

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

MOE MARX

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer:	Ruth Erie
Date:	April 5, 1995

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MM- Moe Marx [interviewee]

RE - Ruth Erie [interviewer]

Date: April 5, 1995

Tape one, side one:

RE: Gratz College Holocaust Archive. It's November 7, 1994 and I'm speaking to Mr. Moe Marx from Seattle, Washington. Moe, can you tell me where you were born and a little bit about your family, just to get us started?

MM: Yeah of course. I am the youngest of two sisters [three children]. I was born December 23, 1916, in Gailingen. And...

RE: Excuse me, could you spell that please?

MM: Yeah. Gailingen, G-A-I-L-I-N-G-E-N.

RE: G-A-I-?

MM: G-A-I-L-I-N-G-E-N.

RE: All right, thank you.

MM: Gailingen is located at the very southern tip of Germany, as it forms the border with, where the Rhine, the river Rhine forms the border between Switzerland and Germany.

RE: All right. Did you live there...

MM: My two sisters and I, we were both born there. My parents...

RE: Yes?

MM: Are Isidore...

RE: -D-O-R-E? Yeah.

MM: Isidore, and Rosa Marx.

RE: Now...

MM: My mother's maiden name was Schwab.

RE: All right, now...

MM: My father was born in Boedigheim.

RE: Would you spell that please?

MM: B-O-E-D-I-G-H-E-I-M.

RE: B-O-E-B-I-G-H-E-I-M?

MM: Mmm hmm [affirmative], Boedigheim.

RE: All right, okay.

MM: D, D, D.

RE: D, all right.

MM: D, D.

RE: Thank you.

MM: Boedigheim, right.

RE: Yes, and your father was born there?

MM: Yes, my father was born there.

RE: And this is also in Germany?

MM: And my father's, yes, yes, oh yes, they lived in Hessen.

RE: Okay.

MM: Hessen...nearby, it's near the border of Hessen and Baden.

RE: All right, thank you.

MM: My father had three brothers, one sister. The interesting part is, they all were Jewish teachers, in different parts of southern Germany. My grandfather was a merchant and a cattle trader.

RE: Also in Germany?

MM: Yes.

RE: All right.

MM: In Boedigheim.

RE: Now can you tell us what your father did in Germany?

MM: Yes of course. The reason why my father, who was born in Boedigheim, and came to Gailingen where I was born, he also was a Jewish teacher in a, close to the function of a rabbi. He was in charge of everything concerning Jews and Jewish, the synagogue, the school, the Jewish school, etc. in Gailingen where he was called from Boedigheim after attending a *Lehrer* seminar in Würzburg.

RE: *Lehrer* meaning teacher.

MM: Yeah, teacher seminar in Würzburg.

RE: Okay, now, it seems, sounds to me as though you come from a very Jewishly oriented, religious background. Can you tell us a little bit about that? What is your background as, to Judaism?

MM: My background in Judaism is strictly Orthodox. I will have to elaborate on this.

RE: We can do that later, perhaps?

MM: No, I have to elaborate on this, because soon after I was born, two years after I was born, my father and mother, of blessed memories, got a call to Frankfurt, Germany, to Frankfurt am Main, to take over the administration of a big Jewish orphanage. Now one of the conditions of the, one of the major considerations, one of the major points in the by-laws of that...

RE: Orphanage?

MM: Orphanage, was that it should be conducted in a strictly Orthodox manner.

RE: Did he have...

MM: I forgot...

RE: Go ahead.

MM: Yeah, I forgot to mention one important part. I was born in 1916. By that time the First World War was in progress already for two years. And my father was allowed to come home when I was born.

RE: In other words...

MM: Yes.

RE: Your father was serving in the German Army?

MM: In the, my father was serving in the German Army. And shortly afterwards he got the call to take over the administration of the orphanage in Frankfurt.

RE: After the war or...

MM: No, the war was...

RE: During. It was...

MM: Still in progress.

RE: The war was still in progress. And they released him from the army?

MM: And they released him from the army, first of all because by that time my mother had to be in charge of, had to take care of my two sisters and myself, and particularly since the call to take over the administration of that orphanage in Frankfurt was of prime importance, even to the non-Jewish authorities.

RE: Okay. Very good.

MM: Also, there was no distinction at that time between Jewish and non-Jewish.

RE: No, but the orphanage was for primarily Jewish children?

MM: Jewish only.

RE: Oh only, only.

MM: Jewish only.

RE: Only Jewish children.

MM: Yes.

RE: All right.

MM: Now, and one of the basic and fundamental guidelines for the orphanage was an absolutely 100 percent pro-Jewish attitude and with a certain amount of distinction, of emphasis, on secular education.

RE: Secular education.

MM: Yes, yes.

RE: All right. Then the children, did the children go to a school outside of the orphanage?

MM: Yes.

RE: Or was the school...

MM: Yes.

RE: Was it...

MM: All of the children...

RE: Yes.

MM: Went outside of the orphanage...

RE: To a public school?

MM: To a Jewish school, to a Jewish school for general subjects. And since it was a Jewish school, Jewish subjects were part of the curriculum.

RE: All right, but was it a Jewish public school...

MM: No.

RE: That was supported by the State? Or was it supported by the Jewish community?

MM: It was a Jewish public school that was supported both by the State and by Jewish congregations.

RE: I see. All right. Can we pause for a moment?

MM: Yeah. [tape off then on]

RE: All right, let's continue. During that time, now this was in late 1919, 1920, and then the 1920's.

MM: I was four years old...

RE: Right.

MM: In 1920.

RE: Right. Can you describe your family life a little bit, just to give us some background? Not...

MM: Since most of the family life was overshadowed by the events caused by Hitler, I can not remember the intervening years, from the time I was a baby, until I had to come face to face with the reality of the events of the time where Germany, that had the reputation of a high level of intelligence, culture, the arts, etc., all of this was surprising to a youngster like me, and certainly to all my contemporaries in the orphanage, with whom I lived together and shared my life.

RE: All right, but we're talking about the 1920's. Hitler really didn't come into power until the '30s. Did you have any hints of antisemitism...

MM: Oh, of course, yes.

RE: Or any...

MM: Yes, yes, yes, needless to say. Needless to say that in the years from 1926, as I remember it, I was then ten years old, until 1930, until 1933, excuse me, until 1933, when Hitler came to power, that antisemitism was flourishing. Many events happened, any particular event I can not remember now.

RE: You can not.

MM: However, I do remember that we went home from school, sometimes ten, twenty of us that went to school, and from school, and was, all the Jewish schools were in the neighborhood, as was the orphanage, and many other institutions, all founded by the Rothschild family.

RE: Now, let's get back to that. You said, what was founded by the Rothschild family, the orphanage?

MM: The street that the orphanage was on...

RE: Yes?

MM: Had many institutions established by the Rothschild family.

RE: I see.

MM: The Rothschild family had, I believe their origin in Frankfurt. And there was a Jewish hospital. And there were two old age homes, one for the more progressed senile, and the other for people who still could contribute to their own surroundings. Because their contemporaries also were still in good condition mentally and physically. Then there was, then there were the two schools; one general school that went up to the eighth grade...

RE: Eighth grade, all right.

MM: Including the eighth grade. And then there was, of course, the very famous Samson Raphael Hirsch School.

RE: Samson? Let's get that, Samson Raphael...

MM: Samson Raphael Hirsch School.

RE: Hirsch, all right.

MM: And needless to say, Frankfurt was known—coming back quickly to the reputation that Frankfurt had—Frankfurt, around the turn of the century had a reputation as a city where very little Jewishness reigned.

