics that was my major but of course I had English and French and German and so on too.

Interviewer: Okay do you remember your sister talking about being in the league of German girls? Was she a part of that?

Anderson: No was that part of the Hitler youth perhaps?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Anderson: In fact I talked to her recently I was going to ask her if she ever was confirmed.

Interviewer: Oh right how much older than you

Anderson: She's ten years older and my brother is 13 years older than I. She's 82 and he's 85.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little about what your brother had told you about his experience during the war and being a POW?

Anderson: Yeah I remember when he came home we had scrounged some special food but he couldn't eat it because his stomach was in such bad shape. And then he had to go back to high school which depressed him very very much because all the school his school mates they were all so much younger than he. And in fact he had depressions you know from all these endurances that he had in those three years. And then my father had him tutored and I can remember it. It was little and I peeked through the keyhole, they were in another room, that was terrible. The teacher was a retired professor and friend of my father's. And he called him a donkey which is like an idiot it's probably strong what he called him a donkey. And then that same evening when we had dinner together he cried and I thought he's so old he's so much older than I and he sits there and cries. And so I said to my Mom later on I says what's wrong with Oland and she said well it's part of depression trying to adjust again to normal life. And I guess that was not very nice of that professor.

Interviewer: Yeah

Anderson: Making that kind of comment you know. But he later on he graduated from Hartlebrug Cumae Cum Latte so he was a real he did rather well.

Interviewer: Yes he did

Anderson: He applied himself.

Interviewer: Right that's amazing. Do you remember your father talking at all during the time he was doing street repair work after the war ended? Do you remember things that he would say about

Anderson: I remember one night he was coming home we had dinner together and my father had beautiful hands because he never did hard work. And he looked at his hands and he said just look at them and they were full of blisters you know working in the streets. It was really demoralizing. But like I said he was not the only person a lot of people had to go do that.

Interviewer: Right your father being so patriotic when he was doing this kind of work did he feel like that was just kind of what he needed to do or did he feel like it was unfair that he was being punished for being a part of the Nazi army?

Anderson: No I think he at the beginning that it was the right thing to do because you know that's why Hitler came to power. He had the right influence on the people and he instilled you know the history the German well he tried to get ___ but anyway he tried to instill patriotism that Germany was the country in Europe. And see another thing our national the German national anthem it's the first verse is _____, Germany Germany above all. And then it was I think after the war ended I believe that the four allied countries you know Russia, England and France and America somehow I believe at times it was misinterpreted that the Germans didn't really think that they were better than everybody else. But that's how it was interpreted and now in Germany only the third verse of that anthem is being sung.

Interviewer: Oh wow

Anderson: Uh huh it's _____ unity and right and freedom and then it goes on.

Interviewer: Right could you talk a little bit about what it was like living in the United States occupation zone after the war. And if you have since talked to people who had experiences in one of the three other occupation zones. Because I know you said you felt lucky to live in the area that was occupied by the United States.

Anderson: We were lucky in that respect in that the American's took care of us. Now I can remember close to where we lived there was a villa section and the American's would come and take furniture to refurbish some of those houses. And I remember they took an overstuffed chair and a lamp from our house and but we later on were reimbursed after peace settlements were made and so on. I forgot my train of thought oh about oh as children we were very happy that we would get meals at school and I'll tell you oh another thing on Saturday's we would get a sweet roll and a piece chocolate it was Hershey chocolate. And chocolate milk and I saved I had saved oh maybe about four of those chocolate bars those Hershey chocolate bars and so when my brother came back from Russia I gave him that and you know they had turned gray. So they were really old I don't' think he ate them either.

Interviewer: Oh that's sweet though that you would save them for him.

Anderson: And close by where we lived there was I think it was like a vocational school and it was taken over by Americans. And I can remember American soldiers they would sit on the window sills we would never do that. And then mother would say if they ever give you something you bring it home first before you eat it we're gonna check it out. And I remember I would once in a while it was chocolate that was in a tin can and I would bring it home and mom would take a little piece off and if she liked it she shared it with me.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: Now the other like the black forest the French army settled there and there were a lot of problems with young girls being raped and you know. It was there were just horrible stories now I don't remember a whole lot about the northern part that was taken over by England. It seems like they didn't stay too terribly long but of course the Americans they stayed their still there.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: So then of course when the wall came down and I'm not so sure I remember I think it was 89 it was just unbelievable how in what shambles the you know how east Germany was. And that supposable was the show case of Russia East Germany. But the factories they were all old and people had left had no jobs so everybody came to the west. And of course it cost a lot of money to Germany to revamp all those big factories in the east.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything I'm specifically interested in anything your brother might have said to you during occupation about the Americans? Was he happy that they were there or?

Anderson: I think so after what he had experienced in Russia.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: I think so.

Interviewer: Did your father say anything do you remember?

Anderson: Well my he spoke English and you know sometimes he would see a soldier walking and he would say hello or something yeah. No I think everybody was very very happy that the Americans stayed. Now what happened after I finished college my English was not too hot even if I studied it for nine years. So I thought of starting to work for the American army and when I came home I don't think my father was too happy about it. But then when I told him how much I started to make he thought it was a good deal then. And so at the beginning I did it was something like accounting in one of those big it was the centralized warehouse in Ludwigsburg. And then I can remember he would tell some of his friends well Otto she's working for the American army she's a bookkeeper. A bookkeeper and it was accepted then by him.

