

Herb DeLevie: Oral History Transcript

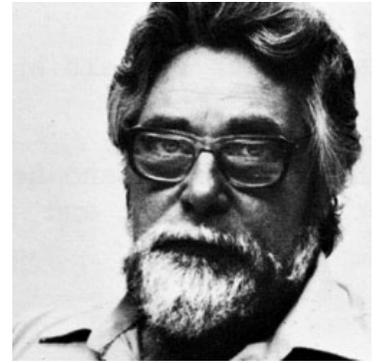
www.wisconsinhistory.org/HolocaustSurvivors/DeLevie.asp

Name: Herb DeLevie (1934 – 1989)

Birth Place: Rheine, Germany

Arrived in Wisconsin: 1950, Madison

Project Name: Oral Histories: Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust



Herb DeLevie

Biography: Herb DeLevie was born in Rheine, Germany, on May 7, 1934. His mother was German and his father was Dutch. His father's family had practiced the traditions of Sephardic Judaism for centuries. After witnessing rising anti-Semitism in Germany, the DeLevie family moved to Stadtskanaal, Holland, in 1936 to escape the growing sanctions against Jews.

In late 1940, Herb's father, a prominent business owner, went into hiding. Six months later, 7-year-old Herb, his mother, and 11-year-old sister joined him. Over the next four years, they hid in one room of a small farmhouse on the outskirts of Stadtskanaal with a large group of relatives and friends. To keep occupied, young Herb read more than 3,000 books brought by the Dutch Underground.



After liberation by a Canadian army unit in 1945, the DeLevies returned to their home. The senior DeLevie resumed his business and the family made plans to immigrate to the U.S. They left Holland in December 1949. The family resided with relatives in New York City until late spring 1950, when they arrived in Madison, Wisconsin.

Herb graduated from West High School in 1951 and enrolled in the University of Wisconsin. A chance encounter with Frank Lloyd Wright resulted in Herb's acceptance at Taliesin in May 1953, where he remained for two years. He joined the Army shortly thereafter and was sent to Korea. After his discharge, Herb settled in Los Angeles, where he worked as an architect, teacher, clothing designer, and cook, and married. His first marriage ended in divorce in 1964.

In June 1964, he married Monica Freund-Fasslicht in Los Angeles. He soon returned to Wisconsin because his father was ill. He set up shop as an architect in Madison, where his sons were born in 1968 and 1971. His second wife died in 1975 and two years later he married again. In 1976, Herb formed the Madison architectural firm of DeLevie and Associates, which he ran until his death from a brain tumor in 1989.

Audio Summary:

Below are the highlights of each tape. It is not a complete list of all topics discussed. Recordings that used only one tape side are marked: (no Side 2).

Tape 1, Side 1

- Early childhood and family background
- Family relocates to Holland
- School and Jewish culture in Stadtskanaal
- Stadtskanaal countryside

Tape 1, Side 2

- Rising anti-Semitism and the German invasion
- Family's decision to go into hiding
- Role of the Dutch Underground
- Nazis search for Herb's father

Tape 2, Side 1 (no Side 2)

- Hiding with the Drente family, 1941–1945
- Community surroundings
- Physical arrangements in hiding
- Concealing many people in one room

Tape 3, Side 1

- Security from German inspection
- Boredom, depression, and mental breakdowns
- Scarcity of food and the need for constant silence
- Support from the Dutch Underground

Tape 3, Side 2

- Religious practices while in hiding
- Close calls with German soldiers
- Germans kill Dutch Underground supporters
- Liberation by Canadian troops

Tape 4, Side 1 (no Side 2)

- Postwar life in Holland
- Herb's hospitalization for malnutrition and weakness
- Reprisals against Nazi sympathizers
- Recognition of the partisans who protected his family

Tape 5, Side 1

- Immigration to the U.S., December 1949
- Madison Jewish community's treatment of the family
- Acts of kindness from new neighbors
- Herb's high school and college years in Madison

Tape 5, Side 2

- More on Herb's University of Wisconsin years
- Training under Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin
- Korean War service
- First marriage in California

Tape 6, Side 1

- Herb's second marriage and return to Madison
- Establishing an architectural firm
- Third marriage and family life in Madison
- Contact with other survivors

Tape 6, Side 2

- Herb's reflections on American politics and culture
- Anti-Semitism in the U.S.
- Depictions of the Holocaust in American media
- Herb contrasts his experience with Anne Frank's

About the Interview Process:

The interview was conducted by Sara Leuchter during three sessions at DeLevie and Associates on March 11, 13, and 20, 1980. The first session lasted 75 minutes; the second, an hour and a half; and the last, two hours.

Although he was somewhat reticent during the first two sessions, Herb opened up considerably during the last. His gruff exterior concealed a sensitive and philosophical man. Though short, the interview is invaluable for DeLevie's frankness and ability to express how much his experiences shaped the way he lived his life. It also records a child's-eye view of the Holocaust and can be compared with the diary of Anne Frank (with whom he contrasts himself on Tape 6, Side 2.)

Audio and Transcript Details:

Interview Dates

- Mar 11, 1980; Mar 13, 1980; Mar 20, 1980

Interview Location

- DeLevie and Associates, Madison, Wisconsin

Interviewer

- Archivist Sara Leuchter

Original Sound Recording Format

- 6 qty. 60-minute audio cassette tapes

Length of Interviews

- 3 interviews, total approximately 4.5 hours

Transcript Length

- 91 pages

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Transcript

The following transcript is from the collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. It is an unedited, firsthand account of the Nazi persecution of the Jews before and during World War II. Portions of this interview may not be suitable for younger or more sensitive audiences. It is unlawful to republish this text without written permission from the Wisconsin Historical Society, except for nonprofit educational use.

Key

SL Sara Leuchter, Wisconsin Historical Society archivist
LB Herb DeLevie, Holocaust survivor

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

SL: I would just like to ask you if you could give me some of your general family background such as your date of birth, and your place of birth and the same types of information about your parents and if you know anything about your grandparents too.

HD: My name is Herb DeLevie. I was born in Rheine, in Westphalen, Germany, on May 7, 1934. We moved to Holland in 1935. My father was born in Oude Pekela, Holland, in the province of Groningen, on August 3, 1904. My mother was born in Germany and raised there. She was born in September 30, 1908. My father was a dealer in livestock. The entire family was in the livestock business or in the butcher business, or both. From my mother's side as well, they in Germany too. My grandparents were in the cattle business.

SL: What was your mother's first name and her maiden name?

HD: Hertha Salomon and my father was Nathan DeLevie. Her parents were born in Germany. I do not remember my grandmother's maiden name and from either side. My grandparents from my father's side died just before the war, within six weeks of each other. And my grandparents from my mother's side both went to concentration camp and died there.

SL: Do you recall or do you know how far back your father's family traces its roots in Holland?

HD: We can trace it approximately to the beginning of the 1600s. We came from Spain originally and the family name at that time was Levie. My grandfather's name was Levi DeLevie and I recall that his

grandfather's name was also Levi DeLevie. My father's brother's son is called Levi DeLevie, so it's kind of like the family name. In the tradition of Holland and Spanish Jews, the Sephardic Jews, if you say that you are of something, you're not. That means that if you are of Levi, you're not a [descendant of the tribe of] Levi, you're something else. So we're not Levis. I believe that in the family tree we are called from the tribe of Judah. Now that is a term that I have no idea, but that's what we've been told, what I've been told.

SL: Do you have any special recollections of your grandparents that died before the war? Tell me anything you can recall about knowing them?

HD: Yes, I recall them from both sides quite well. What type of recollections are you thinking of?

SL: What you remember them looking like, good memories that you have of doing things with them?

HD: From my father's side, the family life as far as good memories of doing it with them, family life in Holland just wasn't quite that way. The kids fended for themselves, the parents went their own way, we helped at an early age in what we had to do. I remember my grandfather's house quite well, which my father's brother ended up living in. It is in a very old part of Holland, close to the German border, like I said, in Oude Pekela. The house consisted of, how do you describe it? It is right on the street and the streets are the paved brick which is between the canal and the house. Then you have an open gutter which is right in front of the house and about a two-and-a-half-foot brick larger cobblestone-type sidewalk and then you open right into the front door. The front door of my grandfather's house opened up into the butcher shop warehouse or retail shop and immediately to the left of that was the formal living room of the living quarters. You walk straight ahead and the very first door to the left was the main kitchen and the main kitchen opened up into the barn which was behind the kitchen. There was a little space in between closed in where the chickens used to gather. To the right of walking through the butcher shop you had the actual butcher room and on the both sides of that were the bedrooms, or the bedsteads. So it was a kind of an all inclusive house. And the kitchen had a hard packed dirt floor. A real typical Dutch old farmhouse.

SL: Was it typical of the community to have the businesses as part of the residences?

HD: Those that are that were very old, traditional, yes. Obviously, in the newer establishment, in the newer towns, no. It was customary that the living quarters, in the small towns at least, were a part of the place that you did business. Either above or in back or alongside of or something like that. But not that incorporated as my grandparents' place was. My grandfather I remember as a man pretty much built like I am, stocky, broad shouldered, very heavysset eyebrows, an immense bush of hair, white and always seemingly standing on end. He was a very tough customer. If he wished that everybody jumped, nobody ever got a second chance, including my father. I remember instances where we were there in a Friday night where we used to walk from the place that we lived because we didn't ride on Shabbes,¹ if my father didn't jump far enough he'd still get up and give him a kick in the rear end. My grandmother also was heavysset, doted on my grandfather. It's like they had silent communication all the time. Was a very soft-spoken woman but also a very hard, domineering, or commanding woman. The image that I carry the strongest is the leather strap hanging in back of the door, which was for his grandchildren and an orange service set that was always standing on top of the old china dresser in the living room. The grandparents from my mother's side, I do not recall the buildings in Germany at all, were of an entirely different type. My grandmother from my mother's side was a very strong woman, small, very straight pulled hair, pulled back, very quiet-spoken but a very strong woman, very kind. My grandfather was as bald as they come, soft spoken, very easy going, and very playful. They lived with us in Holland for as long as I can remember. They were very, very kind and soft-spoken people.

SL: They lived with you in Holland in your own house?

HD: In Stadskanaal, right, where we lived.

SL: When did they move from Germany?

HD: 1936 I guess, one year after the...

¹Yiddish for 'Sabbath'.

SL: Did they move in reaction to what was going on in Germany at the time as far as the Jewish troubles?

HD: That probably was the final straw. My mother's sister wanted to go to the United States. A lot of our friends from Germany in Holland were moving to other parts of the world. My father did not want to live in Germany because he was Dutch and didn't like what was happening there. So they felt that Holland, having been neutral in the previous world war, that it would be a good place to be thinking that they were never going to war with Germany. And since the children were moving from Germany, my grandparents decided to move along with them.

SL: How is it that your father ended up in Germany? Was he there before he met your mother?

HD: Yes, he used to go to the market there in Koblenz from Holland. Where we lived, like I said, was pretty close to the German border, and from the stories that I hear my father used to be very wild and daring for his day and early age independent. He just went to make his mark in Germany as another place to go. He had met my grandfather, I guess, in one of the markets there where they would go to bring their cattle to sell and decided to stay. He was in Germany a total of maybe seven years.

SL: Now you have a sister?

HD: I have one older sister, lives in Sterling, Illinois now. She was born in 1930, on October 25.

SL: What's her married name?

HD: Edith Jakobs. She married a Dutch cattleman also. But she met him here in the States.

SL: Now you said you moved from your place of birth in Germany to Stadskanaal?

