

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

GERTRUDE JACOBS

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer:	Marian Salkin
Date:	April 7, 1981

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Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

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MS - Marian Salkin [interviewer]

GJ - Gertrude Jacobs¹ [interviewee]

Date: April 7, 1981

Tape one, side one:

GJ: It's loud enough?

MS: Yeah, all right, it's fine now, yeah. This is the interview of Mrs. Trudy Jacobs. Mrs. Jacobs, what was your maiden name?

GJ: Bergman. My name's Bergman.

MS: Bergman.

GJ: B-E-R-G-M-A-N².

MS: That's important.

GJ: My name was Gertrude Bergman.

MS: Gertrude Bergman.

GJ: Yes.

MS: All right. Of [gives address]. Mrs. Jacobs, would you please tell me where you were born and when, and about your family?

GJ: I was born in a small village by the name of Voelkersler in Southern Bavaria, 1924, January, 1924.

MS: Could you spell that for us?

GJ: V-O-E-L-K-E-R-S-L-E-R. Voelkersler.

MS: R-, okay, thank you.

GJ: It was not too far away from Würzburg.

MS: Go ahead. Continue.

GJ: My family had lived in this small village for many centuries. My great, great grandfather started a business of, as a cattle dealer. The area where I lived, there were very many small, Jewish communities, most of them very observant Jews. There were twelve Jewish families in our village. We had a beautiful synagogue. Of these, all but three families were killed.

MS: What was your life like before the war, or your life, or, before your life was changed by the Nazi victories in Europe? Can you tell us a little about your childhood?

GJ: Yes. Bavaria was known for its early extreme antisemitism, particularly the area where we lived in.

MS: Did you say extreme antisemitism?

GJ: Yes, yes. And because everybody knew who was a Jew--it was a very small community--even prior to the 1933 election there was a great deal of antisemitism. I

¹née Bergman; nickname Trudy.

²Mrs. Jacobs' personal history form has Bergmann with a double final consonant, this is possibly an alternate spelling.

remember very vividly even though I was a small child, the big posters that were posted always in 1932 already, "Jew Get Out!" And, "Dirty Jew!" And all these various remarks. There was a hidden antisemitism. It was not open. But it was there. The village where I lived was almost equally divided between Catholics and Protestants. We Jewish children normally would go to the Protestant school for education. And we would have Hebrew school when the Protestant kids had their religious training. And there were often very derogatory remarks made when we left to attend Hebrew school. But there was no violence per se. My father and grandfather were in business together. There was no economic boycott or anything like that prior to Hitler, but as soon as, in 1933, as soon as Hitler was elected, they damaged the stores, the Jewish stores in the village.

MS: In your village.

GJ: Yes. And they arrested a number of people. My father, who had fought in World War I, and also my grandfather, who had been a so-called hero--he had gotten the Iron Cross Number One for bravery--was never arrested because of that. But from the very beginning, they, in our village we were being discriminated against. I'll give you a perfect instance. Hitler came to power in January, 1933. And we Jewish children were already--in school, even before the Nuremberg Laws--had to sit separately.

MS: Before the Nuremberg Laws?

GJ: That's right. So we were the early, we had a very early introduction.

MS: To antisemitism.

GJ: Yes.

MS: Did your family belong to any Jewish organizations or to a synagogue before Nazism changed your life?

GJ: Yes. My grandfather was the head of the synagogue in our small village. He belonged to the *Kultur Verein* [culture association], in which he was very active. And that, *Kultur* means...

MS: Culture, Jewish culture.

GJ: Culture, yes. And my grandfather was very involved in Jewish life, education. And as a result, we were, we children, we, from early age we had to make collections for various Jewish organizations. But we resented it, because we were the only children who had to do it! But it was in the family and so we had to make collection for Israel. We had to make collection to the Jewish orphanage, and for the various needy Jewish causes. So we were always very involved. We were a very observant family, and twice a year when the rabbi came to examine the children in the Hebrew school he would stay at our home. So, we were more involved than the rest of the families were in our village.

MS: That's marvelous. Did any men in your family serve in the national army? Now you mentioned your father.

GJ: As far as my father, in World War I, yes.

MS: Your father.