RE: Really?

MM: Yes. Well...

RE: But it sounds to me as though this street, a lot of Jewishness reigned on this particular street.

MM: Except that came afterwards.

RE: What came afterwards?

MM: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch...

RE: Yes?

MM: Came to Frankfurt. He of course is the founder of the strict Orthodox way of living.

RE: Okay.

MM: He published many commentaries to The Five Books of Moses. Then there were the Prophets, etc.

RE: And the orphanage was...

MM: And the...

RE: Started by whom?

MM: The orphanage...

RE: Do you know?

MM: And the orphanage was established by the Rothschilds...

RE: Yes?

MM: About the same time as all their other endeavors in the way of Jewish education, Jewish welfare, and Jewish care for the sick...

RE: Right.

MM: Was established.

RE: So the orphanage was already established when your father was called to serve there.

MM: Correct. Correct. It was, I don't quite remember the date, but I will have it available at a future date when I do some more research.

RE: All right. Now can we go on to the time that Hitler came into power, and how did that affect you? Did you immediately, what was your family's reaction? Did your family ever consider leaving Germany early on? Or just, can you touch on that?

MM: I will have to get back to 1933 now.

RE: Good.

MM: September, January, Hitler came to power in 1933. I believe it was January the 30th, 1933. Significant is the number, the number three in, as I mentioned, in Germany, because any big event affecting us, and affecting the world, somehow there was a three in it. I don't want to dwell on the philosophy behind this and I just want to confine myself to your question. Needless to say that antisemitism, even before Hitler came to power, was very, very rampant. But antisemitism was not the policy of the German *Reich* at that time.

RE: Right.

MM: There were a series of Chancellors, and they were under extreme pressure by the unfortunate popularity of Hitler. And why was Hitler popular? Because in 1929 it was the economic crash that hurt everybody. And that's when Hitler really played up his antisemitism. He wanted to have an object on which the German population could concentrate their...

RE: Hatred.

MM: Their hatred, that we the Jews were responsible for all of, for everything that happened.

RE: Now were you and your family, were your lives changed early on? Or were you, was your...

MM: Oh of course.

RE: Was the...

MM: Of course.

RE: Orphanage able to continue functioning? Can you...

MM: Of course...

RE: Can you...

MM: There are, yeah, the orphanage...

RE: Walk, talk us through the '30s, leading up to the events of *Kristallnacht* and later on?

MM: Well I will have to make a few stops in between.

RE: All right.

MM: Because that, it's very, very significant. Life became more and more complicated in Germany, in Frankfurt, where we were living.

RE: For Jews.

MM: Yes. Many of us realized that, but realized too late, because we were German by birth. Most of our fathers, including mine, served in the German Army in the war of 1914 to '18, and 1918. Distinction that occurred at the time of Hitler, made no difference whatsoever to the continued, excessive, outrageous, physical.

RE: Did you...

MM: Physical attacks on Jews.

RE: Did you experience such attacks during the '30s, you or your family? Physical attacks?

MM: Since the '30s, probably the most significant nine years in the development of Hitler's program of extinguishing Jews, I will have to stop at a point in between. I, by that time I, when Hitler came to—was elected Chancellor—it was in January 30th, 1933. And within a matter of six years, he, against all treaties arrived at in Versailles from the First World War, armed Germany to the teeth, to the very extreme. And it was obvious to everybody that war was in his program. And of course his whole program was in the book *Mein Kampf*. But very, very few of us, except the enthusiastic Nazis, believed in it, that it would come to that.

RE: Right.

MM: As the world knows now, unfortunately it did. At that time, the doors were closed in most cases by, the doors to different countries, where a Jew, a German Jew, could find refuge, were closed, very closed.

RE: However, did your family consider leaving Germany before 1938?

MM: Our family, the fate of our family was closely interlinked with the fate of the orphanage.

RE: All right, can you talk about that?

MM: I will elaborate on that. At that time, my parents and Dr. Josef Burg...

RE: What is his name?

MM: Dr.

RE: Yes?

MM: Josef.

RE: Oh, Josef, okay.

MM: Burg.

RE: B-...

MM: B-U-R-G.

RE: Okay, thank you.

MM: At that time the representative of the *Mizrachi* Party, of the *Mizrachi* movement...

RE: Dr. Josef Burg was the representative. Is that...

MM: Mmm hmm [affirmative].

RE: Yes?

MM: In cooperation with my parents, established the Youth *Aliyah*. However, the Youth *Aliyah* took on a much broader scope of activity than it was planned for.

RE: What was the original plan?

MM: The original plan as the word says, Youth *Aliyah*, to transfer young people to Israel. [tape off then on]

RE: But at that time it was Palestine. We're talking about Palestine. Go ahead.

MM: Yeah, correct, at that time it was Palestine.

RE: Now, what was the purpose of organizing this group? In order to get people into Palestine? Or to get people out of Germany?

MM: The reason was two-fold: to get children, we're talking about children now, that children had a place to go to...

RE: Because of Hitler?

MM: Of course because of Hitler. And that Palestine became, and that, Palestine received more settlers. And that by itself was a paramount factor as well. The most important factor, they settled the children and young adults in Israel, which I just emphasized, because after all, Theodor Herzl had a dream. And there was an opportunity to fulfill part of the dream and at the same time to save Jewish lives out of Germany.

RE: So there was a two-fold purpose to it.

MM: Correct, yeah, the...

RE: Now, Moe, can you elaborate how the orphanage entered into this picture of getting children into Palestine?

MM: First of all, the function of Youth *Aliyah* was not only to get children into Palestine, but the main purpose was to get children out of Germany and save Jewish lives. The function of the orphanage was an ideal one for that purpose, since no other organization had the facility to house 130 children, boys and girls. The names of the 100 or 130 children was only known to my parents, and to those immediately involved in the running of the orphanage. So, consequently, if transports of children were taken to Israel, or to any other country, that were still free at that time, free meaning not conquered by the Nazis yet...

RE: So this was in 1937, correct?

MM: In 1937 in Ja-, yes.

RE: Beginning 1937.

MM: Beginning 1937 and then '38 [pause]. Yes. So, turnover of children in the orphanage took place without much notice to the outside world. The main function was that, the main idea was always to have 100 to 130 children in the orphanage as, well this was the number known to the authorities which of course at that time had a very...

RE: But they didn't care who the children were. In other words...

MM: At that time, not yet.

RE: As other children...

MM: No.

RE: Left, other children came in.

MM: At that time not yet. Prior to 1938 the identity of the children was of secondary importance. The, of greater importance to the Nazis was to get Jews out of Germany. So consequently it was an ideal setup, but it...

RE: Now how did these children get to Israel, or, you mentioned other countries? Were they taken to other countries in Europe?

MM: Yeah they were, children transported went to France, Holland, Belgium, and...

RE: Switzerland?

MM: I think one or two in Switzerland. And of course primarily to Palestine.

RE: Now how did they get to those places? Did they travel by themselves or...

MM: No, no. That was...

RE: Were they accompanied?

MM: That was organized by an organization which was especially set up for that particular purpose. My father, of blessed memory, and Dr. Josef Burg at the time, were instrumental in setting it up, with the help of Jewish organizations in different countries. As I said most transports went to Israel, because the dark shadow of Hitler was already over all of Europe and, however at that time, the primary purpose was to get these children out, whatever the future might hold.

RE: Now were you one of those children?

MM: No, no, I was not one of those children.

RE: What were you doing at that time?