HD: That's right. First we went back to Groningen, which is a city where my father's sister lived and we were only there for about three months and then we bought a house in Stadskanaal and we lived there till we came here.

SL: And how far away was that from where your other grandparents were living?

HD: About six, seven kilometers. Nothing is very far in Holland.

SL: So you were able to keep pretty close together in the family group?

HD: In that respect, yeah. It's about twenty minutes away on bicycle.

SL: Did you have any other family members that lived in that area?

HD: My father's sister lived in Stadskanaal and they had two children. He had a sister living in Groningen who had one child and then there were a different assortment of second and third cousins that lived in the general area. My father's brother moved into my grandfather's house and my grandfather got a different house before the war, about a year before the war and they had at that time three children.

SL: Do you think you could give me a description, a physical description, of how you remember your parents looking?

HD: My parents? You mean way back when? My father had dark almost black, curly hair, usually close cropped with a part on the left hand side. He was relatively small, 5'6", very strongly built, very big-shouldered, big-chested, big-handed, very ruddy complexion. He was very gray, gray eyes, bushy eyebrows, and a big scar on the left hand side. He gave a rough impression and basically was a gruff-spoken man. My mother is about 5'4", extremely good-looking, still is. She had kind of a reddish cast chestnut hair, very dark brown eyes, slim, well-built, and usually very well-dressed. She was always soft spoken, and always acted as an intermediate between my father's temper and my sister's temper and my misdoing. She was the quiet force in between that kept peace in the family.

SL: Did you have any relatives at all or close friends in the Untied States prior to the outbreak of the war?

HD: Prior to the...close would be my mother's sister, Rose Kaufman, who had moved first to Philadelphia and then settled in New York. She was a nurse in New York. She moved here in 1937, to the States in 1937.

SL: Would you say that you had a continuing contact with her?

HD: Up to the war and then after the war again, yes.

SL: I would like, if you can, to describe what your house and your immediate surroundings looked like in Stadskanaal.

HD: We lived in a very big house in one of the side streets of the main street of Stadskanaal. Stadskanaal has the distinction of being the largest or the longest city in Holland, mainly because it just spreads

around the canal and has a few side branches. The street that we lived on was called [15:37], which is quite a mouthful. And again, the houses were built on either side of the canal with a road in between the canal and the house. We were set back a little from the road, we had a ditch in front of it which served the purpose of taking off runoff water. The house was a two-story house, was surrounded by some huge, huge oak trees and chestnut-type trees, very, very dense in foliage, and about four to five feet in circumference. We had a washed gravel walk where you came in from the street and walked around the house and the door would be on the opposite side from where you walked up to it. Walking in the front door, we had a wide hallway that was about four feet wide and immediately to the right was a bedroom which used to be a study, a library, that we had live-in personnel sleeping in my sister's bedroom for a while. Immediately to the left of the front door we had the living room where we usually spent our time. It would have a pot-belly stove, a divan, which is a kind of a sleeping couch but it's more like a bed with a good upholstery on it, a desk, some furniture, some chairs, a grouping for reading. The room was very tall, it had tall windows. It was a cheery room. That room opened up to a formal sitting room and that room was very rarely used except when we had company. The hall from the front door when you walked in made kind of like an "ell". If you went straight ahead, you went up the steps to three bedrooms that were upstairs. If you made a right-hand turn you ended up in what was the kitchen. The dining room [was] on the inside corner [of the ell] and on the outside line of that "ell" was a door that opened up into the root cellar where all the vegetables and the canned goods were kept. A outer bedroom. The bathroom, which consisted of a toilet, a sink, and a tub, but the tub had no water, you had to put the water in by pouring it in, and an indoor outhouse, which was left over from olden days, which was being used predominantly as a closet. The toilet didn't work. Then you walked out the back door. Immediately to the back, from our back door, we had a chicken coop and the barn where my father kept his cattle. It, too, had no running water and it was one of my jobs to, winter and summer, to get the water from the canal and put it into the drinking cups for the cattle so they'd have water to drink. There was a little room in

there, which was the milk house which my dad also used for the slaughtering of small animals which he kept doing when we lived there and had the opportunity. Behind the barn we had the manure piles. The manure was piled all winter long and then that was taken by horse and wagon and distributed in the fields. We had a large garden, grew most of our own vegetables, and had our own chickens. Comparative to the United States, of course, it's a small garden, but for Holland it was quite a large garden.

SL: Would you say that your house was typical of the types of houses that were in the city? You said it was larger, but as far as the barn and the garden?

HD: It would be typical for the turn of the century, late 1800s, early 1900s, more affluent people, yes. It was larger than the standard, than the average type of farmhouse or city house, town house.

SL: What you call the surrounding, of the countryside not specifically the city but the countryside, did you go out on picnics or bicycle out into the countryside?

HD: Bicycle outings, yes. Not with our parents that much. The countryside is typical Holland. Everything goes from canal to canal. Things have changed. The water levels, locks, from canal to canal. It's pretty flat. A couple times a year we would go to a different province to go swimming or to go into the Dutch prairie, de heiden. It's like a prairie flower type of thing where the soil is very sandy and you have little bluish-type flowers to grow, where you have public places to go swimming. A couple times a year we would go and do that as a family. Bicycle outings, yes, I did a lot of that. My father gave me an immense amount of liberty at a very early age and I biked through Holland four or five times in every which way, direction.

SL: Now is this prior to the war or after?

HD: Before the war, when I was seven, I made my first outing. I bicycled through Holland, which was a good four hours with bicycle. And day trips, yes. After the war I went a week, two weeks at a time.

SL: Would you characterize the countryside there, in your mind, as a really beautiful memory?

HD: Beautiful? It is a memory. Pleasant, beautiful— it's a big term. I don't know. It's just another image along with a lot of other images. I don't think that it has any real sentimental type of remembrance or even a special fondness over any other memory that I may have of something else. No, I'm not sentimental. No, I don't think there's anything really special. A few instances like you would have in any childhood, but other than that, no.

SL: I'd like to talk with you a little bit about your religious life. You had told me that your family was Sephardic and traced its roots back from Spain. How big a part did religion play in your life as you were growing up, before the war came?

HD: Traditionally a very big part. I was bar mitzvahed of course. It was tradition. If you went to shul² on Friday nights and Shabbes morning. We did not do any work on the Sabbath. We did not ride the bicycles, we did not do anything. I was permitted to go out and milk the cattle, but that was a necessity. The servants, and my mother's maid, was off on Saturdays. We did not turn on the lights, the meals would be prepared. We kept a kosher household and we observed all the traditions dogmatically. Not by understanding but by tradition. I was taught to read, not to understand. My father was the same way. He could read; he did not understand. And all of us were pretty much trained the same way. It's a very dogmatic, Orthodox, traditional following.

SL: Did you have time to attend the cheder³ or were you too young before the war to have any training?

HD: Before the war, no. After the war, the traditional preparation for the bar mitzvah is all I went through, which is just reading a little piece, and to improve my Hebrew reading and that was the extent of it.

SL: Now you said that you kept Kosher, but did you also have a Passover Seder and light the Hanukkah candles?

²Yiddish for 'synagogue'.

³ Boys' school in which rabbis provided religious instruction, especially in Hebrew and the reading of religious texts.

HD: Yes, oh yes, that right. The candles on Friday night, the separate dishes for milk and flayshtik,⁴ the total observance of Pesach⁵ by cleaning the house and moving all the chomets⁶ away, yes, right down the line.

SL: You mentioned that your mother's servant was off on Saturdays. Was she Jewish?

HD: No, but we would not employ anybody to work on the Sabbath, so she was off too.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

⁴ Yiddish for 'foods containing meat'.

⁵ Hebrew for 'Passover'.

⁶ Foods not kosher for Passover.

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

SL: I wanted to ask you if you had any members of your family that were non-religious, or if this was pretty much the way of life for your extended family too?

HD: Close family, were all pretty much the same. My father did have a cousin who lived "on the wrong sides of the tracks," that means in between our town and his brother's town. They were referred to as [khetaysin 0:30], meaning low class, and goyim⁷ and were not really part of the family. You either did like everybody else did and you behaved Orthodox traditionally, or you didn't belong. That's pretty much the way it was.

SL: You did not have too much schooling before you went into hiding, but were you ever at a secular school?

HD: Yes, I was at the equivalent of what would be the junior high here, sixth through ninth grade I guess it is. I'd started the first year before we went into hiding, and before that I'd gone to preschool for two years. I started at the age of four to go to preschool similar to kindergarten here. Grades through sixth.

SL: But you were only seven though when you went into hiding.

HD: But we started a little earlier. See, we started at four. The equivalent of what would be the sixth grade here. I had the first year of middle school before we went to hiding, right.

SL: What kind of a curriculum did you have, did you get the same education as the non-Jews were getting?

HD: At that time in Holland, yes. The moment it became a point where the Jews were considered subhuman, then you were no longer permitted to go to school, either. So before that it was a standard curriculum, the same as everybody else.

SL: Who were your closest friends at that time? Were they mostly Jewish kids?

HD: No. There were not that many Jews in the town that we lived. Most of it was our family. We lived on one end of the long canal and the rest of my family lived on the other end, so we went to two different

⁷Hebrew for 'Gentiles'.

schools. Besides myself, I believe there was only two other Jewish kids in the school that we were attending, not counting my sister, and they were both girls. I cannot recall any Jewish boys besides myself in the school before the war, or after, for that matter.

SL: So then you were friends really with Dutch children?

HD: With Dutch children, neighborhood kids, right.

SL: Did you have any type of clubs or anything that you belonged to?

HD: Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts. Both my sister and I belonged to it. We were in skating clubs. A gym club. The gymnastics is not taught in school. It is a required activity but you take it after school. So when school let out you usually went to gym three times a week and then that lasted forty-five minutes and then I also belonged to a soccer club, both before the war and then a couple years after the war. So, yes, we partook in everything, did what everybody else did, mixed in, right, and were accepted, especially before the war.

SL: What types of things would you do with your friends on weekends or if you had an evening that you would spend with them?

HD: Before the war that never came up because 7:30 was bedtime and we always had chores to do no matter what. So you played before dinner but you were home a half an hour before dinner so you could do chores. After dinner you were not permitted to go out. On the weekends, you do what any boy does. Evenings you don't go out. Occasionally, once every six, eight weeks we went to a movie in the afternoon on a Sunday. We gathered at a street corner and threw rocks or do normal mischievous type of things. Those are stories all by themselves. I was not very holy in those days and we had a reputation, or I had a reputation, that if anything was wrong in town, my father was the first one who was called because usually I was involved, pranks, these type of things. I was always a kind of a leader, was never a follower. And I managed to do my share of boyhood pranks type of thing. And that was both before and after the war.

SL: Did your parents belong to any political or social clubs before the war?

HD: None that I recall, political clubs definitely not. Social? No, I don't even recall of an adult social club in our town of any kind, other than religious affiliation. We belonged to a church and had a church gathering type of thing. No, I don't remember.

SL: Were your parents fairly friendly with non-Jews as well?

HD: Yes, you would almost have to be. The Jewish community was very small and our synagogue, which was relatively small, could seat maybe a hundred people in the High Holidays. They would draw them in from all surrounding towns, small towns, very much like a small village does here in the States. In our town, like I said, we were only three Jewish families, or four.

SL: What type of population for the town?

HD: About eight thousand. So the entire Jewish community gathering about seven small towns of equal size, would fill the synagogue, but that would be about it. So you did not have a very close interaction at all times.

SL: When did you first begin to be aware of instances of anti-Semitism before the war, and how did they manifest themselves?