GJ: My grandfather too, and I have pictures of them. A matter of fact, I also have pictures of my father in World War I. He was in Russia. When they took the Russians, up till 1916, you know, Russia was losing the war. And they had these, the Jewish people, the Russian Jews made a *seider*. I have pictures of the Russian *seider*. They were more or less prisoners, the Russians, in Russia. And they had to work for the German Army. And I have a lot of pictures. I brought them--my mother gave them to me after my father died.

MS: Do you remember how you and members of your family reacted to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in Germany in 1933?

GJ: Yes. This will give you an indication of people not wanting to face reality. My grandfather, his standard, he was a very bright man, but his standard speech was, "Others were elected and were kicked out. Don't worry. He'll be thrown out too. Don't worry, it will pass." Except, my mother. My mother would not accept it. She would not accept that. I don't know whether this is relating to this question.

MS: Oh definitely.

GJ: Every tradesman, every business, you needed a permit. And each year you had to go for the permit to be a cattle dealer. And one by one the various cattle dealers did not get their permits. My father kept on getting it again, because of his outstanding war record. But, in 1936, after the Nuremberg Laws, my mother, he applied and he got it. No one else did. That's when my mother said, "We are leaving." And my father and sister came here in 1937, upon my mother's insistence.

MS: Your father and your sister?

GJ: My older sister. I did not come, because of my physical disability. I needed a huge affidavit. And our family here were not aware of my physical disability. And my mother, being my mother, she said, "At least my husband and our oldest child will be safe. I will stay with Trudy."

MS: Were you affected by the boycott of April 1st, 1933?

GJ: Yes.

MS: By the Aryan Paragraph?³

GJ: Yes. And I remember that very well, because my mother was in the hospital for a colostomy. And it was just a nightmare. [sighs]

MS: If it's too difficult for you, we can go on to another question. Between 1933 and the passage of the Nuremberg Laws of September, 1935, how was your life changed, if at all?

GJ: It was. We were not allowed employee help. We had a lot of ground, a lot of grazing fields. We were not allowed to have help in the home, or anything for the cattle--nothing.

³*Arienparagraph* [Aryan Clause] represented a transitional stage. It was introduced in April 1933 in a number of laws enacted to provide for the "legal" purge of the Jews from various spheres of society. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, p.83.

MS: Well how did your father conduct his business at that point?

GJ: It was very difficult.

MS: He had to do it himself?

GJ: Yes.

MS: All the farming himself?

GJ: Well, we all had to help. We all...

MS: Yes, the whole family had to help.

GJ: The family did. And not only that. When you are known as a Jew in a small, in a large city nobody knows you. Both my sister and I were very blonde. Nobody knew us, but when you live in a small community, everybody--and they would not deal with us anymore, already in 1936. In neighboring towns, I would go into a store my grandfather would send me in because they didn't know me. And I would buy food supplies. They would not sell to a Jew already at that time.

MS: And this was in 1936.

GJ: 1936.

MS: That's amazing. During this early period, did you or any member of your family discuss the possibilities of leaving Germany?

GJ: We did.

MS: Please tell me any details you recall.

GJ: Well, my family here in Philadelphia were a very prominent family. And they had been to Germany many times, my grandmother's, my father's mother's family. And they came here many years ago in 1830 or something like that, 1840. And my grandmother's great uncle went bankrupt here. And my grandmother's father let him come back to Germany and supported the family--the children and the wife--while the husband reestablished himself. And because of that, they sent us affidavits. They felt obligated. So my grandmother wrote to my family here and asked them for an affidavit for my father and my sister. And they immediately sent it. And they came here in August of 1937. My mother and I came here August, 1938, exactly one year later.

MS: A year later. How were you affected by the Nuremberg Laws? Did you think this might be the worst you would have to endure?

GJ: No. We knew already before that...

MS: This was the end.

GJ: Even before, yes, definitely. We were harassed. I, if you want me to I'll give you two examples what happened in school in 1936, June 8th. They had to gather the pinpoints, already Hitler was preparing for war and get his medal.

MS: Yes, yes.