MM: At that time I was in the Bet Halutz in Lubeck, which is 50 miles from Hamburg. And the Bet Halutz, meaning the House of the Pioneer, was established for those that were not interested in agriculture, such as I was not either, but wanted to work with our hands in a mechanical function. I did welding. I did sheet metal work. I did heavy metal work.

RE: And you had the opportunity to do that in 1937, '38 in Germany?

MM: I, the only way this was possible to be, to do, was that I and many of my friends in Bet Halutz, offered our services to established tradesmen, non-Jewish tradesmen, of course, without remuneration.

RE: I see.

MM: The main function, the main reason being to learn...

RE: A trade.

MM: An important trade. Everything was geared to what was useful, what was a useful occupation in Israel, in Palestine.

RE: What, is this what you really wanted to do, or did you have other ambitions had Hitler not come along?

MM: Yes, I wanted to be a musician.

RE: A musician?

MM: Yes, a musician. And at that time I had an excellent teacher, who was concertmaster at the opera in Frankfurt. And he also was a Social Democrat and an unyielding Social Democrat. And from that point of view, as a Jew it was pathetic to see a man who was opposed to Hitler, to fight for his own survival. And he performed his professional functions [tape off then on]

RE: Nothing.

MM: Yeah. But, his life was changed considerably. And it came to a head where, in, sometime in 1937, when the decrees came out by the Nazi authorities, that an Aryan, which of course he was, could not teach a Jew in the field of arts. And in this particular case, in the field of music. Unfortunately that was the end of my association with a good human being, who-

Tape one, side two:

RE: This is side B of tape one. This is Ruth Erie, interviewing Moe Marx, of Seattle, Washington. Moe, we were talking about your music teacher and, could you just bring us to the end of that particular phase of your life?

MM: Yes, of course. Well, unfortunately my revered teacher was not able to continue to teach me. As a matter of fact, I heard a few days afterwards, after the decree came out, that that particular person, that unyielding anti-Nazi, lost his life. I don't quite know the circumstances. I was in touch with his wife through other people, because a Jew could not communicate with non-Jews at the time. The biggest legacy he probably left for me was his manner of teaching. He got me to a point where I could have taken off in the main direction as a musician, with more education, of course. But it was, it looked hopeless for a man in my particular situation to continue with music. And I had to make up my mind to get into a, if possible, to get into a different profession.

RE: Okay, Moe, could we get back for a moment to the orphanage? I'm intrigued by the children being transported to other countries and how your parents were involved in this. Because I think that was a very unique situation.

MM: Yeah, okay, well my parents were intimately involved in setting the plans of taking children to different countries, primarily Palestine, into action. It was my mother's function to get things organized because she knew that my father—her husband—would be involved in taking the children to other countries and negotiate future transports with the cooperation of Dr. Burg.

RE: Okay, now when you...

MM: So...

RE: Said he, your father was involved, he was physically involved in taking these children, accompanying these children?

MM: Exactly. He, with the help of Dr. Burg, were actually taking the children to the places which were negotiated and each...

RE: Outside of Germany?

MM: Outside of Germany. And each and every time my father and Dr. Burg touched the soil of another country, they were involved in organizing future transports...

RE: So they really...

MM: Out of Frankfurt to those locations.

RE: Right. So they really would have had an opportunity to stay out of Germany and get out themselves, rather than returning for another...

MM: Correct, but...

RE: Load of children.

MM: There was an express arrangement made with the Nazi authorities that the function of my father and Dr. Burg was going in and out of Germany. It was primarily to make sure the children would get to a safe place, and to negotiate future transports. At that time the Nazis were interested in getting Jews out of Germany, the easiest possible way. Of course later on things

became, well took an entirely different tone. But we'll come to that a little bit later. At that time the Nazis were not unwilling to let the children go without any further punishment.

RE: And now how long did that continue? At what point [tape off then on]

MM: The next important date in the struggle for survival on the part of the Jews, and the program that Hitler and Himmler, etc. set themselves for the, for their way of solving The Jewish Question took of course, took place in Paris when a consular, a German consular official, was supposed to have been murdered by a Jew by the name of Grynszpan. And that, of course, set off the fire in the *Reichstag*. It also culminated in the awful Crystal Night when nationwide synagogues were burnt, Jewish shops were destroyed, and all of a sudden, if we didn't realize before we certainly realized it then, that there's only one way to save one's life is to get out of Germany. Unfortunately, many of the borders that were open before, all of a sudden were shut, shut in the face of Jews who needed salvation. That also, that date also, the day of Crystal Night, November the 9th, also resulted in the S.A. and the S.S. storming into Jewish homes, apartments, etc., to round up most Jews over the age of 18, mostly men. Fortunately the women were spared at that time. I...

RE: Were you one of those men?

MM: Yes. Like me, many others of my age...

RE: How old were you at the time?

MM: I was 21.

RE: All right.

MM: Many of my age, like the teachers in the orphanage and many of the older boys, were taken in, rounded up by the Nazis, and eventually we found ourselves in a cattle wagon on the way to, we didn't know. And there starts one of the most gruesome chapters of depriving people of their liberty and playing the role of the lord over executioner one could say. All this was coming directly afterwards because the journey in the cattle wagon was, if one can call it the journey, was, particularly since we didn't know where we were going to, there were at that time many of our elderly Jewish people that could not last through that harrowing experience and just passed away quietly between us. Eventually we got to the point of destination which we didn't know where it was. And we found ourselves, I should say, I found myself in a place called Dachau. And that, of course, does not need much explanation on my part. And I would rather confine myself to more personal experiences because the history and what happened in the concentration camps like Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, etc., was well-known already at the time. So I may come back to that later because these were concentration camps that were at that time built within German borders only. Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, and Auschwitz, came shortly afterwards. In the meantime also I, having had no idea what was happening to my two sisters and to my parents, and to the orphanage, and to the children that were left there...

RE: And your father was not one of those that was rounded up?

MM: My, no, my father and Dr. Burg, and of course my mother, and girls and women at that time were exempted from it. And of course all the boys and girls up to the age of 18 were still in the orphanage. Of course this is all knowledge that came to me after Dachau. I...

RE: How long were you in Dachau?

MM: Well, the biggest problem is that we were living within a space where time was of no consequence. And if it hadn't been for official opportunities, to know what the time is, we would never have known it. We knew when it was Friday. We, of course, had no facilities for prayer. Whatever prayer was said was done on an individual basis and observed by the guards, which, and those quiet moments were done individually whenever the opportunity presented itself.

RE: Can you briefly...

MM: Yeah, but I...

RE: Describe the conditions in Dachau?

MM: Well, like I said before, I don't think I want to take up too much of the time of personal observations, because the general observations are well-known.

RE: But...

MM: I just want to say one thing about this, that we encouraged one another, we, the prisoners, encouraged one another to have a little bit of confidence in the future. They can't always, they couldn't always be this way. But it was at best an artificial way of preserving our sanity. At one time one of my uncles—there were three of my uncles were present, two that, by chance I ran across—however, most of us, very wisely, stayed within the artificial boundaries that we, that were set by the hut number we were in, that we were assigned to. Because it would happen very often that all of a sudden there would be a command to go for roll call. And the time allotted was very, very brief. So, although there were a lot of people that knew one another from different huts, we considered it prudent not to be, to stray too far away from the hut we were assigned to. Generally the conditions could be described as that every minute was wrought with danger. Certain people were assigned to certain labor projects. On which basis they were selected, I don't know. I don't remember.

RE: Were you required to work?