HD: The...anti-Semitism, not until about mid-'40s. The Germans invaded Holland in 1940. They did not really start making their presence known in all parts until the middle '40s. The very first thing I remember is my mother crying and my father saying that he would have to make preparations to go into hiding because he felt that the Jews were going to be gathered like in Germany and there was no way out. And in the '40s is when I remember, that exactly I don't recall. I was what, six, seven?

SL: So you don't recall, when you were going to school with your playmates, did they tease you or anything?

HD: Of the Dutch, not at all, no, not before the war. Before the war, in general, the towns people were very anti-German. Our friends were very pro-friends, or pro-Jewish. No, I never felt anything before the war.

SL: In talking about the growing storm-clouds in Europe, how did you receive news of what was going on in Germany before the actual occupation of the Germans?

HD: Well, we still had friends in Germany. My mother had a lot of friends that would write, and just before the invasion of Holland my mother had some letters from people who had known friends of my mother and my grandparents that wrote us that they had been picked up and were no longer living there, that the houses were empty or occupied by other people. It started with news that they had lost their business. That they were moved out and the business was just automatically given to somebody else and then that they were loaded up and moved away. Then when the Germans invaded Holland, and especially in the southern part of Holland, the news came back that Jews were being picked up, especially the men, that retail businesses, and especially businesses like factories, like I had a cousin and her father had a tire factory in Leeuwarden that he lost almost instantly. The Germans just took it over. And he had a cousin who had a machine-part factory near Amsterdam and he lost that almost instantly after the invasion of the Germans. So those were the first indications that things just weren't going to be the same for the Jews. For us kids it wasn't that pronounced to begin with. Obviously the timing after I saw my mother cry and my father make the statement that we would probably have to go into hiding and that he would have to go before us, it was within a couple of weeks after that that the notice came out that all Jews had to wear a star. And, of course, from then on they changed.

SL: Were you ever able to pick up any of Hitler's speeches on the radio?

HD: Yes, yes, we heard them.

SL: Do you recall your parents discussing the speeches of Hitler's in which he threatened Jews? Were people in Holland taking him seriously at all before the actual start of the war, do you recall this?

HD: Only to the point where they said he was a dangerous man and until the actual day of the invasion no Dutchman thought that Holland was going to be involved. I remember the Dutch government making announcements on the radio that there would not be a draft, that there would not be any preparations to fight because Holland had declared itself neutral and was promised that the neutrality would be

respected. When the invasion came, it came so quickly it didn't last very long. One minute there was a war, the next minute it was over. The entire occupation of Holland I don't think took over a week. So that came all very quickly.

SL: Do you recall anything about the beginning of World War II and the invasion of Poland?

HD: Not aware of a very conscious daily affair, aware, no. We knew it was happening. I guess we were pretty much like everybody else. It was happening in a different part of the world, there's nothing we can do about it, we were glad we were in Holland and not going to be affected by it. Obviously at my age I had more important things to play around with than thinking about the world conditions. It's only in retrospect that I remember discussions on it and comments and fear. But not at the time.

SL: Now, the Germans occupied Holland in May, 1940?

HD: That's correct.

SL: You were living in a fairly northern section of Holland?

HD: That is correct, close to the German border.

SL: Fairly far away from Amsterdam as things go in the realm of Holland?

HD: Right.

SL: When the Germans began to make themselves known, a lot of it was going on in the Amsterdam area, or in the area of greater population there?

HD: Yes and no. Much of the troop movement came through our part of the country.

SL: The German troops?

HD: Right. The German borders of the part of Germany that we were close to was the highly industrial part of Germany and most of the tanks and trucks came from Bremen, Bremerhaven, which were close to the North Sea portion of Germany and all movement pretty much went from Groningen, which was a little further north of us, and moved southerly and easterly through Holland, and that means they had to go through our part of the country. So in that respect we saw a lot of it. There was very little initial

- action of the Germans to begin with. Everything did move towards the bigger cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Flemish part of Holland, which is closer to Belgium and where the rivers were.
- SL: It wasn't until really almost a year later that the edict came up for the Jews as far as wearing the yellow stars.
- HD: No, it was only about eight months, because in the end of 1940 we were wearing it. Mine has a date on it.
- SL: Really?
- HD: Right.
- SL: Did your father have to register the family? Did officials know that you were one of three Jewish families in the town?
- HD: Well, every nationality has its traitor, so to speak, so yes, our town had its share, and yeah, we did have to register. That's correct.
- SL: You told me in the pre-interview that then you were not allowed to attend school after a certain time?
- HD: About a month before my father went into hiding, we stopped going to school. I don't recall whether that was because we couldn't or because the abuses became too great and we just decided we shouldn't. I seem to recall that we couldn't.
- SL: Do you recall what you did during the time before you went into hiding and after you stopped going to school?
- HD: With respect to education?
- SL: Well did you have to stay in the house, did you feel like you couldn't even stay in the house?
- HD: Well, we stayed pretty much in the house. My father was around a lot. He couldn't do much business anymore. People did not want to do business with him. Yes, it was a very much a home-orientated type of thing, right. We did stay together. The family as a group, my father's brother, his sister, we were together much more often. There were a lot of discussions; we were together just about every day, right.

SL: Did you still have close gentile friends that you were in communication with who would come and see you?

HD: Yes, we still had friends. Our neighbors were still friendly. My friends that I played with in school still came over and we played, they brought homework and I still did homework at home. We still had some teachers that came by and corrected some of the work we had. That continued right up, that continued even for four or five months after my father went into hiding.

SL: What was the date that your father did leave?

HD: I don't remember the exact date. It was towards the end of 1940. I somehow seem to recall November or December in the winter of 1940, because we went into hiding in spring of 1941. It might have been as early as October, September or October, of 1940.

SL: Did you know where he had gone?

HD: No.

SL: Did it eventually turn up that he was hiding in the same place to which you eventually went?

HD: We did not know that until we saw him when we got there. No, we had no idea. We knew he had gone into hiding; we had no idea where.

SL: Your mother too did not know?

HD: I assume that she knew, but as far as we knew, she didn't know. Nobody knew as far as we knew, as far as I know or what I remember. You know something, I never asked her whether she actually did know or not. I have my doubts. I really have my doubts that she knew where he was. I'm sure that she knew he was around there, within the vicinity, but I don't think she knew exactly where.

SL: How did she explain his disappearance to you? Was it a straight-forward explanation, "He's going into hiding because we're being threatened"?

HD: That's right. "If Dad doesn't go into hiding, he's going to be picked up by the Germans and it will be the end. Sooner or later we'll join him." That's how I'm sure it was.

SL: You had mentioned to me in the pre-interview that you buried some of your furniture. Was this done before your father left?

HD: No, this was done after he left and when it became obvious that sooner or later we all had to go. When we learned that people, especially in the cities, where it first started, were being picked up, the older people and then the women and the kids, my mother started gathering things and we started burying things. Some of it was buried, some of it was given to neighbors to hide, yes, that was done a couple of months before we actually left because I remember our living rooms was empty; there was nothing there.

SL: Can you recall the actual preparations that you went through as you were getting ready to go into hiding, once you decided what you were going to do? Who helped you? And what you could take with you? And how long it took you to plan in out?

HD: We could take nothing except what we could carry, and the preparation as far as us were concerned, it wasn't there. The only preparations that I remember are things being packed away, the house being emptied and having a satchel ready, packed at all times. I did not know that we were going into hiding until the day Mom says, "Okay, tonight we are leaving", other than that, nothing. I think the primary reason was children are children, and we still played with kids and nobody knew who was to be trusted. And when the night that we were to go into hiding was decided, some man from the underground came and said, "There are going to be Jewish pickups tomorrow", whatever he said, "you have to go in hiding." And we were not able to join my father immediately, so we were hidden across the street in the barn of a farmer friend of my father's, who also had some furniture hidden. And we were in that barn for almost seven days, six days. What he had done was, within the bales of hay, a room was built, so that by removing a few of the bales you could go inside this shelter, and that's where we were.

SL: You mentioned that this was something that was being organized by the underground. Do you have any idea who those people were? Were they people that you had known at any point?

HD: No. The farmer, of course, I knew. The man who came to warn us, I did not know. This man I never saw again, who came to warn us. My mother just went across the street, apparently this had been prearranged with my father or she contacted him during the day, I don't know. But that's where we were and then when we were picked up finally to join my father, which took another three days, even though it was within the same town. The pick-ups, the razzias, as we called them— were very intense, and the Germans came back over and over again to the same houses and went over and over again with the door-to-door searches, and it lasted for about five or six days. Then one night we were told that we were going to join our father, and a man who had hidden my father came for us on a bicycle and by the back roads then, I was on the back of the bicycle, my sister was on front, my mother walked, and the man was walking the bike. We were taking the back roundabout way to get to his house and the trucks were coming again so the man left us off and we all hid in a moat, one of the many ditches in Holland, and we were there for three days before he could come back and pick us back up.

SL: You were there with no food or anything?

HD: That's right, and we were submerged in the water most of the time because the trucks were going back and forth and during the daytime of course we had to be just totally hidden, so we were breathing through straws to remain hidden as much as possible. And my mother was in between the two of us, and she made sure that we stayed where we were supposed to.

SL: Were there any door-to-door searches before you left your house? Did the Germans come into your house at all before you left?

HD: No, not to our house, no. There were door-to-door searches in certain parts of the houses, looking for men. Yes, I do recall, there was, during the day, a group of Germans that came and asked for my father but they did not even come in. They just asked, he was not there, and they left.

SL: What was it like when you finally reached the destination that you had set out for, you know, more than a week before that when you left your house? Do you recall any kind of feeling that you had, as far as feeling maybe a little safer or was it still pretty scary for you?

HD: At first we were very excited that we were going to join my father and we were very happy to see them, and, yes, it was a relief to be again in what seemed to be more or less normal surroundings. But from almost the instant that we arrived, it was a very strict rule that we couldn't talk aloud, we could not go out, we could not run. The air was very heavy— that's about the only way I can put it. Yeah, we were happy that we were back together, yes, and, yes, the immense fear and to be back in dry clothes and we had a meal again, yes, sure, it was a feeling of relief. But it was very short-lived.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

TAPE 2, SIDE 1 (No Side 2)

SL: When you finally met your father, were you at the farmhouse then in which you were to spend the next several years?

HD: That's right. We arrived at night and we were very excited and I remember running through the, to say hello to my father and running through the place which was going to be our home, and we knew it was going to be. For how long, we didn't know, but we knew we were going to be there for quite a while. And this house was a very typical farmer's helper type house. It was one building. We came in the back door; the front door, I guess, was never used. I don't ever remember it being opened. When you walked in the back door, immediately to the right was the outhouse, which was the only toilet in the place, and from there when you walked past, if you made a left turn you walked into a small barn, which contained a horse pen, a pigpen, and two cattle stalls and an opening space large enough to have a little bit of hay and one wagon. It was a very small farmhouse. That particular barn was on one side of the house, and then if you walked to the back door instead of turning left you went straight ahead you went into the main kitchen, which was also the main living room. It was a kitchen combination living room and it had two bedsteads in it. These were big closets that opened up and had the built-in beds. From there you walked straight ahead and to the left there was what was their formal living room, which also housed two bedsteads. That was to be our room. And immediately to the right of that corridor was a other bedroom, which was used for the people who lived there. It was a relatively small room. And that was the extent of the house. There was no attic and there was no basement. There was crawl space and the rafters were right up to the ceiling. There was nothing there, just a little typical Dutch farmhouse. Dirt floor in the kitchen and the barn and the room we were in and the front room had a wooden floor with about a foot-and-a-half, two feet of space underneath it when we got there. We made a trap door into that room and made a big hiding place underneath the floor, but that happened while we were there.