GJ: And everyone had to be saved, but it was no good anymore. And between 1935 and 1937 my disease became very progressive. I could hardly walk anymore. I had to be practically carried to school and back. And I got up to put a pinpoint into the box, and one of the hoodlums I call them, in my class, pushed me over to the ground, to the

floor, and threw all the penpoints on top of me. And I could not get up. But even the, we had a very miserable Nazi for a teacher. But this he did not allow. When he came in the room and saw what had happened, he was very angry. The other incident, I have a friend who is also a survivor. She lives in Kansas City. She would take me home after school. And one day, they started to run after us. They were throwing stones. And she picked me up and we, the farmers used these huge water tanks to water the fields. And we climbed into a half-filled water tank and hid out. They would have murdered us otherwise.

MS: Oh my. During the period from 1933 to 1938, did your family have any contact with non-Jews? If so, how would you describe their behavior?

GJ: Yes, we did. The people in our village would not openly speak to us. For instance, we had to buy milk, butter and eggs from the farmers. They, one in particular, would leave it at night at a particular place. My mother would go there at 2:00 in the morning, pick it up, and leave the money. They would speak to us if no one was watching. But if somebody else was there, nobody would speak to us. Not in school, nobody. We were like criminals. It's very difficult to describe that. The other thing is, I needed medical attention. The physician who treated me since I was four years old was, he did see me. It was at the university city of Würzburg, which had a very fine hospital, yes. But I had to use devious ways. I could not come to his regular office in the hospital. It's hard to believe, but it happened that some physicians in other areas would see you. In our particular area, no.

MS: And you feel this is simply a backthrow to the huge amount of antisemitism that was prevalent in...

GJ: Oh...

MS: Southern Bavaria?

GJ: Southern Bavaria.

MS: Yeah.

GJ: This is where the Nazi movement was born.

MS: Was from there. What happened to your fa-, oh, was your family still in, well, your family left in 1937.

GJ: '38.

MS: '37, excuse me, in '37. '38?

GJ: I came here in '38.

MS: In '38, all right.

GJ: My father and sister...

MS: Right.

GJ: My family...

MS: Were you in Germany in November during *Kristallnacht*...

GJ: No.

MS: Or had you, you had already left the country at that time.

GJ: We had left. My grandparents were, my aunts and uncles. All my family except my mother, father and my sister. We were here. My grandparents still were in our house at Crystal Night.

MS: Do you recall what...

GJ: I have letters...

MS: Happened to them...

GJ: I have letters...

MS: At that time? Can you tell us about that incident?

GJ: They destroyed the synagogue. They broke it. They, everything. I have the pictures of the synagogue. But since the synagogue, and this is written up in here...

MS: In your...

GJ: In the book. The synagogue was built between two houses. They could not burn it down.

MS: Oh, they were gentiles.

GJ: Or they would have burned, yeah.

MS: They were gentile homes.

GJ: On each side.

MS: I see.

GJ: So they just destroyed it. They, there was nothing left in my grandparents' home that was whole after Crystal Night. What they didn't do, and my grandmother--who survived concentration camp--afterwards wrote all the details. What they, it was not from the village that they came to destroy. It was from other towns. It was never the same people whom you knew, but outsiders came. They looted, and what they couldn't take they destroyed. But since the village, it was most houses, bordered on other houses, they couldn't burn them.

MS: Certainly.

GJ: So they had--nothing was burned. And, in this particular book it shows all the synagogues that were burned. They have an emblem on it. And all the ones that were, weren't. And ours was not burned.

MS: It's interesting that that was the reason...

GJ: That was the reason.

MS: Because they didn't want to endanger their own...

GJ: Yes, right.

MS: Their, the gentile properties in the community.

GJ: Exactly.

MS: Well of course now, were any of your members of your family able to work after *Kristallnacht*? [pause] Well then do you know...

GJ: [unclear]

MS: How they were able to support themselves?

GJ: Well, until the war, well my grandparents were very comfortable. They, I think, now I am just assuming that my grandfather had money hidden in the house. I know he had jewelry hidden that we never got, because we never, when they were, left to go to, they were gathered to Würzburg first and from there they went to concentration camp. He wrote a letter to me telling me where I, a specific place where the jew-, he didn't say, "the jewelry," but he gave me the indication where it was. Because he and I had discussed once before.

