

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ILSE STAMM

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer:	Nora Levin
Date:	October 21, 1980

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Gratz College
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IS - Ilse Stamm [interviewee]

NL - Nora Levin [interviewer]

Date: October 21, 1980

Tape one, side one:

NL: This is Nora Levin, a history instructor at Gratz College. This is October 21, 1980, and I have the pleasure now to introduce Mrs. Ilse Stamm, of Philadelphia, a survivor from Germany who will give us an account of her experiences during the Hitler period. Ilse.

IS: When Hitler came to power in January, on January 30, 1933, I had just been in first grade for six months. The Jewish population in a village of 1,000 was about 30 families, with me being the only school aged child at this time. The village or surrounding villages, Jews, according to the gravestone markers, dated back to the 15th century. The Jewish population in 1867 was 427. My grandparents were born there. Eichstetten am Kaiserstuhl, Baden, near the university town of Freiburg im [in] Breisgau. My playmates drifted off little by little as pressure was put upon them to shun a Jewish child. In class the teacher checked my papers-- neither checked my papers, nor called on me. My father was a cattle dealer, and traveled by bicycle to the surrounding villages, since the car and driver he had formerly hired were now intimidated and no longer would drive him. Customers would now only come after nightfall, that is those who still had the nerve to deal with a Jew. All this stopped as soon as the Nuremberg racial laws, 1935, came out. Among our Jewish inhabitants were dealers, merchants, butchers, and innkeepers. We had a paper factory in our village, which was founded in 1876 and family-owned until 1938. The Jewish community organized central secular schools. Ours was located in the county seat of Freiburg, classes being held in a public school building, and religious instruction given at the Jewish community building. Our instructors were all Jewish, with emphasis on religious subjects, translation of Bible, etc. The journey from my village to the school had to be made by train daily, and took about one-and-a-half hours. The ride was no pleasure, being pushed, shoved, spit upon, hair pulled,

ridiculed, and way-laid and often pushed from the train platform as the train pulled into the station. All this even though we had been assigned an area in the very beginning of the train and had either to run for the area or miss the train. On November 11, 1938, we went to school as usual. Our teachers didn't show up. Finally our lady English teacher arrived to dismiss us and to tell us that the synagogue and community house were afire, and we were to go to our respective homes. On our 20 minute walk back to the station, in Freiburg, we went past what was once a beautiful synagogue, now burned to the foundation and still smoldering. Across the yard, the community house burned to the ground. Besides our religious instructions being held here in winter, we were served hot lunches which had been prepared by an elderly woman. This fateful morning, as she was preparing for our lunch, she was dragged out and thrown down a long flight of stairs. The rabbi and *parnus* were dragged in night clothes and ordered to throw the Torahs and books in a pile and set fire to them, then were taken off to Dachau with no one knowing where they were headed. Coming to my village, I could see the smoke from where much the same scene had taken place, mentioned above, with our burning synagogue. My frightened parents were waiting, knowing something was afoot, but not able to put their finger on it. By late afternoon we heard that the men were being arrested and herded into the small jail. Around 5 p.m. the Nazis came for my father. As usual, around 7 p.m., I went to a nearby farmer for our milk. He was across the street from city hall. As I walked up to their house I saw a truck and men being pushed and shoved and beaten and loaded like cattle. That night we were ordered to remain indoors. We closed and locked our shutters. Soon after, the SS, the SA Brownshirts knocked and beat at our windows and doors. Two days later, my mother went to her parents in Emmendingen, a nearby town with a population of 10,000, where 200 Jewish families resided, with the idea of getting information on the whereabouts of the Jewish males. It was an entire week before anyone in our village had a life sign. A postal card arrived saying, "Incarcerated Jew Number such-and-such, Barracks such-and-such, Dachau." Upon arrival of this card, my mother went to our relatives in Karlsruhe, a city about four train hours away, to mail a letter to the American Consul in Stuttgart, and to look after the well-being of our family in this city. I had to remain home with our neighbors, all of us scared to death of what would take place this night. My sick uncle in Karlsruhe, the Nazis permitted to stay abed, while