MM: I was not, for some strange reason. But I had one uncle die in my arms. And I was about three or four seconds late to go to my hut. And the four seconds late were four seconds I will never forget in my life because a guard stopped me that I am, how come I am outside and not in my hut. And I, and of course he had two German Shepherds with him. And also in our own home, in the orphanage, we had two German Shepherds. And most, and they were all friendly to the children. And I made good friends with them. At that point in time I had lost all my love for dogs for the rest of my life. That, what really went on in the mind of this particular guard, I can only be grateful that he had apparently, apparently he was thinking that what, better it was, it would not be, he won't need to shoot me right there and then. And he quieted his dog down. And he told me that he would let me go this time but I should not be late again in my own hut. And I explained to him that I was trying to give, trying to lead my uncle into an easy exit from this world. He relented and let me go, but this is a happening I couldn't possibly forget at any time in my life any more. Generally I don't think I should take the opportunity now to go any further into discussion of the life in the concentration camp. I think a lot has been written and talked about it. I'll tell you, it's always very important to bring it back to life again, to remind ourselves. And I...

RE: And every testimony adds to the total.

MM: That's correct. I think I mentioned one particular facet which was unusual in that there was one individual who [unclear] at a time when doing a good deed, as that guard did, by letting me live, because there were no other witnesses to it, so consequently he was able to let the better side of his character come through and to let me go.

RE: Moe, while you were at Dachau did you have any idea of the fate of your family back home in Frankfurt? Your parents? Your sisters?

MM: No, none whatsoever. I can only talk about it in retrospect. I was released by the Nazis from Dachau in half way of 19-, February the 2nd of 1939. And the circumstances were as follows. My sister, my older sister, Hannah, was a nurse by profession. And she was a very good one. She was attached to a famous Jewish doctor in the hospital at the *Gagernstrasse* in Frankfurt.

RE: How do you spell that?

MM: That's G-A-G-E-R-N-...

RE: Okay.

MM: And street.

RE: Thank you.

MM: It was a famous Jewish hospital, which was still functioning. In fact they had many additional duties because there were so many more cases of, mostly emergency cases for Jewish people that couldn't withstand the pressure of the time.

RE: But it was allowed to continue to function as a hospital.

MM: It was allowed to continue to function as a hospital. [coughs] Excuse me. And there was a very famous doctor, a Jewish doctor, in this hospital. And he had attained world recognition in a particular field of surgery. Very famous people from different countries at that time came to Germany, made arrangements, political arrangements, to be able to stay, to be operated on by that particular doctor. Amongst some of those well-known personalities from different countries was a General Campbell, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L. And this General needed a certain surgery for which that particular doctor, a Jewish doctor in Frankfurt at that hospital, was very well-known for. My sister, Hannah, was a private nurse attached to the doctor and that particular patient. The operation was successful, and there was a certain amount of time allotted for him, for the General's recuperation. And, but shortly before he returned to England, he was very anxious to speak to my parents and to my sister. And this took place one Friday evening, which, according to the Jewish religion, is of particular significance. And at the conclusion of the meal, apparently the General Campbell and his wife, Lady Campbell, were very, very impressed with a Jewish Friday night. And he came right to the point, and he said, "There must be something that I can do, a message I can take with me to convey to my government."

RE: The government meaning England.

MM: Meaning the English government. And of course all of [unclear] spoke just as an unrehearsed choir, "Get us out of here. If you can get us out of here, we'll forever be grateful." And it's significant that after all these years, so know many of our, of the details surrounding the return of this General to his country, that the circumstances were such that there wasn't a dry eye.

Particularly he was very grateful for the care he got from my sister and the care he got from a totally Jewish environment and employees of that hospital. And lo and behold it didn't take long before I had an order, in Dachau, a guard came after me and said I should come to the Comma-, the Commander wants to see me. And he informed me at that time that arrangements were made by an outside source that they--that I would not be a burden to either the government, which was at that time conditioned for settling in any other country.

RE: A burden to which government? To...

MM: A burden to the British government.

RE: Oh.

MM: And, needless to say, if I would have [unclear] burden to the Nazi government, they, at the same time got rid of one more Jew.

RE: Mmm hmm [affirmative].

MM: And at the same time my brother-in-law, who also was in Dachau, he also was released. And the connections this British General had, eased the transportation of additional children into Palestine, and this man was, instilled a lot of hope in us. And where there was no, where we were at a point of even giving up hope and the Jewish word is *bitochaun*, trust in God, that it's a, took a situation such as that. But unfortunately, when the time came to leave, and I looked back, and I see all my friends that did not have the same opportunity. I was taken to Munich and for some strange reason there was a family, it was on a Friday and that family took me in until I could make my way to Frankfurt.

RE: A Jewish family?

MM: A Jewish family. And I remember their name, and I still have a copy of a letter of thanks I wrote to them because they tried to make me feel at home. And...

RE: And you...

MM: I can not quite recall any more. Too many years have gone by. All the details, but I remember the name of the family. And I believe it was a Polish family that was overlooked in the transportations back to Poland.

RE: Of Poles, mmm hmm [affirmative].

MM: Their transportation back to Poland, I imply that around August of 1938, former Polish Jews were rounded up. They were Polish Jews that didn't have a Polish passport and didn't have a German passport and were stateless. And were taken out of Germany and then were put down on Polish soil and then left to their own devices.¹

RE: Being stateless.

MM: Yes.

RE: Can we get back to your family? You were able to return to Frankfurt...

MM: Yeah, I returned...

RE: To join your family?

¹Refers to November 1938 sudden forced expulsion to Poland of more than 10,000 former Jewish Polish Nationals residing in Germany. Zbaszyn was the site of the major camp from November '38 to August '39.

MM: I returned back to Frankfurt. I also had, I, in Dachau I had to sign a document saying that I would be in Germany no more than—I don't exactly remember the date—no more than two or three weeks, and then leave Germany. All right, I...

RE: Did you have a place to go?

MM: Yes, my parents in the meantime made arrangements through the connections. There was an English Jewish family that declared their willingness to take me in.

RE: I see.

MM: And that was my destination. It was—at this point now, 55 years later, it is almost impossible for me to recall all the circumstances of this transfer, because things were happening so fast. And I just hope that I portrayed myself as a person that appreciates the help from...

RE: Oh yes.

MM: From that English Jewish family, because no one has any conception what a concentration camp is like, unless one has been there oneself. And this is a judgment I will return to, or an observation I will return to on a few more occasions in this interview, that... And I want to emphasize it again, that no one has any idea what it is like to be in a type of a pajama with blue and white stripes, which was of course an irony, because blue and white were the Jewish colors, and to have all the circumstances, to be treated in much, a worse way than any one else I could imagine, would have had to go through in the course of history.

RE: Would you...

MM: Well what?

RE: Would you like to tell us something about your life in England or would you, could you...

MM: Well I, this is a...

RE: Bring us up-to-date on your family, what happened to them.

MM: Yeah, yeah, as far as my family is concerned, needless to say, every Jew realized that there is no more hope left in Germany. And I should emphasize at this point that most of us could not ever, could not at that time understand at all what was happening to them. Because Jews are known always to have been good citizens of any country that they were in. But there was nothing left in Germany to either be unable to leave it, certainly not the people, and whatever was of material value was at that time of far lesser importance than saving one's life and other people's lives. My family at that time made—well, I should say my two sisters—made preparations to leave Germany also. My father and mother, of blessed memory, and my aunt, Martha, to whom I owe my, having been brought up-

Tape two, side one:

RE: ...one of tape two, of an interview with Moe Marx of Seattle, Washington. Moe, you were telling us of the status of your parents back in Frankfurt.