MS: Was it ever recovered by any other member of the family? It was...

GJ: No.

MS: Never recovered.

GJ: Nobody came there back.

MS: Nobody came back. [tape off then on]

GJ: I know more about my grandparents because my grandmother survived, and came back. Although she did not come here to the United States, we were in constant contact with her, and various members of the family saw her in Germany. She went back to Würzburg in the old age home. And I have some of her letters. And I'm wearing her wedding band. My grandfather wrote to us, through code. And I have some of the letters. I saved them.

MS: They were written from a concentration camp?

GJ: No, before they left.

MS: Oh.

GJ: But they were going to be sent to Würzburg. And from there they were gathered together in sections, you know, various sections.

MS: Yes.

GJ: And I have the information in here when they were sent from Würzburg to Theresienstadt. And also after they were liberated my grandmother gave us a lot of information. They, again because of my grandfather's war record also, Theresienstadt was considered the best concentration camp of all of them. They went there. My grandfather died in Theresienstadt, eating the garbage. And if you knew him, he was six-feet-three, a very proud, learned man.

MS: [unclear].

GJ: Yes. My grandmother survived. She was a very small person, who needed very little food as a result. And she is a very strong-willed woman.

MS: She, oh, she stayed just in Theresienstadt?

GJ: In Theresienstadt.

MS: They never...

GJ: She never was sent...

MS: They never moved her out?

GJ: Never. And she was liberated, and I wanted to tell you, this is very interesting.

MS: Yes, yes. I'd like to hear it.

GJ: We were three families in that village by the name of Bergman. We were not related to the other two. The one family that came here, I said we were a total of three families, total families as I say, different members were saved, but not total.

MS: Yes.

GJ: They live in Kansas City. And Freddie, who is a year older than I am, he was in the military intelligence in the army here. And he was stationed in Camp Ritchie to be trained, that was for the military intelligence. And when his--when he came in with the army, the American Army, wherever he, when the truck came into Bavaria, he, wherever he saw deportees in the camps, he would go through the list. And he called my grandmother, "*Oma*," which is German for grandmother. And he looked for names that were familiar, of his family, any family that he knew. And he saw my grandmother's name. And he took a Jeep and went to the camp where they were and he took my grandmother out.

MS: Oh my gosh! Isn't that unusual?

GJ: She...

MS: Of course the camp was liberated by the Americans...

GJ: He brought her back to Würzburg, where already they had set up a center. And she was one of the first ones. I believe...

MS: What, was this 1945?

GJ: This was in 1945.

MS: 1945. And what year did they go to the camp?

GJ: '42.

MS: They were interned in '42.

GJ: '42. 1942.

MS: So it was three years she was able to survive the camp. Do you know, did she go in, was she assigned to any work details?

GJ: No. No, she was very old already. My grandmother was born in 1866, 1866.

MS: 1866, I see.

GJ: And she was not in a work camp, and she survived.

MS: It's amazing that, you know, that she was able to survive.

GJ: Yes.

MS: Because mostly the...

GJ: That was the main...

MS: Old people were the first to be destroyed.

GJ: She was a very *strong* person--emotionally, mentally. Not physically as much as she was a very determined person.

MS: And you say that when she was liberated by her...

GJ: He was a friend.

MS: By her...

GJ: No, just a friend.

MS: By her friend...

GJ: It was just a friend.

MS: Which was a tremendous...

GJ: She went back to Würzburg.

MS: Incident. And she remained there? She never came to this country then.

GJ: No, she did not want to come here. Now, I explain something. We never sold our property in Germany. And then Freddie notified us that my grandmother had survived. I at that time was working for the Jewish Publication Society. And one of the women who worked with me, her father was a close friend of Senator Meyers, the Senator of the United States Senate. And he was instrumental in introducing me to Colonel Marcus.⁴ And Colonel Marcus was the head of the distribution of, or the restitution for all those who had left their property in Germany. Not sold. We didn't sell it, because my grandparents were still living there when they left. And he was instrumental within a short period of time. There were 17 families living in our home after the war, because you know, refugees inside this very large home. We--the rental went to my grandmother. And she had means of support.

MS: Of support.