they took another of my uncles and one of my cousins. Another cousin had not been at home when the SA came to arrest my uncle and the rest of the Jewish males in the house. When my cousin returned from riding the train for hours and found his father gone, he went to the Gestapo to find out the whereabouts of his father, and pleaded with them to take him instead of his aged father. Result: arrest for him as well, and off to Dachau. After three weeks in Dachau, my father was released. Many of the village's elderly men were unable to withstand the harsh treatment and severe cold, without proper clothing. One of our men, together with another elderly man, were forced to load a wagon with bricks and to pull it along the length of the parade ground. As they were running, being lashed to make them run faster, they dropped from exhaustion. Next shoved under a freezing shower, heads pushed back with a handled scrub brush, our village [pause] stop it a minute [tape off then on] our village elders did not withstand the treatment. The release of my father at the end of November was due to our possession of emigration papers to the U.S.A. We left Germany December 9, to say goodbye to our family in Switzerland. Then, to my uncle and aunt and cousin in France, leaving the port of Le Havre December 15.

NL: Excuse me now, Ilse, before we continue. Can you go back in time a little bit and do you recall, for example, your parents talking about the extent of Nazi influence in your village? In other words, in the early '30s or the middle '30s, were your parents aware of a considerable Nazi party membership in your village?

IS: Definitely. Definitely.

NL: Definitely. How did it express itself?

IS: We had a electric plant, which was fairly new to the village. There was an old one before, but this new one, they hired a man from out of the area who was really just a cover-up agent and was the Nazi *Führer* of our village.

NL: Now who appointed him? The elders of the community?

IS: No, it wasn't the community.

NL: It was...

IS: It was...

NL: From Nazi headquarters.

IS: From headquarters.

NL: So he was simply assigned to take charge.

IS: To the area.

NL: How about the local people? Were you, were your parents at all aware of any local people who were members, perhaps secretly, and who then revealed themselves after Hitler came to power?

IS: I'm sure that my parents were aware, because I, now that we're speaking about it I can recall even where the people lived and they said so-and-so and so-and-so. You didn't suspect them, but so-and-so we did suspect, and they certainly were on the bandwagon. But when it came to the burning of the syna-, the actual burning of the synagogue, it was this head of the electricity works who headed the whole operation in our village, as it was, held true for many of the other...

NL: Yes.

IS: Villages.

NL: In other words, he mobilized the community and coerced people perhaps, or at least got their cooperation.

IS: It was more outsiders that day that came in to do the dirty work.

NL: The burning of the synagogues.

IS: So that the villagers, correct, so that the villagers really weren't in sight.

NL: Weren't party to it.

IS: Yeah.

NL: I see.

IS: Well, our villagers may have been taken elsewhere, where they weren't known.

NL: Yes, to do the same...

IS: Same job.

NL: Work.

IS: Yeah.

NL: Can you also tell us a little about the relations of your family and other Jewish families with your non-Jewish neighbors? Was it, would you say it was an amiable relationship, or a tolerated relationship on their part?

IS: It was definitely amiable.

NL: Amiable.

IS: Because, I think I mention as I go on here, my grandparents were born there. But, so were many of the other villagers born there and had lived all their lives. And the Jewish community, the other, there wasn't any...

NL: No antisemitism.

IS: Bad, no.

NL: No?

IS: No.

NL: No hostile feeling?

IS: It wa-, my parents always said it was *der feine Risches*. In other words, it was the undercurrent.

NL: The undercurrent, yes.

IS: The undercurrent.

NL: Yes.

IS: But it wasn't on the daylight until much much later, 1936, when, 1935...

NL: After the Nuremberg...

IS: When people dared...

NL: To reveal themselves.

IS: Flaunt their, yeah.

NL: Yes.

IS: And there were, I remember also having a what they call a torchlight parade, which is a horrible thing to watch.

NL: I'm sure. This was organized by the Nazis?

IS: Yes. Yes.

NL: And did the whole community participate? Or do you think that your...

IS: Well those that were, certainly those that were in the Nazi party did, and the others stayed well behind the shutters not...

NL: Revealing themselves.

IS: For them not to be found, found out.

NL: This happened after '35?

IS: I don't recall. I wouldn't want to date it. But I definitely see it in my

mind's eye.

NL: Was the community affected at all by the depression of the '30s? Was there some economic adversity in the village that the Nazis might have played upon? Or was it...

IS: I...

NL: A fairly prosperous...

IS: I...

NL: Village?