MM: Yeah, that, also the status of my two sisters and my aunt, Martha, and the status of the orphanage. Let me do things in con-, try to do things in chronological order. They were, [the] orphanage was functioning, under extreme stress and strain, needless to say. There were only children under the age of sixteen and seventeen, boys and girls. My father was still involved in *Youth Aliyah*. And by that time, of course, it was pretty clear that any other so-called free country in Europe would be useless to consider for any further youth transports to those countries. But the emigration from the orphanage into Palestine continued unabated. I should say continued under stress and strain, but it did continue. My father and Dr. Burg were still trying, realizing the extreme need for getting as many children out as possible, since the program of getting Jews out of Germany was now of paramount importance and every avenue was considered to accomplish that. And I will return to the troubles of my, the efforts of my father and Dr. Burg momentarily. So, we have established that the orphanage at the *Waisenhaus* [orphanage -ed.] continued with its function of taking more children in, ever more children, because at that time already many people had died in concentration camps.

RE: So these were children of victims who had been taken off to concentration camps?

MM: And...

RE: And others.

MM: At that point. And now in retrospect it is of lesser importance how, where these children came from. The greater importance at the time was to get them out as quickly as possible. Yes, it's true, there were some victims from—that were, that lost their lives in concentration camps where families were torn apart completely. So the orphanage was still functioning. Needless to say, the material means for the orphanage were not forthcoming. It was because, under normal times people would support the orphanage with donations and the, and that, [unclear] families that had children in the orphanage were no longer able to contribute anything. So, the *Waisenhaus* there, the orphanage had to exist merely on the cash on hand. My Aunt Martha, who practically raised me, because my parents were so preoccupied—and I want to emphasize that we were all one big family, a family consisting of 150 people—so my Aunt Martha shortly afterwards passed away, of natural causes. Or I should say of unnatural causes, because the strain of staying alive was just too much for anyone, healthy or not healthy. My mother, was heroically continued the everyday affairs of the orphanage, including of course the help of eight employees to feed 150 people.

RE: Were they Jewish employees? You don't know. It doesn't matter.

MM: This is of lesser importance now. So let me continue for a moment. My two sisters made preparations to leave Germany, also for England. And all of us were invited

by the Campbell family—the family of that General who had the operation in Frankfurt where my sister, where my older sister was a private nurse. That was the meeting point for anyone coming from the *Waisenhaus*. So they, so that family really played an amazing role. And if there would be a new memorial being built for Righteous Gentiles, they certainly would deserve a place amongst them. My sister, incidentally, got engaged to my brother-in-law—who was able to leave Dachau before me—because it was, the marriage was planned but under the circumstances could hardly take place, but did take place in a very, very informal manner. I think I was already in England by that time. And my brother-in-law and my sister, when they succeeded in getting the papers, also went to England. And they stayed with Mrs. Campbell, Lady Campbell. And I stayed with a family in North London. And needless to say, the fate of our parents, the fate of the orphanage, and the fate of Jewry in Frankfurt, and all of Germany, was of course of [unclear], in our mind every minute, hour of the day. And unfortunately we were, well, what was so frustrating was the hopelessness of the situation where we had to be witness to a gradual dissolution of what used to be Jewry in Germany.

RE: Do you, can you tell us then what happened to your parents? Were they able to leave Germany? This was now 1939, I believe.

MM: No, my parents were, continued with their work. In the meantime Dr. Burg, on one of the transports they were taking to Palestine, Dr. Burg remained in Palestine. My father, of course, returned.

RE: Your father returned to Germany.

MM: Well, my father wanted to return to Germany. But the ship, and I do not remember the registry of that ship, was intercepted by the British Navy. And my father, of course, was taken off the boat because it was—but, after all, he still had a German passport.

RE: In other words they considered him an enemy?

MM: They—no, the British authorities classified Jewish Refugee from Germany as a friendly enemy alien.

RE: All right.

MM: Which almost, it seems to, almost sounds like a...

RE: Contradiction in terms.

MM: Like a contradiction itself, no better wording could be found to describe our situation.

RE: I see. And your mother during this time?

MM: My mother continued to be in charge of the orphanage, as best as she could. And my father, of course, was a broken man, because, well, first of all my two sisters and I, and many other interested persons, we tried to arrive at a solution. My father wanted to go back. And here was the situation: where it was better to have one person out than the same person to be in, because at that time any arrangement which [was] made previously was of course conveniently forgotten by the Nazis. And we are sure that at the border our father would have been shot right out.

RE: Now was this before the war started with, between Germany and England? Was this still before?

MM: Yes.

RE: All right.

MM: Yes, yes. So we now have the picture where my father, separated by the awful conditions in Germany, was unable to go back to Germany. Again I have to emphasize that the value of a human life, because we knew, and our advisors knew, that my father's life would be of very short duration if he would return to the side of his wife, which of course he wanted to do.

RE: Now would your mother at that point have been able to come to England, but would not because of the children? Or why was, why did she stay behind?

MM: Because my mother would not leave the children alone.

RE: All right. That's...

MM: And we, of course, tried to get her out of Germany. But there was no one else to take care of the children.

RE: Right.

MM: And there were several other people, teachers, that had the permanent position to be in charge of the children. And of course, they were, some of them were still there—young Jewish boys and young Jewish ladies—that helped my mother. And the question of material means never even came up, because, well, I should admit that in my memory I, that was of secondary nature. And yet, and yet one needs money to live. So I don't quite remember how that was achieved, except I know it was done, everything was done on a cash basis. Well apparently there must have been some funds still in the account for the orphanage.

RE: Was your mother eventually able to leave Germany and join you?

MM: Well, eventually we, in England, we three children in England, and my father, of course, made preparations to get our mother out and equip her with a visa to America. Those preparations took a long, long time. And in the meantime the conditions in Germany were getting worse and worse by the minute. And then it came time for the children of the orphanage, and whoever was left of the grownups, to be taken into Theresienstadt. My mother already then had the visa to go to America, but she could not bring herself to leave the children to their fate without her seeing what was going to happen to them. And so, my mother joined the children, and whoever was left in the orphanage, and they came to their ultimate death in Theresienstadt.

RE: I guess we should go back to your life in England, now, sad as this is. But we have to continue with this testimony. Can you talk a little bit about your life in England, what happened to you there? Did...

MM: Well [pause] let me quickly say what happened to my family then, my father. My father, incidentally, now by, oh by that time, the *Blitz* on England had started. And it was of great importance to save, to once again save lives from the city of London,

which came under intense bombing from the Nazis, to save children from the bombardment of London. And my father—completely unable and unwilling to sit by—decided to start once again a home for orphans. And how did those orphans come about? Very simply, because [coughs] excuse me, because many a Jewish family lost, were lost through the bombing. And miraculously many children were left over. Now once again, my father started an or-, not quite an orphanage, no, but a...

RE: Children's home?

MM: A Home for Evacuated Children...

RE: All right.

MM: He called it, which was a clever way of naming it. And unfortunately, once again, the need was very, very great. He started again to approach well-known personalities in England, Jewish personalities, to help with funds to establish that home. And the home was started in Northampton. I do not remember at this time why particularly Northampton. I...

RE: Maybe it was safe from the bombing?

MM: It was, it was safe from bombing. Yes, that's correct. But the important point is that it was done. And of secondary importance is now, even if I would remember, which was the reason for starting it in Northampton. The home was successful. And if it...

RE: Were...