GJ: But I in turn turned all this correspondence over to the museum in Israel, because they have a museum, a whole department on Colonel Marcus over there and they wanted that information.

MS: This was not Yad VaShem. This was...

GJ: No, no.

MS: It was another museum.

GJ: Not exactly.

MS: That is really fascinating. So then you never saw your grandmother after that...

GJ: No.

MS: Because you refused to go back to Germany.

GJ: I will not go there. And my father wouldn't go back. He wanted to bring her here.

MS: And she didn't want to come.

GJ: And she did not want to come.

MS: How long did she live?

GJ: Till 1956.

⁴Daniel David Marcus served under General Lucius O. Clay to oversee the Military Government in post-war Germany. Under the name Mickey Stone he worked for the *haganah* and Jewish Agency in the pre-state period in Israel and was appointed commander of the Jerusalem front during the War for Independence. www.fau.edu/library/br102.htm

MS: So that was almost...

GJ: She was 86 years old when she died.

MS: Almost another ten years, or more than ten years she survived there.

GJ: Yes.

MS: Was it a...

GJ: It was an old age home.

MS: But not for Jews?

GJ: Yes, for Jews.

MS: Primarily for Jewish people primarily?

GJ: It was a very, Würzburg was one of two cities, Dresden and Würzburg were firebombed. It was almost completely destroyed. But the old age home was in a suburb of Würzburg. It was not destroyed. And it had been used by the, during the war, by the Nazis, you know, for the wounded or whatever. I don't know. But it was not destroyed. So as soon as the United States forces came in, they turned that into an assembly for the Jews who came back. And then after they just distributed them in the various areas. It was just for the old people again.

MS: Were there any other members of your family that survived the Holocaust?

GJ: Concentra-...

MS: Or the concentration camps?

GJ: No. My mother had, I have members who left Germany before the war. But the, who survived, who came back from the camp? No, only my grandmother.

MS: Only your grandmother.

GJ: I have a second cousin living in Israel, two second cousins. I have a, this second cousin, he was on the *Patina*, the ship that they sank themselves. And he was one of the early founders of *Terat Tzevi*, a kibbutz [unclear]. I have another cousin living there. And just a few members here. Almost all of my family were killed.

MS: The years that your grandmother lived in...

GJ: Germany.

MS: In Germany, did you correspond with her?

GJ: All the time.

MS: All the time.

GJ: And we supported her. We supplemented her income. You know, she didn't really need it, because she got the rent. And after they, after my grandmother died we sold the property. But I, this one cousin, a second cousin I have living in Israel, she is also a survivor. And she was in a camp in Germany and she found that my grandmother had survived. And she saw her many times. And of course our friend Freddie saw her. And different members, people, various rabbis I knew when they were in the chaplaincy service visited her. But she would not come here.

MS: It's an amazing story really.

GJ: So, I can understand it today. At that time I was very angry, because she was old, and she had been through so much, and she didn't want to make another change.

MS: Well it's...

GJ: It's understandable.

MS: Understandable, yes.

GJ: But she also understood that we could not go back. It was too painful.

MS: Mrs. Jacobs, inasmuch as your family and yourself were able to leave early enough, and fortunately escaped the catastrophe that existed, that happened in Germany, but your family of course was deeply touched by all this, could you express some of your feelings regarding Germany? How you feel about the country and the people today and why. Of course we could understand why, but I would like you to make a statement to that effect.

GJ: As far as the German people, I think all of them were aware of what went on. There is no such thing as that they didn't know. They did know. They, some of them could not accept the reality of the ugliness and probably denied it to themselves what was happening. But knowing the situation and having lived for fourteen years, and please remember, when you are a fourteen-year-old in Nazi Germany, you are old. I had forgotten how to laugh when I came here. And you have assumed the responsibility and the thinking of a twenty-year-old. I cannot accept their restitutions. I cannot accept, and I condemn Israel for taking it. I feel very strongly, and this is partially-

Tape one, side two:

GJ: ...from Germany. Because you can not repay for the lives you took. And you can't bring back the innocent children and all those you loved, and all that we have put into Germany--hundreds of years Jews lived there. My, both my grandfathers fought *four years* in World War I, in the very beginning. You can't forgive that. I can't. And I don't read German. I used to love Wagner's music. I will not listen to anything like that. I will not buy German products. And I, as a result I have very few German Jewish friends. I want no part of it. I want to forget, which I can't. But I don't want those who make excuses, and go back, and accept restitution and all. My hatred is so deep. It's tainted, the country. I want nothing to do with it. And if they live, and even now, there's a great deal of antisemitism there. I know it from people who have been there. And I read a great deal. And it will never change. It's in bred into the Germans. There are some young people who have come to Israel and have toiled for it. I think that's the exception to the rule.