SL: What were the community surroundings outside the house?

HD: We were farmland, were again. There was a canal in front. Oh, about half a mile down the road you could see another farmhouse. We were the last house going out of that portion of the outskirts of town that led to the German border. There was no other houses there until you hit the German border, which was only about five kilometers or six kilometers away. So we were surrounded by fields.

SL: Were you on the outskirts of Stadtskanaal or in a different town?

HD: No, Stadtskanaal, that's correct.

SL: Had you ever seen this farmhouse before?

HD: No, no, it was a little further out than we normally would go.

SL: Who owned the place?

HD: A family by the name of Drente. A man, wife, and two daughters. He was a day laborer, very poor. He used to make his living off working on farms for people, seasonal, and running a bagger⁸ ship, which is a flat boat that would mix up turf that you burn for fuel. And that's kind of the clay material that's dried and you dig it out from the bottom of the canals or where you wet soil and you cut it like bricks, you let it dry, and then you burn it. And he used to run one of those boats that carries this kind of freight. When I say run, that means that you load the boat and the man pulls it with the rope, or you have a horse that pulls it and he drives the horse. You pull this through the canals which was quite common in Holland. So the family was very poor, the house was a very poor house, very simple, again, very low class, bottom of the scale Dutch type of living.

SL: So this man, his wife, and his two daughters were living in the house?

HD: That's correct.

SL: Who was actually there when you got to the house, were there other people in hiding?

HD: No. My father at that time was the only one and the daughters were there and the woman of the house and the man.

SL: How old were the daughters?

⁸Dutch for 'dredging'.

HD: The youngest daughter was my sister's age, so she was about four years older than I was, which would have been eleven, and the older daughter was about fourteen, fifteen, at the time.

SL: How had your father contacted this man?

HD: The way I understand it, my being told afterwards, is that my father had met the man and approached him to hide us in the case it would become necessary and it was a question of buying space, of paying for prearrangement of how much it would cost per week to hide us for the family, first for him and then for the family.

SL: Do you have any idea of how much that was?

HD: Yes, 250 guilders a week.

SL: What was that a rough equivalent into dollars?

HD: Right now, about one hundred dollars.

SL: That would include food as well?

HD: That was supposed to be room and board, which was a lot of money at the time.

SL: You seem from your description of where you lived and the type of life that you lived before, were you considered to be fairly well to do?

HD: Yes.

SL: So that your father did have that money saved or was he receiving it from someone?

HD: No, business in Holland, or especially his kind of business, was a cash business, so nothing was done by bank voucher or anything like that. So, yes, he had the money. We were a fairly well-to-do family.

SL: Did he take the cash with him when he went into hiding?

HD: A large portion of it, and then my mother brought quite a bit and I also recall that my mother gave a considerable amount to somebody, which I believe was the underground to give to my father. Yes, my father had really made the pre-preparations. I believe he prepaid for himself about a year. The way I understand, it was not immediately anticipated that we were going to go and join him— that was arranged afterwards by contacts of the underground and I'm not familiar with it. Towards the end, just

getting ahead of the story, the money was owed because we did run out or it wasn't there. The underground supplied some and then my father owed for time afterwards that he paid after the war.

SL: Do you recall if there was ever a feeling that even though you were paying for being there, that there was a possibility that this man would report you? Was there really a feeling of trusting them not to give it away? Could they be bought by the Germans in other words?

HD: The only thing I really remember is that the fear was for the daughters. I do not believe that the question ever came up that the adults would ever have turned us over to the Germans. I remember my father saying that no matter what else this Drente was, what kind of a scum of the earth, I guess he was called, he was one hundred percent Dutch and would never do anything no matter what to help the Germans, I guess. This is something that my father knew even before he approached him. Either by family tradition or by the nature of the man being rebel and antisocial and anti-everything and the class of people that they came from. But those type of people were also the backbone of the Dutch resistance, and if there's anything to be said for the Dutch, if you were an honorable Dutch, you could be trusted. All I can say is, remembering my dad saying Drente would die before he would utter a word.

SL: When was it that other people started to come in to join you in the hiding?

HD: My father's brother was the first one to come. The timing, I guess, was about two or three months where my father's brother was in one place and his family was someplace else and they couldn't stay where they were. First, my father's brother contact he made with the underground came to find out if he could be hidden with us, and I recall that being discussed. First, he came, and then within a very short time thereafter the rest of the family joined by the wishes of my uncle. Again with the agreement that, okay, a few more doesn't make any difference, it isn't going to last very long anyway. So his wife came with three children. The kids were all within one year of each other up and down. One was one year younger, one was my age, and one was one year older. Two boys and one girl. The girl was the oldest.

SL: Do you know if they were also paying to stay there?

HD: Yes, everybody paid, right.

SL: Who else then joined you there?

HD: After they had joined us was an older couple, Dalsines— they were like a second cousin to my dad— joined us. They were considerable older. He had a very bad case of asthma, and he was in his middle fifties, middle to late fifties, and they came and joined us and that was about two months after my uncle did. Then there was a family that lived with us for about four months. That was a temporary— they were only going to be there for a week. Which was a man and wife and three children again, and they stayed for about four months before they were moved elsewhere. Then a cousin from my father, a single man, came and joined us. He was about twenty-one, twenty-two, and he stayed for the duration. This gentleman took care of our education when he came. He was a teacher and or, I don't know if he was a teacher, but he had a college education, and he was the one that taught us. He stayed for the duration.

SL: Were these other people also paying as far as you know?

HD: As far as I know everybody paid their way, right.

SL: So there were a fair amount of younger children then in the house.

HD: There were five kids: my sister, myself, at one time there were eleven kids. It was a short time while the family with the three kids were there, another family came in with two kids, and then there were two kids by themselves that came, without parents, for a short period of time. They were there for six weeks, two months.

SL: Did this become a fairly usual place for the underground to bring people in?

HD: Not really, considering the amount of people that had to be hidden. I'm saying this all as if it happened all at once; it really wasn't so. The family, for about a year, it was just my father's brother and his family and us. Then after about a little less than a year, the old couple joined us. Then for four months then the single man joined us and just about the same time that family with three kids were

there for four months. For about two weeks before they left, the two kids came and joined us by themselves, and they were all removed again and put elsewhere. I have no idea what happened to them, just lost track. The nucleus of the group was for about two years the adults, the older couple, the single man, my father's brother and his wife, my parents, and us five kids. Those were the permanent residents, so to speak.

SL: And all of these people were living in that one room which was to be your room?

HD: That's right.

SL: What exactly were the furnishings that were in there?

HD: All I remember is a table and three chairs when we arrived, and that's it.

SL: Did you have pull-down beds in that room?

HD: No, those were the bedsteads. The built-in beds that looked like a closet and they looked pretty much like bunk beds except they're not double and they're behind doors and they took up one wall. We had two sets like that of two beds, which when we first got there, my parents had one and my sister and I had the other. When the other people arrived, additional chairs were brought in. Kids usually sat on the floor. We slept then with five kids in this one bedstead and the parents alternated of sleeping on the floor. When the older couple came, more people slept on the floor. When people got sick, it's another story again. I think we better call it quits 'cause I got some people coming.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1 (No Side 2)

TAPE 3, SIDE 1

SL: Do you recall when it finally was that you had more people living in that area than you could really possibly deal with, space-wise?

HD: First, it was no problem, of course, even with all the people, because everybody is fresh. Usually when you arrive you have some amount of supplies of some kind, whether it be food, something to read, these type of things. The biggest problem at first was the children, to keep them quiet and from fighting, and you played games and you did odds and ends to keep occupied. So the first five, six months were no problem. Then the little bickering began. Each group as they arrived had a different source of the underground and depending what the source is your supplies would be different. So what everybody got would not necessarily be the same as far as food and clothing or whatever the underground would bring in or be able to bring in. The first six, seven months, eight months weren't too bad. We were told to be absolutely quiet, the children were, my father insisted I learn how to draw and he stood behind me with a stick and made me draw, copy things, whether it be a bird or a building or a tree or draw a cow or whatever it was. And we had sufficient games to amuse ourselves with for the first period of time. Also the first months, not knowing how long it was going to be and having been separated for some time, there was a lot to talk about. After a while, the talking ceased and the nerves began to set in. The food became more scarce, small illnesses began— you know, small colds and you couldn't cough so you coughed in a cushion. And privacy became an irritant— going on the potty in the room, you know, people became a little pickier. Everybody became a little more on each other's nerves. One of the main sources of irritation was the older couple that joined us. The gentleman had asthma. He'd be burning something in a little cup that would smell up the whole place and be coughing like to clear your throat and his asthma condition and that would be done in a tent because it had to be kept quiet. The biggest problem was that he had a source where he would get— the biggest argument I remember was that after he'd been there about six, seven months he got a couple of eggs from one of his sources and my father felt that the eggs should be cooked— this

happened a couple of times— and they would eat the egg, this older couple, and us kids would be watching. And my father was kind of temperamental anyway, so he lost his cool one time and said, "The least you can do is give the kids the egg instead of eating it yourself." And that led to a big argument with the result being that we got, in turn, first was the youngest, which was my cousin, got a little top slice of the white, and he ate that, and the next time there was an egg we all had the rotation. It was this type of a thing that became a very great irritant. Also, the other kids became very bored. They were not as self-involved, I guess is the word, as I was. I did a lot of reading. There were always plenty of books, and if I'd read them once I'd start over again, and I was drawing and I enjoyed it. None of the others did. This period was all before the single gentleman joined us. After about nine months that we were there, this younger man joined us. Just before he arrived my aunt had a nervous breakdown and just about the same time that she had a nervous breakdown, the SS decided that there should be a watch at the road that went past the place that we were in hiding, and they set up a permanent watch to check everybody going back and forth there because they decided there was smuggling going on from Germany into Holland, whatever it was. So now we were faced with having two Germans sitting by the back door who often came in for coffee in the one room, and when they were there, of course, we couldn't even as much as whisper.

SL: Was that room visible to them in the house?

HD: The room that we were in? They would sit in the main room, which was the kitchen/dining/living room for the people, and we were in the next room over. It was visible if the door was open and you could see two doors leading from the corridor. Luckily they never really went in because the people we were hiding with were kind to them, so to speak. Also the owner, the man, had gotten a job working for the Germans and the older girl was dating some of the Germans and working as a secretary for them and they were generally considered by them as being traitors and being supportive of the Germans and against the Dutch. So they were treated by the Germans as more or less special people, which made it a little easier for us because they were not considered a risk anymore. The first real illness was the

nervous breakdown of my aunt, which lasted for almost two or three weeks. I remember her having to be tied to the bed because she wanted to move around and wanted to get out and my mother and her husband and my father putting a pillow over her head so nobody would hear her screaming and so on, and right after that my sister had a nervous breakdown, wanted to get out, wanted to kill herself, and while she was having that, the oldest girl of my father's brother ended up with the measles and that became the biggest fear, fear of the different sicknesses and how to treat it because there was just nobody you could call in so you did the best you can. Luckily things worked out. But these things added that much pressure to it at the same time the food became scarcer. It was harder and harder for the underground to come in and supply on a regular basis, and of course the people who were hiding us could not go in and purchase sufficient food to feed that many people without asking questions. So we basically, at that time, started and continued to have a steady diet of brown beans with no meat and water, and that lasted for just about the duration. Occasionally we had a little piece of spek, which is pork fat. And when I say little piece, it would be about a centimeter square and we'd work on that little tidbit at a time. After we were there about nine, ten months, just about when my sister was so bad, this single gentleman joined us, and there was a lot of discussion as to whether we wanted him or not and it was decided that we would take him in because he was more educated. He was a second cousin of my father, and he would then educate us and keep us busier with schoolwork, which is the way it worked out to begin with. However, at first he slept on the floor like everybody else, but he got close to the oldest daughter and ended up sleeping with her.