MM: Hadn't been for the fact that by that time, unfortunately my mother and the children were all deported, an attempt was made to transfer the *Waisenhaus* to Northampton, but it was a task which was absolutely impossible. Of course I wasn't, there was no money, no way of achieving that aim. And once again, my father had to resign himself for having tried and not being able under the circumstances, to succeed. He was admired for having done that in the first place. And like he says, what other choice did he have, having had to, having to worry about his family, particularly his wife. Such were affairs and conditions in Germany at the time that the world was sitting by unable to do anything for the last remaining souls—Jewish souls—in Germany. And of course in the meantime, additional concentration camps were started in Czechoslovakia and particularly in Poland: Maidanek, Birkenau, Auschwitz, Theresienstadt, Mauthausen. There are so many. I don't have to go into details now. I'm just mentioning it to point out that the Jewish Solution as Hitler foresaw it, was unfortunately well on its way. My two sisters in the meantime, well, my sister Esther, helped my father in the running of the hospital in Northampton. My sister Hannah—she was—stayed on the grounds with her husband, on the grounds of the estate of the Campbell family, and continued to work as a nurse in surrounding hospitals, army hospitals, etc.

RE: Now what about you?

MM: And I was at that time working for a company called Brimsdown Chemical Works, in Enfield, North London. They produced gas masks for the army, and other

chemical items. And I don't quite remember what kind, but that's unimportant now. And that's, and I lived in North London.

RE: Then you stayed in England?

MM: Yes. I stayed in England but not for very long. At that time we were close to the point when Hitler was overrunning France and of course Holland and Belgium also fell in Hitler's wake. How that affected me, I will have to present a rather lengthy explanation. I believe the date when Hitler marched into Paris and subjugated France was around the beginning of June, 1940. By that time, the whole of Europe was under Nazi domination. The only two countries that were not conquered by the Nazis was of course Russia and England itself. At that time most countries that were overrun by the Nazis had representation in London in the form of the free Polish government, and we all remember the emergence of Charles deGaulle, as the leader of free France. Of course we know they had the Vichy government, there was the Vichy government in France. But that, they acted on the side of Hitler. And so many countries like free Dutch, free Belgium, free French, free Polish, free Czechs, all were represented in London. They all wanted to contribute to the fight against Hitler. They, and of course, whoever came and managed to get to England, was anxious to get into the fight against Hitler. However, there came a legal problem. The legal problem simply was, how do you name a person that is on English soil, is from a country that is overrun by the Nazis. But those refugees—of course including all of thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany—we all were anxious to get into the fight against Hitler. But the British were a little bit slow in arriving at any solution as to what to do with us. And needless to say, they had to check everybody out, because there was a time when Hitler sent over in the form of refugees many spies. So, we were labeled, we Jews...

RE: From Germany.

MM: From Germany. We were labeled as "friendly enemy aliens". I don't think anywhere in the book of history is a similar occasion where any group of people were named friendly enemy aliens. Now, I'll have to let that sink in for a moment.

RE: That's a contradiction in terms.

MM: Of course it's a contradiction in terms. I'll have to let that sink in—whoever would be the listener of this report—because it's very, very hard to come to terms with that expression. Well anyway, let's just continue with the history of those, of that awful chapter in our lives. While...

RE: How did it affect you?

MM: Well, how it affected me and thousands of others of refugees was simply that we were rounded up at the place of our work and were allowed to go to wherever we lived to get our working clothes off, collect our papers, and were taken to mostly schools, army camps, etc.

RE: This was by the British government?

MM: It was by the British government on British soil.

RE: Right.

MM: And we had no idea what was going to happen to us. But it soon emerged that the main reason was to herd us all together in convenient places where the army and other British authorities could examine the past and the present in each refugee's life to find out if each one of us was reliable...

RE: Legitimate.

MM: To being, was reliable and were legitimate refugees. Having accomplished this we were then shipped to Huyton, which is H-U-Y-T-O-N, which is outside Liverpool. It's right by the waterfront. And...

RE: When you say shipped, by what means were you taken there? On trains or buses? By boat?

MM: That depended entirely on the proximity of each collection point to Liverpool.

RE: All right.

MM: Some by bus, some by train, some by army vehicles, etc. So, here we were, a group of several thousand people.

RE: Were they all men?

MM: They were all men.

RE: All right.

MM: Yes.

RE: They did not take the women?

MM: No, they did not take the women. The process of collecting-

Tape two, side two:

RE: Tape two of an interview with Mr. Moe Marx of Seattle, Washington. Please continue.

MM: As I was saying, this process of collecting, this was actually, the expression I have to use of collecting human beings that had nothing else in mind but to help in the war effort, to fight in the fight against Hitler, and we did not know what our fate was going to be. But it soon emerged what it was going to be, because the process became too burdensome. There were probably more people there than the British Army could handle. And some fifteen hundred people were put on a ship by the name *Arandora Star*. And I'll spell that, A-R-A-N-D-O-R-A, *Arandora Star*.

RE: Yes, including you?

MM: No, not me, no. My time hadn't come yet. Those were previous people collected from different points all over Britain. Unfortunately, that ship was torpedoed and...

RE: By the Germans?

MM: Yes, by the Germans, because they got wind that on that ship there were 250 Nazi prisoners of war, also some 230 Italians, plus the balance made up of Jewish refugees from Germany.

RE: Do you know where that ship was headed for?

MM: We were not told where the ship was headed for. But it, but having had so many scientists in that group of Jewish refugees, we were able to figure it out ourselves from the direction the ship was going, in a duly western direction. I was not on the ship, on that particular ship. And so we figured it would go to Canada. And at first the idea of going to Canada was...

RE: Appealing?

MM: Not something that worried us too much. But the next day the *Arandora Star* was torpedoed by a German U-boat. The balance of the people that were not taken onto the *Arandora Star* and those that were saved from the *Arand-*, for, well I will have to correct myself. The—were, about 450 people approximately were saved from the *Arandora Star*. And the balance of 2,000 other people that were put on a ship called *Dunera*. And here starts, with the *Dunera*, a very, very sorry part of history of the war.

RE: Now you were one of those who was put on the *Dunera*?

MM: I was one of those that were on the *Dunera*. Unfortunately, also, it appears that Italians and the Nazis didn't lose many. Most of the victims of that torpedo were German Jewish refugees. So we had no idea whatsoever where we were going. Attempts were made on, to sink the *Dunera* as well. Fortunately the Nazis did not succeed. And so off we went. And we still had no idea...

RE: Where you...

MM: During the entire trip we had no idea which way we were going.

RE: Can you describe some of the conditions on the ship?

MM: I'm just coming to that. The *Dunera* was built in 1937, as a troop ship, with the capacity of 1600 troops, including the crew of the ship. However, for this particular trip, from Liverpool to Australia, as we then found out the ship was headed to, on July the 10th, 1940 that ship the *Dunera* carried the 200 Italian fascists, the 250 Nazi prisoners, and almost 2,000 Jews and other refugees from Germany, a total of two thousand five hundred-forty people. On the fifth week of the voyage we still did not know our destination. And how we kept going, the daily cycle of life, with very little food, still in our filthy clothes from the very beginning, and hygienic conditions were non-existing, where it's so bad one could say non-existing. The lavatories didn't work any more. It was one of the filthiest times that we, the 2,000 refugees, I'm not including now the Nazi prisoners, that was the responsibility of the British anyway. And sometimes it seemed that they were more concerned with the fate of the military prisoners, the Italians and the Nazis, than 2,000 Jewish refugees. For us to communicate with the commander on board ship was almost impossible. Needless to say we, in the meantime, we established representation on the part of the 2,000 Jewish refugees, in the form of a cabinet that would be responsible and they would represent our interests to vis á vis the commander on board ship. Because we have to consider that the way the *Dunera* was organized, there were the naval forces who had to answer to the military forces on board ship, the guards were from the British Army, and of course the naval, the...