IS: I don't think so, because it was an agricultural community, and people supported themselves that way. Or there were innkeepers or storekeepers, which provided just enough for the village. And there weren't even too many people that had to leave the village for...

NL: Any of their needs.

IS: Work.

NL: Oh, for their work.

IS: For their work.

NL: Even, they were self-sufficient.

IS: So it was self-, yes.

NL: Self-sufficient.

IS: Yes. Yeah.

NL: All right, now, would you continue please?

IS: Shortly before France fell, our family there went into hiding with a farmer. Fearful that my young cousin would be discovered, the farmer sent him off. He found another hiding place with a friend of the former, of the farmer, and lived in a hole in their cellar. They survived the war, my cousin's eye severely damaged. In 1940, the remaining *Eichstetter* villagers were forcefully taken away, together with the surrounding area Jews, destination unknown. Included with this transport were my step-grandparents, who lived in another town, from whom we later heard that they were in Camp de Gurs, France. They arrived in Philadelphia September 1946, as skeletons. All my grandfather could keep saying was that he was so happy to have been able to deliver his wife. One week after their arrival, he passed away.

NL: Oh, how unfortunate. Now, again, can we go back just a little bit? You spoke about the fact that you had emigration papers. And of course, inasmuch as it was so hard for so many Jews to get out of Europe, and to come to America, may I ask, do you know when your parents applied for admission to America?

IS: It wasn't just applied, Nora. It was, you had to have a sponsor. And my parents, I definitely recall, trying many different avenues and thinking where in heaven's name they could come up with someone in the United States that would be willing to sponsor us. Now...

NL: And how early do you think they started this?

IS: I would say at least in 1935, 1934. Finally, through some Shabbas afternoon *schmooze* at an old relative's, my mother discovered distant relations in Philadelphia. So, it was a long procedure to first find out where these people lived, to get in contact with them, for them to answer us, for, then to ask whether they would be willing to sponsor us. As it happened, they were very kind and they did sponsor us. They sponsored my father, my mother, and myself. Plus, two of my cousins and their parents, whom I've spoken of previously, who also landed in Camp de Gurs. My uncle didn't make it to the United States. He was-- he passed away in Camp de Gurs. But my aunt did come to the United States.

NL: On the same affidavit of...

IS: Of the same, by the same people.

NL: Support. Yes.

IS: Yes.

NL: Now, the papers that they had to sign involved a guarantee that you would not become public charges? Was that...

IS: That's correct, yes.

NL: Essentially...

IS: Yes.

NL: The kind of affidavit it was?

IS: Plus, plus, they had to show so much income or bank accounts.

NL: Assets.

IS: Assets.

NL: To enable them to...

IS: Actually more cash than assets.

NL: Provide for you.

IS: Yeah.

NL: Yes. I see. And you took this information to an American Consul--or your parents--to an American Consul?

IS: We took it, you had to have the papers first.

NL: Yes.

IS: Well, I don't know exactly whether that, which order it came, whether my parents went to Stuttgart first. I believe that was the case. If my parents went to Stuttgart first, you had to have a waiting number because of the American quota...

NL: Quota, yes.

IS: System. So, my parents, my father went to Stuttgart and got...

NL: Got a number.

IS: This, this number. And it wasn't so easy there either, because there was this rascal by the name--an American...

NL: Yes?

IS: By the name of Fuchs, who it was well-known, who for money, you could buy off. And many people were fortunate, if you can say in such a situation, were fortunate enough to get out. But there were others who were very unfortunate whom he pushed out. If you had, once you got to the Consulate after having this papers, sponsorship, and you had to be medically examined, if the doctor was so inclined he could reject you for...

NL: Anything.

IS: Even like a bad cut on your finger. I mean this is exaggerated.

NL: Yes.

IS: But, they found...

NL: Some technicality.

IS: Technicalities...

NL: Yes.

IS: Where they rejected many people who never made it out.

NL: And those who were less affluent, pardon me, and couldn't afford to bribe

the Consul, were also cast aside.

IS: Right. But not everyone bribed this Fuchs. You also had people that got numbers. For instance, Fred, that's my husband, got papers rather a number years much earlier. But he can tell that himself.

NL: Yes. He also went through Stuttgart, or...

IS: Also Stuttg-- that was the only Consulate...