SL: The oldest daughter of the family?

HD: The oldest daughter of the family. That's getting ahead a little bit, after he'd been there for about four months he started sleeping with her and nine months later she had a baby, which everybody said was an SS baby, but this caused some additional crises because now this young man was living more or less with the family and eating better and sleeping better than the rest of us. He was still teaching us, but now he was treated more or less as the husband of the older daughter. During that entire thing,

the discussions that went on about this, the arguments, the discussions or fights my father and his brother had with this fellow, Benny, were very severe from the standpoint of "How can you do this at times like this, number 1. Number 2, you're Jewish, she's just a shiksa,⁹ how can you? You lower yourself." You know, "What about your parents' memories," etc, etc. Just before the baby was born my mother came down with a nervous breakdown, and that lasted for about thirty days. In between that time the Dalsines, the older couple, were offended by the different problems we would have and the older man was feeling kind of sickly but they had gotten to the point that they would just sit in a corner and hang a sheet around them and didn't want anybody to approach them. That was their corner, they wouldn't talk with anybody, they wouldn't share with anybody. They'd get books to read they wouldn't share. They got very impatient with the kids and apparently we got on their nerves like they did on everybody else's nerves, and they would begin to hit out at us and then my father would get back at them and it got to be a very stilted free for all. That was the general atmosphere, and it pretty well continued. Every adult during those three years was ill and three of the children. I myself stayed healthy and so did my, the oldest cousin. Occasionally there were notifications. Oh, just about once a month, every six weeks, of house-to-house searches. And depending on how or who was conducting these, we would either hide underneath the floor in a hiding place that we had dug out or go out in the field at night and hide out there. And sometimes we were out there for four or five days not knowing when.

SL: Were you being fed at all at that time?

HD: No, no there was no way to do that because we had to sneak out when the Germans were either being kept occupied or would not be there for a short period of time and then they would reappear and we'd have to wait until they leave. At one time we were out there I think for twenty-two days. This was during the fall and we ate the corn that was there and grass and whatever we could find, drank the water that was running through the little moats that are very plentiful in Holland. Actually, there was

⁹Yiddish for 'non-Jewish girl'.

never a house search at this place, so even though we took the precautions, as it turned out, the house was never searched. Once very superficial— somebody came in and when they recognized that the man was working for the SS, they just said, "Well, how are you," had a cup of coffee, and left. The day-to-day stories are pretty much a repeat of the generalization. I can't remember all the little fights and all the little things, but the general atmosphere was one of this kind of fear, nerves being shattered, weakness because of lack of food and lack of exercise, and a continuing feeling of helplessness as time went on and on.

SL: How is it that you received advance notification of these searches?

HD: Because he worked for the SS. So, since he worked for the headquarters, which happened to be in our house, they had occupied the house that we lived in as the SS headquarters, since he worked there he would hear or see the bulletin or know that this was going to occur.

SL: Did this man spend any time in your previous house there in Stadtskanaal?

HD: Oh yes.

SL: Was he able to bring anything out to you? You mentioned reading material.

HD: No, no, he never brought anything except the kind of a thing— he was sort of illiterate. So his daughters would bring. But the underground, when they did come, would come in with thirty, forty books at a time.

SL: How would they bring them in, in what manner?

HD: In the evenings by prior arrangement, by leaving them on the boat that this man had anchored in front of the house and this man then would go out and bring them in. Occasionally they would bring it in themselves. A few times medicine had to be gotten and this man would know who to contact and somebody would bring it. It was never the same person; it was always somebody different who would do this. I only, on two or three occasions did I actually see the person who brought something.

SL: What types of reading material would you have there?

HD: You name it. I went through an entire library from children's stories to philosophy, geography, you name it. I must have read over three thousand books in that period of time, most of them twice. And to this day I can pick up a book I haven't read, but if it's an older book and I read it and I know I've read it but I just don't remember where, you know, the particulars of it. Yes, anything, anything that was printed we read. Didn't make any difference.

SL: Were you doing more reading than most other people?

HD: Yeah, I think so. The oldest daughter from my father's brother, Ome¹⁰ Benny Salomon,¹¹ did a lot of reading. But my sister didn't do a lot of reading, she couldn't concentrate, and my younger cousin was too young and the other, who was closer to my age, just didn't— he read some, but he just couldn't get interested the same amount. He had to be amused more and I was, by my nature or because I actually did like to read or became interested.

SL: Was it after a time that you found some sort of solace in putting your thoughts into something else?

HD: As an escape? I would assume so. There is no doubt that— what was there to do, you know? You either sit and do nothing, you either get into an argument about who was using what for that time, toys were being destroyed, you get sick and tired of playing Monopoly. And besides my drawing, which I liked because I was good at it, and the reading, there was nothing else to do. And this was twenty-four hours a day. You can only sleep so much and after a while you can't sleep, you can't move around, there's really no place to stretch out, you can stand in the corner, there's not sufficient chairs to go around, what do you do? You do what you can.

SL: You mentioned the lack of physical activity. Was there anyway in which you could get any amount of exercise, whether it just be pacing around?

HD: How do you pace around a small room filled with that many people? When we first were there, yes, we did some morning calisthenics and so on but after a while there's just no way. There's too much stuff

¹⁰Dutch for 'uncle'.

¹¹This appears to be his mother's brother— he misspoke.

laying around, you know, your bunks, even though you roll them up and put them aside during the day, you still six, seven adults and five kids and a small confined place and there's just no place to move.

SL: The daily routine that you established once this single man came in that acted as a tutor, was there actually a routine that you would follow with him there to kind of put some order into the day?

HD: To some degree. We continued to get up when it got morning because people got up, you woke up, and you had to go to bed when it got dark because you couldn't afford to have a light be seen from the outside. So we had some flashlights and some candles but basically you could not do much at dark. So the daytime hours was the only good time to do something. In the morning we had a wash basin, we washed ourselves. The pail of water was brought in usually, and then we had whatever breakfast there was, whether it be a piece of bread or leftover beans or whatever was there, and then we would study or read or whatever. So we had a couple of hours of what was called quiet time. The education, because of the different ages, was very general, and this fellow was fairly good in math and the languages but the other things didn't amount to that much. So what we ended up doing is discussing the books that we read and whatever we got out of the library and this was done for a couple of hours a day. It first it was much more intense. You'd do two, three hours in the morning, two, three hours in the afternoon. But the fellow couldn't take it and us kids couldn't take it and the parents couldn't take it because this was something that they could not, they had to be quiet while we were doing this because they couldn't go anywhere either, and they got bored with it, and it got on their nerves. So it became much more on a one-to-one basis where you could quietly sit in the corner and do something. So that way everybody got an hour, two hours a day, but not at the same time.

SL: Do you recall what exactly you studied besides the math?

HD: Exactly? Math was organized. We studied philosophy, discussed philosophy, and that was based on the books that were available. Geography was an open discussion as to what everybody knew about the world. You played games like naming the countries of the world and their capitals, the biggest

river, the biggest mountains, and these type of stuff and had an atlas and we looked them up, these type of things. The physics and biology were again— outside of the basics, were based on what we could understand from the books that were coming in. Some of the concepts were very far out and some of them were totally erroneous. A formal line of education wasn't there after the first six months, because basically we had exhausted what he knew because of the concentration. I mean it was an ideal learning situation if you had the mental ability, and the mental ability is very surprising, but the power of concentration is very, very difficult. It seems to become less and less even though you have nothing else to occupy your mind. It seemed that your mind is so pre-occupied with your physical discomfort and the negative vibrations, I guess is the modern word for it, that float around you that you're constantly a bundle of nerves. Every sentence you have to read twice and nothing seems to stick, and that was the case in almost all of us.

SL: You had to be afraid because there were people constantly in the house?

HD: That's right and it was a very small house. Everything could be heard, like you could hear everything that happened in the kitchen and you never knew who would be coming in. It was just established. You talked in a whisper. If somebody was there you didn't talk at all.

SL: Could you tell if someone was there in the kitchen?

HD: You could hear them come in, yes, and like I say, you could hear almost everything. So, yeah, we talked in a whisper. When I say whisper, it was a whisper. You could not cry. If you were punished and you cried, your head was stuffed in a pillow. If you were in pain, if you had stomach cramps or any kind of a pain, whether you're an adult or not, sound was something that just could not be made. The rule was adhered to. It was necessary.

SL: It's interesting that you mentioned punishment, that you were punished you when you cried. How successful was the family in keeping some sort of a family situation where the parents still had a role as parents?

HD: Well, your parents remained your parents. The problem was more so as to the overriding what the other adults would say to the kids that were not theirs. My father and his brother were very close all their lives, but for my uncle to say something to me, that was like waving a red flag in front of the bull. Especially after a while, "How dare you pick on my children, you know— look at your own," and vice versa. So everybody kind of did their own thing and everybody was afraid to go over a mark of crisscrossing. You had to keep some kind of discipline. My father was fairly well in charge for most of the time because he was the strongest, the strongest willed, and that of course led to arguments also. But he still was the strongest and he did lay down the rules and kept them enforced and that, too, was necessary because without it we never would have made it either. Everything kind of interlocks. You do what you have to. You face the circumstances and you must live within it or leave it. And if you're leaving, you know, all right. We didn't because we felt the choice was not really there.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1

TAPE 3, SIDE 2

SL: Did you have any type of religious practices at all that were going on at this time, to keep up any kind of holidays or anything like that?

HD: Yes, we did. As a matter of fact we daven¹² every morning as part of the, something to do. Yes, we kept the holidays the best we could, at least observed them by name. The religious practices, the davening, mornings, evenings, doing Shabbas¹³ services, filled time, therefore they were done. Religion was discussed quite a bit, again as a time-filler. The big problem was that nobody that was with us knew much from anything because all of us, my parents and us kids, were too young to know much and my parents were also educated by indoctrination. My father could read, not well, he knew what to observe, what was the proper thing to read, but not a word was understood. He had a couple of tefillin¹⁴ that were translated in German and Dutch but everything was Hebrew to Hebrew so it was just a question of reading and no way to understand what you read and recalling what it was about because of their prior education. It was quite limited. It was more a dogmatic adherence to tradition, which we did.

SL: Did you have a menorah or any physical object of a holiday?

HD: No, except for the tefillin, we had some tefillin, a few.

SL: Do you recall discussing what was happening to you on a theological sense, as far as the existence of God in your own particular situation, where it was so bad for you and so bad for other Jews?

HD: No, I do not recall. Nobody in my family, at the time, was philosophical-oriented, a very practical, day-to-day people. No, God was something that, as far as my father was concerned, was something to be accepted. We were Jewish, that was something to be accepted. What was happening to us is

¹²Yiddish for 'pray'.

¹³Sabbath.

¹⁴Yiddish/Hebrew for 'phylacteries', but that doesn't make sense here. Does he mean tefillah (plural, tefillot), which is Hebrew for prayer?

something, was a fact of life you did not question as to the righteousness of it. No, I do not recall any of those kind of conversations at all.