RE: The crew was...

MM: Naval operation, the crew, and they were under the command of the...

RE: British Navy.

MM: Of the navy. Neither the army commander or the naval commander, it seems, were inclined to even talk to us. We were allowed a few minutes to come up from the deck. We had to run.

RE: Was this for exercise? Or why?

MM: So-called exercise. We had no shoes on. We were not permitted to have shoes. And most of us didn't even have any shoes any more. The conditions were such I can not remember any book ever that would describe a scene, experiences on the high seas such as we went through. The only way we could communicate with the *Kommandant*, with the authorities, was first, we had eight rabbis on board, and they wrote a note. And the only way to let the *Kommandant* on board ship know that, who we are, was through that note of the rabbis. We attached the note to a eating utensil such as spoons and knives, etc., to give it some way so we could throw it at the right moment to gain the attention of the authorities on board. We also elected, besides the religious representation, we also elected people that would represent us as civilians, as human beings, and they performed the task admirably. Eventually contact was made, but by that time we were much closer to Australia than of course to England. However, it was too late.

RE: For what?

MM: It was too late...

RE: To make a difference?

MM: Then to improve the conditions on board ship.

RE: I see.

MM: We were told, however, by the *Kommandant*, by the Army Major, that a representative of the Home Office and of the British government would await us in Sydney.

RE: Sydney, Australia?

MM: We arrived, yeah, Sydney, Australia. I should go back for a moment. Before I describe the come to the landing in Australia. I want to emphasize again, we had hardly any food, no basic hygienic facilities, no change of clothing, no ventilation. Under such conditions, a lot of men died from the conditions on board ship.

RE: Were these all younger men?

MM: Uh, just a moment. And many committed suicide—I will answer your question in just a moment—since there was absolutely no, we were not given any opportunity, any thought of how this might all end. And the answer to your question is, it was only the young that really had the strength to survive that. Quite a few fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds survived that strenuous voyage.

RE: You're saying that a few or quite a few survived? Would you say, you don't know? All right.

MM: We don't know the actual numbers.

RE: Right.

MM: We, all we know is...

RE: Many did not survive.

MM: All we know is that many did not survive. The only way we could judge was by the absence for any roll call. And there was only [unclear], the *Kommandant* brought the British and, about the British Navy and the British Army, had no other means to ascertain how many died or committed suicide.

RE: You mentioned roll call. Was there an every morning roll call?

MM: I don't quite remember. Roll calls were made only to as a *pro forma* procedure...

RE: I see.

MM: We certainly didn't benefit from the roll call, and to have to stand in, in, under condi-, stand in conditions which I can only describe as extreme. I mentioned that the lavatories didn't work any more. So, where we, under the deck, and in the hold where we, that's where we were, the 2,000 of us, and we had to live day in and day out in...

RE: Sub-human conditions.

MM: In sub-human conditions. It's awfully hard to describe it when human nature has to allow itself certain excrement of nature, that we had to live in and live with. But there was no other way of doing it.

RE: Then upon your arrival in Australia, you mentioned you arrived in Sydney?

MM: Well I wasn't quite through with the conditions...

RE: Oh.

MM: On...

RE: All right, I'm sorry.

MM: On board ship yet. Particularly in those days, when we had to be very inventive, like opening the round windows, that we had access to...

RE: The portholes?

MM: The portholes. To hold up one another to relieve nature, instead of one another. But still the navy and the army soon got wind of this and then that way of relieving ourselves was taken away from us then too. Anyway, we were, we...

RE: Were you treated as prisoners? Was that the idea?

MM: They, yeah, it was, it appeared, it was obvious to us that we were treated as prisoners and that the troops on board ship and of course the naval crews, they thought, they must have been under the impression that we also were prisoners of war. Incidentally that's, it appeared to us, we had the impression that the Italian fascists and the Nazi troops that were captured and on board ship, it seemed to us that they were treated far better than we were. Anyway, we arrived in Sydney harbor on September the 6, 1940. And we were immediately transferred, right at the dockside onto trains. And...

RE: Were these...

MM: But we were on a...

RE: Were these passenger trains?

MM: No, they, no, no, no, they...yes, they were old passenger trains.

RE: Oh.

MM: But at least they were not cattle wagons. These were passenger trains but we were herded like animals, not like human beings. It was a 20-hour ride, through the outback, through conditions that we had never seen. But that of course is Australia. And after the 20-hour ride, we arrived at a place called Hay, H-A-Y, which is an old mining town, due west by about 400 miles, of Sydney. Gradually we got organized. First of all the Australian Army organized us, into four different camps. There was one camp for the Nazis and for the Italians, and of course at that point we never at any time had any contact with them. We didn't want to.

RE: Of course.

MM: That was far from us.

RE: How many of you were left at that point?

MM: Well, at that point there were about 2,000 people left, and they were divided into three or four different camps, adjacent to the camp where the Nazis and the Italians were. And there was no, each camp, incidentally, elected its own representation. It took us quite some time to get used to the awful heat, get used to the conditions.

RE: Can you describe the conditions in the camp?

MM: I'll be coming to that. The conditions were certainly very much better than on board ship, the *Dunera*, but they were internment camps. There was no luxury. On the contrary, we slept on straw in wooden bunks. At least we, at least it emerged gradually that we were, that the Australian Army looked at us like human beings. We then proceeded to organize ourselves from inside. We organized synagogues according to the three Jewish movements. There was no shortage of rabbis; I mentioned that earlier. Nor was there any shortage of ritual slaughterers. There were 400 Orthodox people that were anxious to arrange for kosher food. And the relationship with the Australian Army and their commanders gradually improved. They gradually realized they've got a wronged human cargo on hand. That, of course, had a beneficial effect on us. They put us in touch with Australian Jewish authorities and we asked the Jewish authorities, who had trouble to recognize us for what we were known, officially, as friendly enemy aliens...

RE: They couldn't understand this.

MM: They could not understand the identification. But time eventually made them understand the unusual circumstances. Also, the mistake that was made by the War Office in England, in sending us together with Nazi and Italian fascists on the same boat.

RE: Did the British ever admit to this mistake?

MM: Yes. The British admitted to this in the form of, where Winston Churchill himself, in the House of Commons, openly and to the world, apologized to the 2,000 refugees in Australia. And he emphasized that under the circumstances we should have patience with him. We can not be repatriated with the condition of the war as it was at the time. Many, many ships were torpedoed, and the British government was unwilling—and this is understandable—and so were we, to be exposed a second time to all the dangers we had been through before.

RE: Certainly.

MM: I want to briefly tell now how we tried to make our existence, because that's all it was, a little bit more bearable. In the meantime, of course, the Australian Army that was in charge of those camps in Australia, they recognized us for what we were, namely friendly aliens to the war effort. They recognized that most of us were Jewish, and they helped us with—in every way they could. But I have to admit we—the menus were a bit more, were better, because we had mutton almost every day because that's what was available in Australia at the time. And it was slaughtered in the Orthodox way for the 400 Orthodox people. And they were very, the authorities were very cooperative. They also put us in touch with Jewish organizations in Sydney and Melbourne. And gradually the Jewish civilian population of Australia recognized us for what we were. I particularly was very, very lucky. In the whole of Australia was just one relative of the Marx family left, on my mother's side. And she came to visit me.

RE: How did you make contact with her?

MM: I made, if I could, if I remember, she heard, if I remember, a list of the internees was provided to the major organizations in Sydney and Melbourne for the Australian Jewish civil population to find any familiar names.

RE: I see.