MS: Yes, but not the rule. Before our interview started you made a very, very important statement I think. As, when you were growing up in Germany and you were saying that you were not German first ever in your lifetime. You were Jewish first. Judaism was more important to you. Would you please tell us why you feel that way?

GJ: Most German Jews were more German than they were Jews. And all the history books will prove it. And I have studied them extensively. And I've also discussed this with Dr. Grayzel many times. Because of my grandfather I had an exceptional background in Jewish history, Judaism, religion, true religion, not just a ceremonial, but the ethical behavior of the Jew. Jewish philosophy. A man who can teach a seven-, eight-, nine-year-old girl Jewish philosophy must have been an exceptional man. And that was my grandfather. And he always stated that to be a Jew was more important than being a German. And my father was not at all like that. He was a German first.

MS: Did he come from a very religious background?

GJ: Well, that was my grandfather! That was his father!

MS: ...yes, yes, that's right.

GJ: But he...

MS: I thought maybe it was your grandfather on your mother's side.

GJ: No, no. My grandparents from my mother's side died prior to, in 1934.

MS: All right.

GJ: So they did not experience all of this. But, and they did not live with us. They lived together, so. And as a result, I have always been a Jew first. I am a Jew first, an American second. When I vote, I vote as a Jew. What is good for the Jewish people, what's good for Israel, then I vote as an American. And I will always live that way. This is what the Holocaust has taught me. If I were physically able, we would have moved to Israel long ago. But because of my severe disability I would only be a burden. I am happy here.

MS: So, you have such a brilliant mind. I'm sure you could have contributed in many marvelous ways.

GJ: I would have been a burden.

MS: I'm sorry you feel that way.

GJ: I've been there often enough. And Israel needs strong bodies. And that's something I don't have. And they don't have the kind of medical care I needed.

MS: Well, that's a very important factor, yes, of course.

GJ: Yes, yes. But the, one of the reasons also like Victor Frankel said, in spite of, I have a disease I was supposed to be dead at age 21. That I have survived is my love of Judaism.

MS: That's marvelous that you can attribute that to your own survival.

GJ: Yes, it's a very important factor in my way of life. And it's not just a cultural thing. It's a philosophy of life. It's the way I live. And I think my experience as a child has intensified it, and I've never forgotten it. It has made me appreciate my Judaism all the more. I remember one instance, the first day I went to an American school. There was a girl in my class and she said, "My father doesn't like the Jews." The teacher introduced me that I was a refugee and I could not speak English very well. But I could understand it very well. And she, that was her first comment. And I answered her that I didn't come all these thousands of miles to find out whether her father liked the Jews or not, that I was here to stay.

MS: That was quite an introduction to our America.

GJ: Yes, right. I have not been disappointed.

MS: Oh...

GJ: I've encountered a great deal of antisemitism. And people that say they never encountered it here, then they live in a ghetto. If you are in the business world, you more or less. I know when I graduated from college I had the same...

MS: Where did you go to school?

GJ: I went first to Pierce and then to Temple. And this was 1944 and there were many firms that would not hire me because I was Jewish and I was an observant Jew. And I had to lay my cards on the table. I would not work on the Sabbath. I would leave early Friday. And I would take off the Jewish holidays. And I encountered it very often.

MS: When you were growing up in Germany in your community, would you say that there, the other, that the feeling of Judaism was this strong in other families as well? Or is it...

GJ: Yes. Well, in this, in Germany was divided. The Jews who lived in the northern part of Germany were much more assimilated than in the southern part of Germany. They, in the small towns often you found much more religious communities. We were, I don't know of the name, Frankfurt am Main.

MS: Oh yes, oh yes.