SL: Going back to your discussion of the Nazi searches, you had mentioned that there was an underground, some sort of cellar or something that you dug out under the floor and you mentioned that it really wasn't there when you got there.

HD: It was pretty much like here when you have a wooden floor built over earth. So it was about a foot-and-a-half of space there to begin with and during the first few months that we were there we dug it out and put the sand in buckets and that was then carried out at night by the man or placed on top of the earth in the barn, which had an earth barn which happened to be right alongside of it. You asked previously if we ever got any exercise, and on a few occasions we were in the barn and we could run back and forth. But now you're talking about thirty feet because it was a very small farmhouse. I remember in all the time we were there, there were two occasions when you were permitted to scream, except we couldn't. But we could try to scream and to let out our voices in the, and this was even true at the end. That was after the invasion of France, as a matter of fact it was at a time when we thought that Holland was going to be liberated very quickly and instead it lasted another six months where they were stopped in front of the Rhine in southern Holland. But in those times we started to run a little bit more because there was less fear because the Germans were on the withdrawal and we knew it was just a question of time. Matter of fact, at that time we thought it was going to be a matter of days. As it turned out, it was another six months.

SL: Did you have to hide down under that false floor on occasion?

HD: We did.

SL: All thirteen of you in there?

HD: Yeah, yeah. At one time there were all sixteen of us in there. Yeah, I guess there were a few dozen times that we went down there. A few times my mother was down there in order to keep it quiet, when you couldn't keep it quiet enough, they lowered her down there so that she would not be heard so

much from upstairs. A few occasions we ended up using the other room where the other couple slept in order to help out with the sleeping arrangements when too many people were sick to be in one room and that then became a sick room for a few months at a time to get, to have some separation. But, yes, we used it. The one thing we never did use was the hiding place under the shed, which was a hollow turf unit that we built just in case we got no place else to go we could go in there and hide and let the ship float down the canal. But we never used it.

SL: Now this situation that arose with this single man and the daughter of the family there, the Germans since they were there quite a bit knew that there was a baby in the house. Did they have to think of some way to explain this baby to the Germans.

HD: We explained it as being from one of the SS, one of the soldiers. Which served two purposes; the girls were left alone, and because now a German officer was a father to one of the children. It was accepted because she was working at the Gestapo headquarters so it was taken for granted that, yes, more than likely she was pregnant by a German officer.

SL: Did he sleep in the room where you were hiding while she and the baby were in their part of the house?

HD: The baby and he were in their part of the house. They slept in one of these closet bedsteads that opened up off that room most of the time. He would sneak into our room when somebody knocked on the back door to come in. But otherwise just about 95 percent of his time, especially in the last year of the hiding, was spent with the family, which again led to a lot of arguments because he was getting, eating, things that we were not. And the big argument was that he should have had enough sympathy for the children to not eat it and bring it in because we weren't getting anything and everybody was weak and the kids came first as far as everybody else was concerned.

SL: How was he accepted by that other family, did they resent him?

HD: Not really because to them it was a step up the ladder. They now would be admitted to a different social standing because, after all, at the end of the war they were going to be rich and they would now have a means as a stepping stone to become more socially accepted.

SL: Were they going to be rich because of all the money that was going to them?

HD: That's right. So it didn't work out that way, but that's what they anticipated.

SL: Did you manage to keep abreast of the war news as it was progressing, or how did you keep in touch with...

HD: The man that lived there had a radio that we listened to once in a while, so we did hear whatever news was being given. But this was controlled news. Occasionally, whenever the books were brought or something like this, we would get updated news from the Underground. But it was sketchy and nothing you could really count on because the news that would be coming back from the people who were hiding us was very controlled. So you could never know.

SL: Were there any newspapers that you could take a look at, even controlled newspapers, that you could get access to?

HD: Yes, the newspapers that the man would bring home, we would get to read.

SL: There was an underground newspaper in Holland.

HD: We only saw that whenever the Underground would come in with something and, as time went on, this became less and less because things became more difficult. There were less of them, people were picked up, and less people to do the job.

SL: Did you become friendly with the people who came in from the Underground or was it always someone different who brought you things?

HD: It was always somebody different, yeah. One man, the first...this is backing up a little bit, one of the men that, the every first one who came bring us books, was the same man that we had seen beaten up by the Germans before we went into hiding. We heard later that again he'd been beaten up and beaten to death. He was a real rebel and he was considered a Jewish sympathizer even before they

went to pick up all the people, and after we were told to put on the stars, the Jews that were in the area normally had to go and watch what they called disciplinary action by the Germans. And the kids always had to be in the foreground. So any beatings or anything that was done were done on a public display type basis. This was the man that first would come and then afterwards he disappeared and nobody else I remember.

SL: Was there ever a visit from anyone you knew?

HD: Not that I knew, no. There were some people that came that my father knew. But not that I personally knew.

SL: That knew that you were hiding there?

HD: In the house? No, I don't think so.

SL: So your father knew of them but they did not know that your father was hiding in the house?

HD: That is correct. As far as I know, nobody knew that we were being hidden there. No one, except a few people in the Underground.

SL: Because there was this contact in the town with the daughters that were working there and even this man, did they, did you ever ask them what the talk was in the town about what had happened to the rest of the Jews, or what had happened to your family?

HD: Nobody was sure. It was a general feeling that we were in hiding someplace, although it was observed that our grandparents were loaded into trucks and hauled away. But nobody had observed us being loaded. So therefore it was assumed that we were in hiding. Nobody knew for sure. But afterwards a lot of people said, yes. Nobody in town, per se, would talk to the man who was hiding us because, after all, he was a German sympathizer. A citizen of the town who had no regards for the Germans absolutely had no regard for him because after all he was Dutch working for the German, and there was nothing worse than that. I mean, that was worse than being German. So the daughters had a very tough time in school, the youngest daughter especially. And it was quite remarkable that nobody ever said anything because they took a tremendous amount of abuse.

SL: Was it felt that his working so closely with the Germans was really part of his way of being able to keep this secret about hiding you?

HD: This was decided really by my father and everybody that this was the best way to keep the Germans off our backs, to keep everybody safe. Because, after all, the Germans would not think that a German sympathizer would be hiding Jews. And he made it known he hated Jews and he was very volatile every opportunity. He was considered a real, real traitor. After the war he was one of the very first ones picked up in order to be punished. And when it turned out that he had been hiding us, of course he was made one of the leaders as to the disciplined people who had truly been German sympathizers. And that's an entirely different story again.

SL: I wanted to ask you if you can recall some of the thoughts that you had when you would just think about, what was happening to you, what you would daydream about, what you would...if you had a plan for the future that you would have when you got out?

HD: The overwhelming thought with myself that remains as to the biggest desire was to run and scream. And when that opportunity came, we couldn't do either— we couldn't talk and we couldn't run. But that was the biggest thing— to be able to run and make as much noise as you wanted to. That and food. But running and noise and not have to be quiet were the overwhelming things. What my parents felt, I don't really recall many discussions on that. The energy it took to live from day-to-day was too great and too demanding to really daydream and if those discussions were there, and I'm sure they were, I do not remember.

SL: Do you remember having a fear in your own mind what would happen to you if you were discovered? Did you know what was happening to Jews?

HD: Yeah, we knew. For myself, there was a fear. The fear that was instilled in us was sufficient to make us keep quiet. In my sister's case, the fear was so great that she slept with a knife and you didn't dare wake her up by touching her because you'd be stabbed. There'd be no ifs and or buts about it. That lasted for years after the war, too. She was four years older and I'm sure had a much deeper

understanding of actually what was happening than I did. All our kids knew that something terrible was going to happen and that everybody was going to die and that the death was not going to be pleasant. But at seven, eight, and nine the word death is something that is a word and doesn't really have the impact, I guess, as when you're older.

SL: You were the only person who did not suffer a mental collapse?

HD: Myself and my cousin, right.

SL: The youngest cousin?

HD: Right, right.

SL: Was this something that was repeated, were you likely to have another collapse at a certain point, or once you passed the barrier it didn't come to that again?

HD: There were minor flare-ups afterwards. There were many, many minor flare-ups before a final collapse. Especially in my mother's case, I recall it the best, it seemed to go on for months before she finally collapsed where she was too weak to stand, too weak to go to the potty by herself, too weak to get dressed. The biggest thing was no desire, no will to continue, and to reestablish this will. Even if you get over the hump, the will does not come back so easily. So each time that something happened, you're left a little weaker and my mother came out of it pretty good. My aunt came out of it very good. The old couple, the man that had a collapse, never came out of it, and he eventually died after the war. But he never came out of it. His wife never had a collapse. But then she was so self-centered that we figured that it could never happen anyway. The biggest contributing factor was the overall weakness that everybody had. You had no, you had nothing to draw anything from anymore after a period of time. Especially in the last, well not the last six months, but the six months before the invasion of Holland. It was just like a day-to-day coasting. When the news came of the invasion, by the time that we had the news of the Normandy invasion, they were already in Belgium and then the next news was they were already in Holland and we figured that at this pace they'll be there within a

week. Then they were stopped, but now there was hope. I mean, here was freedom so it was like a resurgence of everything and no matter what happened, we were going to make it.

SL: Was that then the topic of conversation then to...

HD: Absolutely.

SL: How did that news get to you?

HD: This came at first from the man who was hiding us and then an underground person came in again. As a matter of fact, at one time, when we heard that news we were already packing up ready to go and we thought the Germans were leaving and then it turned out that they were reinforcing and more Germans came in. So we had to go back in, and that lasted another five-and-a-half months...

SL: I suppose that, I know that you can talk for ever and ever about what, there are certain stories that happened while you were in hiding. I wanted to ask you about some major points, and I don't want to carry it on forever because I do want to talk about also some other things that had happened to you. I would like to move on to the circumstances of your liberation, however if you feel that there's something that you want to add that we didn't cover...

HD: Generally I think we have, generally covered it. You're right there are many, many instances and as I talk it will come back to me. The actual liberation was that the Canadian tank division had arrived in one part of our town and they were held up, we were canals, our town was predominantly made of canals and bridges, and the canal where we were in hiding was one of the major canals that went into the Stadtskanaal main fare and this had a big bridge on it. The bridge was blown and when we heard that the Canadians were at this bridge we figured that it would only be a matter of moments. For three days they couldn't cross that bridge and then again the man who was hiding us told us that the Germans were packing up and leaving. That's when we packed up and went to the point where we felt we could make contact with the Canadians, and we were ready. We took the bicycle, left all these people a couple of bicycles, and we packed what little we had and us kids were going to run out except we couldn't. And we were going to scream and we couldn't. We had to go about two kilometers

up the canal and we couldn't make it. We met some people we knew about the last quarter kilometer and they practically carried us to where the Canadians were, but the bridge was gone and we could see the Canadian tanks. So the Canadians had a raft and they came and one-by-one took us to the other side and that was the actual liberation. It took another four days before the Canadians actually were able to cross this particular stretch of canals and secure our city and the rest of Holland.

SL: They took everyone who had been in the house across, one-by-one?

HD: That's right, that's right.

SL: Do you remember what day this was?

HD: Truthfully, no. My birthday keeps coming to mind, but it was later. I think it was June of 1945.

SL: That was quite late, then, much later than the actual, in terms of people who were liberated from the camps in Eastern Europe.

HD: Yes, like I said, my birthday's May 7 and it keeps coming to mind. Normally when people ask me I say the first of May, but I keep knowing that it was after my birthday and I think it was right around the first of June.

SL: Were birthdays something that you celebrated at all, something special?

HD: No. What could you do, what could you give? You were wished a happy birthday and let's hope that next year at the same time you're free. It was that kind of thing. Ah, no.