NL: That was...

IS: American Consulate in Germany.

NL: In the whole of Germany?

IS: Yes.

NL: Is that so?

IS: Yes. In Stuttgart. But not everyone, really, he wasn't, he didn't just take bribes. He only, I suppose he did it where he could get the most money.

NL: He certainly didn't take people in the order...

IS: They were...

NL: Of their appli-...

IS: Of the numbers.

NL: Of...

IS: No.

NL: Of their application.

IS: No.

NL: Not in any chronological order.

IS: Definitely not. And...

NL: He picked and chose pretty arbitrarily.

IS: Yeah.

NL: And do you have any idea how many of the other Jewish citizens in your village were able to get out?

IS: Not very many.

NL: Not very many.

IS: Not very many. A handful.

NL: A handful. Did a number of them...

IS: There were some that went to South America, and met very poor conditions at that time in Uruguay, Paraguay, and there were also devious means of being able to get there. I don't recall. I just remember the people coming to our home and talking with my parents. And I know many may have made a...

NL: I think you had to be certified farmers, at least for a time.

IS: Something to that order.

NL: And money had to exchange hands, too. There were lots of unscrupulous agents representing South American interests. And they were often unscrupulous [unclear]. Do you know if a number of the Jewish families applied to leave once the Nuremberg laws were passed? Do you think, do you know if there were some efforts to get out of the country? Or were people saying to themselves, "This is the worst that can happen, and we'll somehow have to live with it."

IS: No, I don't think at that stage of the game. I think they, I definitely remember my parents, hearing my parents talk with other villagers and relatives saying that it's, the time had come for us to get out.

NL: To get out.

IS: In the beginning they said, "No, we don't know." And my father was definitely one of those who, we had our papers. We had our papers before 1938. I believe it was early '37 that we could have gone. But my father was afraid to go because he was established in business and he said, "I know what I have here. I have a family to support. I don't know what I will meet in the United States."

NL: And, up until *Kristallnacht*, up until November '38 he could still make a living and support you?

IS: No, he couldn't make a living. He lived on...

NL: But when he said...

IS: What he had made...

NL: Ah, his savings.

IS: Previously. Yes.

NL: But when he said, "I know what I have here," did he think he could somehow build up the business...

IS: No.

NL: Again?

IS: No. No.

NL: No.

IS: Because they knew by then...

NL: By...

IS: That, they didn't know what was to come, how terrible times would be.

NL: Yes.

IS: But they knew that it was high time to leave the country. I...

NL: And that was you think after *Kristallnacht*, or even earlier?

IS: I think...

NL: When they...

IS: I think they, if they...

NL: Felt there was no turning back?

IS: I think they had known before *Kristallnacht*, but let's say maybe they were still shaky five percent.

NL: Yeah. And it's a big move of course.

IS: But that...

NL: A big decision.

IS: Yes.

NL: A big uprooting.

IS: Yes. I recall we had a cousin in this village where my grandparents lived, and I met the daughter this summer. And she doesn't remember any of these things. She doesn't even remember her, what her mother looked like. But this is an aside. Her father and my, and her mother and my father were very, besides being relatives, very, on very good terms. And they were talking about leaving Germany. And this cousin, Arthur, had a brother in America for years, and had the opportunity to get out. Besides that, he had a, the wife had a sister in Paris.

NL: Oh. Well...

IS: Had a butcher shop, whom they want, and they wanted them to come. And I can see the man standing there as it was today. And he spread his legs and he shook the floor. He says, "Here I can't feel the floor shake and I know what I have here." But this

was earlier.

NL: Yes.

IS: But...

NL: Yes.

IS: They didn't make it. Their son, they sent their son out of Germany to Paris, where they thought he might be safe. And he was only safe for a very short period of time.

NL: He was caught by then...

IS: And they all were sent away.

NL: After the occupation.

IS: And my cousin, who is now in Switzerland, was sent away with the children's transport, taken, by the way...

NL: A children's transport from...

IS: From Germany, organized by the German Jewish organization, landing in Switzerland. And I just learned that this summer.

NL: Well! When did...

IS: But...

NL: That leave?

IS: In 1938, early 1938.

NL: This...

IS: Let's say in the winter of 1938.

NL: This was organized by the *Reichsvertretung*?