GJ: Well, our rabbinate went to Bad Kissingen [a spa near Bavaria], and then from there Frankfurt am Main was the Gross-rabbina, the chief rabbi. And that community was known for its great learning.

MS: Leo Baeck...

GJ: That, no, he was Berlin.

MS: Berlin but I...

GJ: He was with Berlin.

MS: He went to school in Frankfurt am Main.

GJ: Yes, yes.

MS: Yes.

GJ: He went there with Franz Rosenzweig.

MS: Right.

GJ: That was a very fine, it was not a high school. It was higher than a high school where Franz...

MS: Was it a yeshivah?

GJ: Franz, no, it was not a yeshivah.

MS: Was it a, no? It was not a yeshivah.

GJ: That was the big contention. Because it was not a yeshivah. But it was a school of higher learning.

MS: Yes. And that's...

GJ: So...

MS: How it was stated, School of Higher Learning.

GJ: Yes.

MS: Yeah, yeah.

GJ: And it was much freer than a yeshivah. You understand...

MS: Yes, yes.

GJ: What I'm saying?

MS: I understand, mmm hmm.

GJ: And you could express even if you did not agree. And Frankfurt am Main produced some of the greatest brains in Jewish thinking. And it influenced the people who wanted to learn. There were many who did not. And since I always had a thirst for learning, I was very fortunate in having a grandfather I had who could train my mind.

MS: You're very fortunate, really...

GJ: Yes.

MS: In spite of...

GJ: Yes, in spite of all the other things.

MS: Many difficulties, yes.

GJ: Yes.

MS: Yes.

GJ: I have always lived positive in spite of all the problems I had. I live a very positive life.

MS: Is there any other comments you would care to make regarding your experience, your family's experience?

GJ: Yes. I just would like to say that each one of us who survived, whether we have been in concentration camps or not, all of us have a special obligation that as long as we live, we must be continuously an example of how Jews must live, behave, and have a special obligation to Israel, that we can not live for ourselves alone. That is our, this is our heritage, to let the world not forget what has happened. Because we are on the brink of another Holocaust.

MS: Oh God.

GJ: And this time it means Israel. Because the world is controlled by oil. And they will sell their souls for it. And all of us who have contributed, this is just a minor thing that we contribute...

MS: But you are contributing through this, and we are very, very appreciative, really and truly. And your thoughts are extremely deep and sensitive. And I hope whoever has the privilege of hearing your tape and using it in the future will recognize what deep understanding you possess, Mrs. Jacobs, and the kindness on your part too, to share these, this thinking with us.

GJ: I have in my possession a lot of documents that sooner or later I will give to the Jewish Museum or the Jewish Archives here, or let them make copies.

MS: Well that's a marvelous thing to do, yes.

GJ: Well, yes. And I have been working on it. A matter of fact I'm just finishing up. And my cousin Howard Stern has given me some help. And when I have it all completed, I will turn it, they can photostat it.

MS: Right.

GJ: And there'll be records of different letters and things that I saved over the years, copies.

MS: That's an excellent archive in itself, and an addition to information that will be forthcoming hopefully.

GJ: But I'm also grateful to you, that you give your time and your energy and your knowledge.

MS: I...

GJ: And for American-born Jews, I don't care what they know, and how they have lived, they can never know the anguish we have known. And that you make the effort and the time to devote to this project is to be highly commended.

MS: Thank you very much, and I think that sometimes it's a feeling of guilt too. It's the craziest thing to say, but...

GJ: You couldn't help it.

MS: But the more that I have studied this period of history of our Jewish history, I feel that, you know, that I was spared this ordeal and somehow or other I feel that I have to compensate for it. And this is my way of doing that.

GJ: You know Marshall Bernstein? He's very active Federation. He was president of AJ at the time of the Six Day War. And he stood up on the *bima* [platform in a synagogue] and he said, "I don't want my children to ask me, 'Where were you when the Six Day War

broke out?’ like I asked my parents, ‘Where were you when the Holocaust took place?’ I don’t want to feel guilty.”

MS: Thank you again, Mrs. Jacobs.

GJ: Thank you.

MS: It’s a great pleasure to have interviewed you, and your contribution to the Archive. I thank you very much.

GJ: Thank you.