MM: And there was a lady by the name of Epstein who was a direct relative of, on my mother's side. And she came to visit me. And it was, and those that were lucky to be visited by acquaintances and relatives, it was a welcome opportunity to realize we are human beings again.

RE: Of course.

MM: They helped us with, I think I mentioned that before, to become, to organize, to, they helped us with prayer books, with Bibles, and a lot of other Jewish books. We established camp universities. We established *yeshivahs*. We established, we had three different services for Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox.

RE: Outside of Jewish life, did you have any other kind of social opportunities?

MM: Yeah, I'm coming to that. We had, we got musical instruments so that those that knew how to play were able to play, myself included.

RE: Did you form an orchestra?

MM: We formed, I can't say we formed an orchestra. Under the circumstances we tried as best as we could to provide entertainment. We established a theater group. We established a musical theater group. And our lives became somewhat bearable. After a little while we even got a change of clothes, from the Australian authorities and from the Jewish organizations. We had to settle down and be satisfied with the daily way of life, which primarily consisted of walking on the inside of the barbed wire fence, whereas wildlife—and particularly kangaroos—were with a tremendous speed, almost were mocking us. "Look, we can do it so much faster than you! Why? Because we are free!" So, however, life never settled down to the point where we would accept it as, well, this is a way of life we have to do for the next, for the immediate and long-term future. Because freedom was still far from our sight.

RE: And no one knew when the war would be over...

MM: And of course not...

RE: Or what the results would be.

MM: But something happened at that time. Japan's entry into the war...

RE: I see.

MM: Changed conditions, it changed circumstances politically and militarily considerably. The Australian authorities, with the full knowledge of the British authorities, then proceeded to give us the opportunity to enroll in the Australian Military Labor Corps.

Tape three, side one:

RE: Side A of tape three of an interview with Mr. Moe Marx of Seattle, Washington. Please continue.

MM: Okay. My last remark was about, about a thousand people that joined the Australian Military Labor Corps. And about 150 to 200 were permitted to proceed to Israel, well, Palestine at the time. And several transports were arranged to return the remainder, that means about 800 people, back to Britain. However, before all this took place, something very unfortunate had to be dealt with. Out of the original 2,000 that came to the camps in Hay, approximately 200 were, came down with rheumatic fever, including the speaker.

RE: Including whom?

MM: Including the speaker.

RE: Including you.

MM: Which means me, including me. And that, of course, was the beginning of a hard story in a way for most of the 200 people that were so infected. I think it was of paramount importance, medical importance, to separate the 200 from those that were not infected with rheumatic fever. We, the 200, were taken to another camp, which was located in Tatura, T-A-T-U-R-A, which was located in the State of Victoria, in the northern part of the State of Victoria north of Melbourne, where we received medical attention. And it—that of course, like in my case—changed the course of each individual life. I don't remember exactly how long I was there, but whenever a group was ready to be released on medical grounds, they were then merged with the original group from...

RE: Hay?

MM: The camps in Hay, to return to England. Very few could perform any military service, because all of us were declared unfit for military duty.

RE: Now you mentioned for return to England, but earlier you said that there were no transports going back to England at that time.

MM: Well they started at that time.

RE: When?

MM: The return to England started in the year '42.

RE: I see.

MM: They started at that time and they were, and the return to England was organized by civilian and military authorities. I remember that on board ship that I was on, together with about 80 other people, most of whom had had rheumatic fever, but we were safe, medically speaking, then. And so we saw our friends again, but it changed our lives, because as soon as I got back to England I tried to enlist in the British Army, to get back at Hitler, and needless to say, my papers showed very clearly that I would be unfit for this. And...

RE: You were rejected.

MM: I was rejected militarily. Well I will come back to my own fate a little bit later, just to explain that gradually, the internment camp in Hay, and in Tatura, were dissolved and we all tried as best as we could to return to a normal way of life. Those that stayed in Australia, of course, went first to the Australian Military Labor Corps. And those that were returned to England, or to Israel, they all pursued their own way. Those that were able to join the British Army in England did so. Those that were not, that, of course couldn't. But we were all channeled into some kind of military/civilian service. Let me explain what that means. In my case, I had a, I was an authorized electric and acetylene welder. So I was working in a, for a company that specialized on heavy duty repairs on tanks and guns, etc., on British soil. And my particular function was to weld parts of tanks, parts of other heavy equipment. Coming back to the general picture, as I said, the camps were almost completely empty of us former Jewish refugees. What happened to the 250 Nazi troops and the Italians, we, I have no idea.

RE: I see.

MM: Their fate was not known. It was in good hands with the Australian Army, of course. So let me finish the story of the voyage of the hell ship. There's no other way for, no other word for it but the...

RE: You're referring to the *Dunera*?

MM: The *Dunera*. Some general remarks. As I said before, Japan's entry into the war had the consequence of a dramatic change in the attitude of most everybody in Australia towards us, because, then, of course, Australia itself was in danger.

RE: And at that point it seemed wise to return you to England rather than keeping you in Australia? Is that...

MM: Correct. Yeah, but many of us chose to return to England anyway, because we had dear ones in England, and we became very nonchalant by saying, "What else can happen to us?" So, the question of the Jewish refugees in Australia gradually was solved. There was no problem any more. We became very much involved in Australian life, Australian Jewish life for those who chose this way. And just in 1990 was the 50th anniversary of everything that took place—our landing in Australia and the beginning of our stay in Australia. They were, events were, had taken, were—commemorative events were organized in Australia for the date of September the 6th when the ship, the, when the hell ship *Dunera* arrived in Sydney.

RE: Did you attend those events?

MM: I did not attend those events. At that time my wife and I, my wife of blessed memory, were visiting Australia, because our niece in the meantime had married an Australian citizen. And so of course we wanted to visit him but my wife became very, very sick at the time. And consequently we could not undertake any kind of a trip until my wife had recovered from the sickness that she was suffering from. From others who attended the reunion I found out later that they attended with some very, very mixed feelings. I would have, certainly would like to have seen some of these friends with whom we shared

such closeness, by the condi-, caused by the conditions. You couldn't avoid one another. So, but anyway, we, on one hand we are glad that we were, that we could think back 50 years to, having gone through this experience.

RE: That you're still around.

MM: That we are still alive after everything that happened. But we are still very, very bitter about the fate that we had at that time.

RE: That the British imposed on you.

MM: Well, yes, but we just wanted to generally, in general remarks say, without that, it was a miracle how we made it through. Many of those from the 2,000 Jewish refugees have passed on. Needless to say, their lives had been shortened by the tremendous strain on their and our physical and emotional resources, particularly those that received a life-long memory of Australia in the form of rheumatic fever. But those of us who are still alive would never be able to erase from our memories the many fellow Jews who went down on the *Arandora Star* and our almost impossible survival on that hell ship *Dunera*. At this point I must say, of course, all of us were very much aware of Hitler's genocide in Europe. And needless to say, we were very, very concerned that we were tucked away, far away in Australia, without having been able to do anything about it. And, but now we have to say, we also suffered, and we are not ashamed to say now that while we were not in a ghetto, we survived conditions that were similar in a different way than those that befell our brothers and sisters in Poland and Russia, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkan countries. Our suffering that we went through holds a very important lesson for mankind. The facts of the story that we experienced have to be told; they got to be remembered. Later generations have to learn, and have to know what happened to us at the hands of the British and Australian authorities. How we were treated during the war years shows how fragile human rights can be, even in democratic countries.

RE: Thank you so very much for this interview, which has added a new dimension to our Holocaust Archives. And we thank you so much for your time, and for the information that you've been able to provide us.