IS: No, no, no, by German Jew-...

NL: By the German Jewish...

IS: Jewish, yes.

NL: *Der Juden. Reichsvertretung der Juden, in Deutschland.*

IS: I don't know the organization, it could be.

NL: And this was an org-, this was a, an organized transport of children, Jewish children in Germany? To Switzerland.

IS: Correct.

NL: To save them, in other words.

IS: Yes. And, but now I must tell you what I found out...

NL: Yes.

IS: Which was appalling. The Jewish community in Switzerland, these children, my cousin, and two other girls that I went to school with, they took them off in the hinterland of Switzerland somewhere to--this happened to be a single non-Jewish woman...

NL: Who made these arrangements?

IS: Who took in, no, no, no, who took these three in. And most of the children that were on this transport were not taken in by Jews, but rather...

NL: By non-Jews.

IS: By non-Jews, the Swiss.

NL: And...

IS: By non-...

NL: Were they returned...

IS: Yes. Yes.

NL: To their families?

IS: Yes.

NL: Ultimately if their families survived?

IS: Yes. Yes. Yes.

NL: Now, did the Jewish community then in Switzerland make these arrangements for placing the children?

IS: I don't know. I can't tell you that, to be exact.

NL: And do you have any idea how many children were involved?

IS: No.

NL: This is most interesting.

IS: I don't. But I can find out. I came across this little book which had some facts...

NL: Ah, this is the book...

IS: And I'm looking for...

NL: That you were mentioning.

IS: Yeah.

NL: Yes. Especially interesting, because from so many sources we gather that Switzerland was not very accommodating, and not very cooperative in accepting Jews from Nazi-occupied lands.

IS: No, they were not.

NL: Not at all very helpful. Well, yes, now excuse these interruptions. So please carry on if you can find your place.

IS: Yes. To obtain *Auswanderungs* papers, that is, emigration papers, was no easy feat. One had to have, find, borrow, beg or steal a sponsor. A sponsor was a willing person with means to promise to be responsible for the family upon their arrival in the U.S. The sponsor was required to present a legal document and declaring his financial status to take care of the individual, not to become a burden upon the American government. Quite by coincidence did my mother find out that we had distant cousins who had come to Philadelphia in the 1880s. My parents wrote to them, and after much inconvenience to them of gathering documents, filling out tons of papers and many trips to the various official U.S. immigration offices, plus the assistance of HIAS, did we receive our papers in 1937. Having been well-established in the community, my father, fearful of what the unknown future would hold in store, procrastinated with our departure. Upon leaving Germany, we were permitted to take only a very small amount of money. Two dollars and 50 cents per person. However, we were still permitted to take a lift, a lift van of household goods, including furniture and linens. While saying our *au revoirs* to our family in Switzerland, late one evening the bell rang. My aunt opening the door to a bedraggled, unkempt cousin of ours. He had worked for a practicing rag firm. His boss had been arrested on trumped up charges. The Gestapo came to interrogate, and roughen up all the workers, office personnel, etc. My cousin decided to leave immediately. He boarded a train with the clothes on his back and the permitted 10 marks. He was frightened as to how the German customs official would let him leave Germany due to his firm's problems. Therefore, he left during night and fog. His final destination was England.

NL: Did he make it, do you know?

IS: Yes, yes, he made it to England.

NL: He did make it.

IS: And later he established himself, working for the same type of business in England.

NL: So he was one of...

Tape one, side two:

IS: Yes. I remember leaving my village at the train station. They had these, how do you call, bulletin boards that they have in Europe, and places of business had signs, large signs printed, *Juden Unerwünscht*, meaning Jews...

NL: Not wanted?...

IS: ...wanted. [she says this at the same time as Nora says "wanted". She's not correcting Nora. She means "not wanted"] Also, or it wasn't just Jews. Many of the signs were "Jews and dogs not wanted." And one of the things I recall in our railroad station was when Czechoslovakia, when the Germans marched into Czechoslovakia or previous to that, they were advertising for the fact that Czechoslovakia belonged to Germany.

NL: To Germany. Did your father ever talk about his experiences in Dachau, Ilse?

IS: Yes. He talked, talked about the way they were herded into these barracks, unheated. They were, when they, when they came into camp they were-- it had been a long trip from...

NL: Your village.