Interviewer: Right when you was your father still living when you decided to move to the states after you were married?

Anderson: No my father passed away in 61 and I came in 64. It would have been terrible hard to leave home because we were very close. He was a fine man very smart and I broke Mom's heart when I left but she came she came over here.

Interviewer: Right she heard you on the radio.

Anderson: She liked it very much. And it was funny we lived in government in officer's quarters on post and she would sit on the back we had a big patio and the golf course was real close and she would sit and she say I think I'm in Switzerland. I would say what makes you think that what makes you think that. She would say oh it's so pretty the lawn is so green and those beautiful clouds and that sky. And then I would take her town and going down 41A she would say oh I think I'm in America with all the signs. It was so trashy we thought.

Interviewer: Right I understand that.

Anderson: It was pretty horrible.

Interviewer: After the war ended I know throughout like you talked about the autobahn and Hitler promising Volkswagens and things like that and we talked to another man who said a lot of German citizens at the beginning of the war their quality of life had been improved by Hitler and the changes that he was making. By the end of the war do you think the overarching opinion was that Hitler had been a bad man that he hadn't done good?

Anderson: Yeah I think so I think so. Well maybe there might have been some hardheads that would say well he did the right thing. But you know especially with the Jews I thought that it was so horrible and the thing about it it's never forgotten. The Jews are making sure it will be never forgotten it should never happen again. And a lot of people well a lot of people died German people died during the war too. And a lot of them came back crippled and I think people realized it was such a senseless war because he never he was like a crazy person because he thought he was gonna concur Europe and it was impossible with what was available.

Interviewer: Right did you have contact with any Jewish families after the war that had lost people or that had been released from camps?

Anderson: I worked for a Jewish captain at one time in the military he was in when I was working for the army. And when first it was announced that he was coming and I knew from his name that he was Jewish I was hoping that he liked me I was his secretary. And we became good friends and his wife was also Jewish she was from Africa she was white. And they invited me for dinner and we were talking about Jews and one thing I'll never forget her name was Sisal she said you know we can be in a crowd of 500 people and we know each other we can figure out who are the Jews. And I was real amazed about that and it was I was very happy that they accepted me the way they did.

Interviewer: Right do you I think that's interesting did you you were obviously nervous about wanting them to accept you. Did you feel like it was a given that if a Jewish family that if you were to meet a Jewish family that they would blame you because you were German just because you were German?

Anderson: Maybe not so because I was so little. I'll tell you one incident that happened. Would you like some coffee?

Interviewer: I think I'm okay.

Anderson: Would you like some coffee?

Interviewer: No I'm okay I can hold it together.

Anderson: I have a sprite.

Interviewer: That would be great. (Tape stops for a moment)

Anderson: Everybody that gets orders to move.

Interviewer: Right

Anderson: So this major came to me I had called him in he was sitting across from me and he was in uniform in greens and he had his insignias on and I thought I've never seen that insignia. It couldn't be

engineer no I kept looking and so I thought I better look at his orders. He was a rabbi they were the tablets I had never seen that. I had never seen that before and I remember his name and it didn't sound Jewish at all. And I said to him I have never processed a rabbi how do you feel going to Germany he had orders going to Germany? And he said well it's going to be interesting and I said do you feel are you afraid of going because there are going to be bad memories. And he said well you know a rabbi he understands and one has to you know let the time go by. And I don't know the more I thought about it him going over there and probably going to some of the concentration camps to look at I started to cry I got so emotional about the thing. And it was kind of comical my supervisor was walking by me and she said she said DeDe so I got up and we walked a little away from my desk and she said is that guy being smart with you? I said no I got so emotional he's a rabbi going to Germany and it was kind of comical at the end.

Interviewer: That's so sweet. Well speaking of rabbi and church do you after the war ended and you were allowed to go back to church do you remember your preacher talking at all about kind of the horrible things that were done during the war or things that you should do now that the war was over to kind of help rebuild the country?

Anderson: I don't think so because that would be too political for a religious person to do. But I'm sure we were indoctrinated to do right and do good and help everybody that we can.

Interviewer: Right of course

Anderson: So I think that was more like the sermon than making political statements and so.

Interviewer: I don't have any more questions unless you have anything you'd like to tell us. Do your brother and sister still live in Germany?

Anderson: Yeah I wish they would come over here.

Interviewer: Have they ever visited?

Anderson: My sister my sister's number on child she has a Ph.D. in a very odd subject something environmental if I remember right. Anyway she's married to a Ph.D. and he was allowed to study a year at the University of Boston. So they came over here and I was hoping that my sister would come south to visit with me. And so one day she called and I said when are you coming and she said well I'm on my way back home. And I said you know what you make me angry you have been here months and you have never come down here to Tennessee. But maybe she was too uneasy to travel by herself because of you know

Interviewer: A strange county

Anderson: But she spoke English in fact the way it happened at home the way I was educated at home I had to read French with my father German with my mother and English with my sister. And she was ugly sometimes she would say repeat it. I would say no and then she would hit my head and I would say mother. Mother was in the kitchen mother she's hitting me again. And mother would come in and she would say now I take care of the discipline in this house. So we usually we had a few spats when I had to read English to my sister.

Interviewer: How funny

Anderson: Now when we call sometimes I have to explain something to her and it's too difficult in German so I'll say I have to tell you that in English. And I speak real slowly and I'll say did you get it and she'd say yep.

Interviewer: She got it

Anderson: Got it anyway I just I hope (tape ended)