SL: Were the Canadians surprised to see you in a certain way? Did you look as if you had come out of some sort of ordeal?

HD: Yes. We were put into a Red Cross hospital almost immediately. I remember my feet were wrapped because from the walk they were totally torn and my legs couldn't support me, couldn't support any of us. The old couple did not come out with us because they couldn't walk, and I believe my aunt couldn't make it either. They were picked up later. But the rest of us all went out at the same time. Yeah, they were very surprised, although a lot of them had run into it before in that trek across. Yes,

they were surprised and they didn't expect it, but at the same time, from what I understand later, is that they had picked up a lot of other people in the same circumstances.

SL: Could you communicate with them ? Did you speak any English at all?

HD: No, no. What is there to communicate? You get a big hug and I remember getting a candy bar and... No, but then you didn't need to communicate. They could see with their faces that it was worth it to them, and what we felt, I can't really describe.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 2

TAPE 4, SIDE 1 (No Side 2)

SL: You mentioned that once you got to the Canadians you spent some time in a hospital situation, were you treated for anything specifically or just, they were just trying to nourish you?

HD: No, we were all— malnourished, I guess is the word. We were treated for malnutrition, weakness in the muscles, general speech coordination. We had to immediately learn how to talk again to use our vocal cords. So the first ten days was predominantly spent in getting strength back, getting proper nourishment so that we put a little more color in our face. During that time, the man that was hiding us was put in charge of the traitors to clean up our house. The way that was done, was that they had to... We used to go out and watch because as we were getting our house ready again, this was very exciting. We watched the people weed with their teeth because that's what he made them do and they couldn't use any hand, a fork, a eating utensil. And they had to clean the windows with a toothbrush. He made them do it because now he was getting back at some of the people and the abuse that he was taking. The whole house was being made ready again, cleaned up and so on. Our furniture came back, was being dug up. People brought things back. A lot of the neighbors had taken things that we were not able to hide and brought it back. One of the biggest incidents was a cat that reappeared. Before the war, before my father went into hiding, we had a great big black cat that appeared one day and we had a lot of cats, and we had dogs, we had everything. This cat was a very independent cat. He just made himself at home no matter what, and was just a big, black, ugly, cat. And my father once took this cat, because my mother didn't like it, took it out in the country on the back of his motorcycle and left it. A couple weeks later the cat appeared again. Then he decided to drown the cat and he put it in the sack and threw it in the canal and that afternoon the cat was basking in the sun. Then he tried the same thing again by putting it in a sack, tying the legs and putting rocks in it. And that cat appeared again. So my dad says, "That cat is here to stay." We were gone for three-and-a-half years. According to the neighbors, the cat disappeared the day the Germans came in and when we

came back that cat was sitting on the picnic table in the back yard. And that cat lived till about a year before we came to the States, when it died. So a peculiar incident with cats.

SL: What was the reaction of the townspeople when they finally learned that Drente, who had been jailed as a traitor, had saved you?

HD: I guess the word is they honored him. Surprisingly, at first very little was said. He was respected automatically, that did change. He did buy a new house. People had a lot more respect for him, this did change. But surprisingly enough, the true recognition didn't come— the man died seven years ago and it wasn't until two years ago that a questionnaire came here to the States where the Dutch were honoring this family. The lady was still alive and the children, of course, were alive. It wasn't until two years ago where they actually erected a plaque because this man— the eleven of us, had saved more people in our town than anybody else. As a matter of fact, he is the only one in our town who had hidden anybody and it was to this date. My father afterwards with the rest of the Jews that came back had a memorial put up for him and set up a trust for the kids to be taken care of. We remained friends and saw them often. But like everything else, you know, one year, another year, another year, you go your separate ways again. Real recognition was not given to anybody really for the acts of heroism that they performed. The family that hid us was no exception, I guess, with the exception of a day-to-day respect that they gave him. But the Dutch are very non-demonstrative and they didn't go out waving the flags and doing things. There was one, well the mayor of the town or the equivalent made a speech at a gathering when we all came back and we all took our houses back. He was honored and given a plaque from the city as being an honorable citizen and these types of things, but that was about the extent of it.

SL: What did your house look like? Had it remained intact or had they stripped it of most of your possessions?

HD: The possessions weren't there anymore except for what the neighbors took out before they moved in and everything else was gone. The house basically was still intact. No rooms were changed or anything like that. The rest of the house was still there.

SL: What was the reaction of your neighbors when you got back?

HD: Basically they were happy to see us. The neighbor that hid us across the street before we went into hiding of course knew that we were in hiding and were very happy to see us. It was an older couple that lived next to us. Everybody was very pleased and they said, "We didn't know that you were in hiding. We felt you were, we didn't know you were town. Surprise, surprise." The general reaction of the adults was very good. The reaction of the kids was very cruel for about a year afterwards. We were very weak and couldn't defend ourselves in any shape or form, and the kids would pick on us and call us dirty Jews. The years of indoctrination by the Germans obviously left their tolls on the kids and it took a while to get rid of it. In our case, in my case, I was the biggest of the Jewish families that came back, the biggest in build, and a gym teacher took it upon himself to teach me how to box and give me physical exercises daily to strengthen my legs again and the feet and so on. The first six to seven months after we went back to school, there wasn't a day that we didn't get picked on or I didn't get beat up. Then for the next four months I slowly but surely paid everybody back. I waited for them, I made it a point to get them alone or get them to where I could handle them, and handle them I did. Some of these things were pretty bad on my part and today I wouldn't do it, I wouldn't advise my kids to do it, but it got the respect back and after that everything was fine and back to normal.

SL: These were some of the kids who had been your friends from before the war?

HD: Some of them. Most of who were bigger kids that were in the upper classes that might have been ten or eleven when we went underground and, therefore, not my friends, and had been in the Jeugdclub, the German youth organizations and felt it was only proper to do this. And of course at home they wouldn't— just to be told this isn't proper anymore doesn't get rid of it. But like I said, slowly but surely I managed to gain the respect back. And my cousins who lived in town were proportionally

much smaller than I am and much more timid, so I fought their battles and my battles and, like I said, I didn't do it very pleasantly. A few instances: one of the neighbor kids that was two years older than I was, he beat me up one time, about the first, second week we were back at the house. It was seven months later that I spotted him working in the garden next door and I just took a regular steel rake and planted it in the top of his head. I mean it took me seven months but I did it. I noticed a guy fishing and I'd push him in the water and hold him under. One time when I really had my strength back and knew what to do, I waited for a group of them to come back from gym in school, and our school was in back of a horse display and the horses were usually tied to the fence and the fence had big spokes on it, points. And when these guys came by on their bicycle I'd pick them off the bike and plant them on top of the spokes. There was much to do about my behavior. I beat a guy up with a chain one time, backed a horse and buggy up against one. I did all kinds of things, and I was severely punished for it towards the end, but it worked because we reestablished our place among them and thereafter it was business as usual.

SL: Did it take a long time to restock your house with a lot of the things that were lost?

HD: The stuff that was in hiding that we had put away came back almost instantly. That was put back by the people who were cleaning the house. A lot of the things, there were people who had taken things that came back a few months later and said, "We took this; we're giving it back to you." No, I guess it didn't take that long to make it feel like home again. The major things we had in hiding. And who cared, really, if it was the same or not, it felt like home. So we were back in the same [covered? 12:55].

SL: Were the neighbors, helping you to get the house back into order?

HD: There were a lot of neighbors that came in and brought food, these type of things, yes. To put the house back in order, was done by this group of German sympathizers who were made to clean the house and paint it and put everything back the way it was before and they worked there for two, three months. Put the gardens back in shape, had to do the planting as part of their punishment.

SL: Did you get the cattle back?

HD: My dad was a dealer so what wasn't sold before he went was lost, obviously. The land we got back again, obviously. I'm sure my dad lost cattle. It wasn't important. Nobody made a point of it either, because it wasn't important.

SL: But did you start back in the new life with a certain amount of money?

HD: No, no, no, we were flat broke. No. My dad I remember borrowed money on the house, which is very rare for Holland, and started back in business in dealing in cattle. No, he started from scratch. The only thing he had was his name and he was pretty well known in the finer circles.

SL: Did you ever manage to pay back the Drentes the money you owed them?

HD: Absolutely, absolutely. Even to the point that after we arrived here they ran into some financial difficulty and we helped them out. Absolutely. To this day my mother, I'm not in touch, but my mother still writes with Mrs. Drente. And the gentleman is still married to the daughter. But we have not kept in touch with them. He was not accepted and neither was she after the war, at all.

SL: Into the community, you mean?

HD: Into either community. Either Jewish or non-Jewish.

SL: How did you find out what had happened to family members, such as your grandparents?

HD: We traced them down and it was confirmed that they were gassed in Dachau. [Molmost? 16:00], my father's sister, who was also traced down. My father's cousin and her daughter came back from the concentration camp. The family generally was traced down. My mother went back to Germany to find out through some of the other relatives, to establish exactly what happened. As far as I know, they were pretty well established as to what happened to them and when and where all the way down the line.

SL: Was it when they came back from the concentration camps that you found out what had happened to so many other Jews in Europe?

HD: No, we knew that beforehand. Generally, it was known even during the war. The people that came back from the camp, like the cousin, that was almost nine months after the war before they finally came back to Holland. This lady had to be deterred in a Russian camp, which apparently was worse, or almost as bad as the German camps. Another cousin of my dad was in an Italian camp for six months and a lot of the Jews in general took a long time to process out, to be placed again some place, or to be allowed to go home for one reason or another.

SL: What contact did you have with your family in the United States after the war?

HD: My mother wrote to the old address and [the letter] came back address unknown. It was my aunt that found us and started writing again and sent packages, cigarettes and things, to help out. And then the contact was immediately reestablished after that. Along with a lot of other people that had managed to come here. Some went to Africa, some went to Australia, South America. Slowly but surely we came back in touch.

SL: The life that you had in Holland after the war, as far as your education went, did you go back into school at the level at which you would have been for your age as if nothing had happened?

HD: At first, yes. But then my advancement or lack of it was so strange compared to the rest of the kids that I was tutored in some things and advanced to junior college in other levels. I never did balance it out ever again. We went back to school, yes. We attended classes and we were put into different levels. My sister ended up one year above me and we kind of stayed that way.

SL: Did you receive a continuing physical therapy program?

HD: For about two years after the war.

SL: And you said that your father reestablished his cattle business?

HD: Cattle business, back to normal, exactly the way it was before the war, right.

SL: On the surface it seems that things were really almost as they had been before the war.

HD: As strange as it sounds, yes, you are right back where you left off with a pause in between. Correct.

SL: Was there a difference in your own family's dealings with one another? Was it harder for you to be disciplined? Or harder for you to want to stay indoors or get back into that same type of life, or did it feel good to go back into it?

HD: Again, I guess it goes back to the general nature of my family. It is one of dealing with a day-to-day basis. After the war things are back to normal. The only way to get back to normal is to be normal. You accept what is. Discipline, my father was a disciplinarian, therefore the discipline was as nothing has happened. The only difference would be the emphasis as to what my father placed on independence, freedom of thought. He wanted me independent. He permitted me to do things that other people my age could not do. He gave me much more rope in that respect. But as far as to my chores, behavior, it was as if nothing had happened. You went back to shul on Friday night, we kept the Sabbath, the chores had to be done, he was boss and we better toe the mark. Yes, we were no different than anybody else, right.

SL: When did you finally decide to leave Holland and why did you decide to?