IS: Our village to Dachau, which is near München, which is a long ride in itself. Besides that, they stopped at, what should I say at different places, on...

NL: On the way.

IS: Hooked on, hooked on other trains where they had gathered other Jews.

NL: Other, other Jews.

IS: So where they latched on these trains to take the Jews to Dachau. So when they arrived, you must remember that in Europe this is November 11 we're talking about. It's already very cold.

NL: Very cold.

IS: Very cold.

NL: In winter, yes.

IS: Yeah. So they arrived and it was raining. And they hadn't eaten or drunk anything for hours and hours. They were called to line up at this parade ground, and they had to stand at attention for I don't recall the number of hours, but long hours. And then

they were what the Nazis called de-loused, which meant their hair was shorn. And their clothes were taken from them and they were given prisoners' garb, which was striped uniforms, and a number. All their paraphernalia. Nothing was left to them.

NL: They were stripped.

IS: No wallet, no wallet, no pen, or belts or anything that they felt that they would do away with themselves. The food was, of course...

NL: Atrocious.

IS: Atrocious.

NL: Yes. Was he put in a labor unit of some kind, or...

IS: They did...

NL: To carry rocks or some other senseless...

IS: Labor.

NL: He was in a labor...

IS: Digging.

NL: *Kommando*.

IS: Yes.

NL: Digging.

IS: Yes.

NL: And how long did you say he was...

IS: ...over three weeks, just about.

NL: ...forced to stay?

IS: Yeah.

NL: How did he manage to get home, Ilse?

IS: That's another thing. He, they didn't have any money, because...

NL: Yes.

IS: Whatever money the Jews had, they took away from.

NL: Right.

IS: And though the Jews tried to help each other, whoever had or they went to München, to the, and the Jewish community or...

NL: Ah, yes.

IS: If you knew someone by, as Jews still work today, thank God, helping each other.

NL: A network, yes.

IS: And so and so gave my father money and then the money was returned and helped, or if he had money, borrowed enough money, he would take another villager with him and so on, and that's how it worked.

NL: Were you able to maintain contact with people in Germany after you came to America?

IS: Do you mean Jews or non-Jews?

NL: Either.

IS: We didn't want to keep contact with non-Jews, and did not. We tried, but it was already, remember it was December '38. We got out with the last...

NL: One of the last...

IS: Safe train, so called.

NL: Yes.

IS: Among the last safe trains.

NL: Yes.

IS: So there wasn't, I do recall we had a couple of letters and post cards from my grandparents, because my uncle at that time was still in Germany and he left Germany early '39 and made it to the United States.

NL: But your grandparents...

IS: So, and those negotiations all went on after we had arrived to get him, to try to get him papers and we were fortunate enough...

NL: You were, had al-...

IS: They had already been in the workings, but...

NL: I see.

IS: We were able to hurry it.

NL: Expedite it, yes.

IS: Yeah.

NL: And your grandparents were where?

IS: In Camp de Gurs, in France.

NL: And...

IS: All, not all, but many of the southern German Jews were carted off to Camp de Gurs and Recebedou in southern France [south of Toulouse]...

NL: This was the...

IS: Where they lived under atrocious conditions also.

NL: Yes, and many perished in the camps.

IS: Yes, and one of the camps, I don't remember whether--I think it was Recebedou, was under the auspices of nuns? Am I correct in that?

NL: I guess I've never heard of it.

IS: Yes, one of them was.

NL: Is that so?

IS: Yes.

NL: Was the treatment somewhat better then?

IS: Oh yes. Yes. They were, you know, as tolerable conditions as the nuns themselves...

NL: Could manage.

IS: Could manage.

NL: These camps then were in the Vichy zone.

IS: Yes.

NL: The so-called free zone.

IS: Correct.

NL: Which had a little more autonomy...

IS: Yeah.

NL: At least until November of '42. Were there any other experiences or recollections that you think of now that you want to add?

IS: I could, yes. It's not from my village, but it's from a cousin's family that lived in the north, northern part of Germany. And she related this to me here. And I recall this because it happened only a few years ago. Cousins of hers were taken away with a small child, a three- or four-year-old child, were taken off as hostages. The woman was able to save the child by devious means, I don't know exactly how. But the child lived underground with French people, Catholics. Now they raised the child, or the woman raised the child as a Catholic. After the war, in the meantime the child had grown and wanted to know her whereabouts and so forth and so on.

NL: Her parents.

IS: And there were people in France--no, she was ready to get married, and

somehow she had gotten back to the Jewish community at this stage of the game, and she was going to marry a Jewish man. And she did marry the Jewish man. The in-laws proceeded to make ways to try to find out her whereabouts, and about her parents. And they were, in so doing, went back to where the child was born. They had written to relatives and somehow they got back to whereabouts, and found the addresses of relatives here, which was my cousin.

NL: In America?

IS: In America. But the child had an aunt in Chicago, which the child didn't know of, and the aunt didn't know...

NL: Of her.

IS: Of her being alive.

NL: Yes.

IS: So my cousin...

NL: Her mother perished?

IS: Her mother and father were taken as hostages.

NL: Oh, then they were...

IS: Yes.

NL: They were killed.

IS: And so my cousin, of course, immediately called Chicago and the aunt then made tracks to get in touch with the child, and she went to France and they were reunited.

NL: Reunited.

IS: Yeah. But I thought that was...

NL: A dramatic story.

IS: Quite a, yeah.

NL: Did you learn any more about her experiences with the Catholic family?

IS: No I didn't.

NL: She probably had to be raised as a Catholic child.

IS: Yes. Yes.

NL: But then eventually unraveled her story...

IS: Yes.

NL: So that she knew she was actually a Jewish child. Thank you very much,

Ilse. We'll try to arrange to see Fred soon so that we can add his story to this one. And thank you very much. [tape off then on] Mrs. Stamm has a little postscript that she'd like to add.

IS: I recall that *Kris*-, on Crystal Night, as I had mentioned, we had to lock up. Around 11, 12 o'clock at night, someone tapped on our shutters. And it was a gentle tap, not like the previous ones had been. And of course we were scared to death, but I suppose being women, I don't know, or just wanted to see what was going on, we peeped through the shutters, and found that it was one of my father's classmates, who had come and brought us a basket of fruit and vegetables and bread. And he kept that practice up for the three weeks that my father was away.

NL: He never came into your house?

IS: Yes. Yes.

NL: Or he did, but at nightfall.

IS: Because, only, it was...

NL: It was too risky otherwise.

IS: Close to midnight...

NL: Close to midnight.

IS: That he came every, every night. Otherwise...

NL: Oh my. That certainly was so loyal...

IS: Yes it was. But you didn't find too many...

NL: Was he in the village, or did he come from another village?

IS: No, no. It was, he had quite a distance. That is, it's quite a distance in the village. I would say it was a 15 minute, 20 minute walk from his house.

NL: So, it must have been over a mile then. So...

IS: So that he did...

NL: It represented a real...

IS: Sacrifice.

NL: Effort and sacrifice.

IS: Yes. Yes.

NL: And this happened for three weeks while your father was in Dachau?

IS: Yeah.

NL: It's so important to note that, I think.

IS: Yeah.

NL: Were there any other neighborly gestures?

IS: Not that I recall, no.

NL: People who lived next door to you, for example?

IS: No. No. Because they were innkeepers on the one side. On the other side we had Jewish neighbors.

NL: Ah.

IS: But the non-Jewish neighbors, they didn't want to know from us at all, because they were in business. And I don't know real-, and I'm sure they, they wanted to be with the party, to, for as, for nothing, if nothing else, for selfish reasons, self preservation.

NL: To be on the winning side. Do you remember any episodes at school while you're thinking back for another few minutes? Any gestures or reactions by non-Jewish children or teachers that were exceptional at the time?

IS: No I don't recall.

NL: No.

IS: Other than, no one would play with me in recess.

NL: Not a single child?

IS: Nobody. They were all afraid. All afraid.

NL: And the teacher was obviously hostile.

IS: She was an anti-, the teacher was an anti-Semite. The principal was an anti-Semite, and as many of the teaching profession...

NL: Yes. I've read that.

IS: Was...

NL: Yes, throughout Germany.

IS: All, yeah. It was a well, that was a well-known fact.

NL: Yes. Yes. Any other points that you think are...

IS: I can't think of anything at the moment.

NL: All right, if you do, we'll just add them on.

IS: Okay.

NL: So thank you again Ilse.