HD: I believe that decision was made before the war. He had wanted to leave Holland then. He couldn't arrange it. It was said during the war that if we ever get out of this alive we are not going to stay here. And after the war, even though he was making money and reestablishing himself and came back very rapidly, the fear of it ever happening again, whether to us or to their grandchildren, was overshadowing everything else. So we started learning English within a year-and-a-half after the underground and it wasn't really decided where we're going to go, whether we're going to be going to Africa, Australia or the United States. America won out and it won out predominantly because of the type of government it had. It seemed to be the most stable, with the least interference of the government, which made my parents decide that it would offer the best future for us and whatever would come after. Israel never came up because unlike the rest of my family that went to Israel, my father was not one of those that could work for the better of all. He was never a Zionist, he believed

the Jews had to function like everybody else in the rest of the world and was not for, not against, but not for a individual Jewish community as such. Didn't believe in it at the time.

SL: Once the decision was made to come to the United States then how long a process was it to get the papers and then be accepted with the quota?

HD: About two years, yeah two-and-a-half years. It took a while to get somebody to sponsor us and it took about two-and-a-half years.

SL: Who did you get to sponsor you?

HD: The doctor that my aunt worked for in New York. He sponsored us.

SL: Then what was the actual procedure of leaving? Did you sell your house, did you pack stuff to bring with you?

HD: Again, you were permitted to take your personal belongings, you were permitted to take, I believe, 250 guilders per person and that's it. So my dad had a lift made out of aluminum, it's about the size of a one car garage, and we packed that with all our things, bicycles included. He bought the most expensive aluminum he could get hoping that he could sell it as a container. And we left everything there. The house was sold, but the money could not be taken out. During that time and until about the mid-fifties, all the survivors' possessions were put into what they called the big book and kept an accounting of. Now the Americans did not permit you to bring anything in, and the Dutch would not let you take any monetary things out. Dad did put together some, bought some diamonds, nothing fancy, and he smuggled some of those in, but basically our furnishings, our clothing, these type of things we brought along, and that was it.

END OF TAPE 4, SIDE 1 (No Side 2)

TAPE 5, SIDE 1

SL: When was it exactly that you left? Do you recall the date that you left Holland?

HD: We left in December of 1949, and arrived in New York about a week before Christmas.

SL: How did you make the voyage?

HD: By the luxury liner New Amsterdam.

SL: Do you know whether or not there were any other survivors aboard?

HD: No, I don't know. We were just one of many passengers going to the States. And no, I don't recall that my parents knew anybody on the boat and neither did we.

SL: If you went on a luxury liner, did you finance your own voyage across?

HD: Yes, yes we financed our own voyage across and paid our own way.

SL: Do you recall having any special feelings when you saw the Statue of Liberty?

HD: Oh yes, the whole trip was very exciting, seasickness and all and, yes, I remember getting up, we were supposed to see the Statue of Liberty about the break of dawn. We got up and it was still dark, didn't see it till about ten in the morning. We all had to go to I guess Ellis Island where we all had to be checked through, and that took about seven or eight hours. My mother saw my aunt on the other side of the gate but they couldn't come in till we were all processed. The process seemed to take considerable amount of time. Besides checking your luggage they, you know, with the physical [examination] and immense amount of questions that had to be answered and translated because we didn't speak the language. Somebody, an interpreter, would ask us a question in Dutch and then it would be transcribed. I don't remember the questions, just a bunch of requirements, I guess. It took all day. My aunt had come with a friend in their car and then it took the car across town to go to where they lived in Manhattan. That seemed to take forever. Of course, you're all eyes, very tired but very excited. The trip was finally over and we had arrived. The first few days especially was very exciting because you saw all the things you read about. We were visiting, had nothing to do except to look at the sights. My uncle took me on the subway so that I could go from one place to the other and at least

recognize which one to take back. I recall going to Times Square where the old [New York] Times Building used to be. At the time they would go around the corner, but across the street from that was a huge sign that displayed the dancing ad, I forget what the ad was about, but there was a kind of Charlie Chaplin type of light thing. I remember watching it for hours thinking it was television but it never changed. So it was pretty exciting. After the first week my mother went to work as a maid in a hotel cleaning rooms and my father went to work in a butcher shop as a helper. Us kids didn't do much of anything. Because of the time of arrival, apparently we couldn't enroll in any kind of a school until a break in the semester, plus the fact that weren't even sure where we were going to settle. My parents wanted to get their feet on the ground and my dad wanted to go somewhere where he could eventually go back into his own business in dealing in cattle, which is the only thing he really knew, or butchering. Initially, we thought we were going to remain somewhere in New York or close to it. After a couple of weeks my father did not like the way they did the butchering here in the States. He said they really butchered the meat. He was working for a kosher butcher and he didn't like the way they kashered¹⁵ the meat either. Just very disappointed with it. He went up to Hartford, Connecticut, where he had an acquaintance from Holland who had a dairy and he spent a couple weeks up there to see how he liked it. He was a milker and he didn't like it so he came back to New York trying to decide what to do. Somebody suggested possibly go to Wisconsin where there were a lot of dairy cattle and so on. Someone knew Rabbi [Manfred] Swarsenky, and how it came about I really don't know, but we got a letter from Rabbi saying, yes, you're more than welcome to come to Madison and, yes, it's a nice dairy state, etc., etc. And it was decided that we would go to Madison. And we did and that was about four or five months after we arrived in New York.

SL: Had you stayed that whole time with your aunt in Manhattan?

HD: Yes, we stayed at their apartment. My sister stayed with a friend of my mother's from Germany.

Turned out there were some old friends and distant relatives from my mother's side who lived in New

¹⁵Made kosher.

York. Also some very old friends of my mother's, a woman that used to baby-sit for me when I was a child whose brother now is the manager at Caesar's Palace in Vegas, and this lady at the time was a nurse in Philadelphia. She since then got married to a doctor in San Francisco. Yeah, we stayed there all the time. It was essentially a...my father became very impatient in doing what he was doing because it seemed like we weren't going anywhere. I had a good time. I enjoyed New York. I enjoyed looking around. I was involved in drawing and sketching and some of the paintings that I did at that time I still got. I really enjoyed it. I made acquaintances and every trip was another kind of adventure. I used to take trips, go on the subways everywhere, got lost of course, did all kinds of things. Anyway, in about May, June we ended up in Madison. We were met by Rabbi Swarsensky.

SL: Did you come by train?

HD: We came by train, yes.

SL: With all the belongings that you had brought on the ship?

HD: We had the personal baggage with us. The big lift that we had packed, which was, like I said, the size of a small garage, had been left on the dock in New York because there was no place to unload, and that was arranged to be shipped later. But our personal belongings, clothing and so on, that we needed, we had with us. We were handled by the Jewish welfare, I believe, and we were the new refugees, which upset my father no end, because as far as we were concerned we were emigrants and not refugees. Our living arrangements had been arranged that my parents would stay with a couple by the name of Becker, in one place, my sister went somewhere else, lived in the Frank residence here, and I stayed with the Weinstains, and that arrangement lasted for about three, four months.

SL: When you first got to Madison and you said that you were handled, so to speak, by the Jewish welfare organizations in the city, what type of help would they offer to you? Just was this the arranging of residence or other types of help?

HD: The residence was the predominant thing because that's the only we thing we needed, a place to stay. They found a job for my mother and my father and my sister, and they placed me in school and placed my sister in school. I ended up in West High and after about a month of being there I moved in with Herman Mack here in town because it was closer to West High, and I stayed there for about four months. And the general living arrangement after about four or five months, I guess it was, we found an apartment on Mills Street, which has since then been torn down, above the Swarsenskys, right below were the Swarsenskys' residence. They found a job for my father at Frank Fruit, unloading warehousing. My mother went to work at the Lorraine Hotel to begin with, my sister went to work at Oscar Mayer's, and I went to work for the Madison newspapers.

SL: What type of job were you doing there?

HD: I was stuffing papers. And this was after school. Then after we'd been here a couple of months, the rabbi found a retired cattle dealer who started taking my father on the weekends around to make him more familiar with the neighborhood. As soon as we had sufficient money saved, my father rented a car and went out and bought his first animal. He went with the truck and he took it immediately to Oscar Mayer's and made fifteen dollars on it. The moment he did that he quit working for Frank's and went on his own. In the meantime my mother had started working for the bridal shop as a seamstress on State Street. I had graduated from West and started college, and my sister decided she didn't want to go to school anymore. well, she did want to go to school, she wanted to learn a trade. So she enrolled in the trade school here at Central for a while and from there on in it was getting reestablished and pooling all our money, we all worked, until our father had enough to buy a pickup truck. From there on in we were settled back down.

SL: Did your parents eventually buy or get into a house that you lived in while you were still single, on your own living in Madison?

HD: Yes, after about two years my father bought a house on Blackhawk Avenue on the west side and we moved into that together with an old friend from Holland who had also moved here and settled in Cincinnati, they bought a farm on the east side.

SL: What was that family's name?

HD: Pinto. And they still live in Cincinnati. Yeah, he settled into the house and stayed there until my father died and my mother moved to Florida and then they sold it. So they lived there for about eighteen years. My sister got married in '53, again to the son of an old friend of my dad's who had settled in Sterling, Illinois who was also in the cattle business.

SL: Were they survivors?

HD: Also survivors, yes.

SL: I'd like to ask you just a few questions about those early years in Madison. You said that being in New York for all that time, when you came to Madison you didn't feel real thrilled about being treated as refugees you felt more that you had already come with some, you had spent that new arrival time in New York, but did you find that you had any problems of a new immigrant here in Madison? Did people try to take advantage of you because of the language problem?

HD: In general, no. The Jewish community is very snobbish in Madison and very cliquish and very standoffish. If you don't go back here, if you're not of a certain family tree, you don't belong, and you were made to feel very much that you don't belong and that if you're not wealthy you don't belong in the class that you may think you are an equal to. I find, and still do, the Jewish community extremely hypocritical and— what's the word that I'm looking for? If they weren't Jews, I'd call them anti-Semitic.

SL: You told me in the pre-interview something about this feeling they have of almost self-hate towards themselves?

HD: Yes. They seem to be living two lives, one which is on Friday night and High Holidays and donation time and one which is their everyday life. The two just don't seem to get together for most people. Like I said, they're very hypocritical and extremely, extremely money-oriented and we're not used to that in

New York. The Jews are very tight, and you are at least in the community the way I was raised, from what I recall, if you're a Jew you're a member of the community, of the Jewish community at least, and the Jews stick together. I mean if you have a choice between a Jewish doctor who was good and a non-Jewish doctor that's good, you automatically go to the Jewish doctor, because after all, you're both Jews. In Madison or in the States it just doesn't exist, I just haven't found it. My parents were very hurt by it because even though that my mother became early active in the things that the women do in the Jewish community and my father belonged to B'nai Brith and did what he could, they were never invited anywhere, they were almost second-class citizens and it didn't change until my father gave a double wedding for my sister and a girl that had come over from Holland, also a survivor, who ended up marrying the brother of my brother-in-law. And he gave the double wedding that Rabbi Swarsensky officiated and was quite a big affair, and from that point on they became kind of accepted. They were invited to places they weren't invited before. My father was the kind of a guy, "I didn't need you then I don't need you now. Go fly a kite." So it really didn't make any difference anymore, but it's a feeling and to them, to most American Jews and especially at the time, the only kind of Jew that comes over is a refugee that has nothing, knows nothing, and deserves very little and everything they give you've got to really kiss feet for it because after all out of the goodness of the heart we are helping you. Whether they are or not is besides the point, just gives that impression. I've been personally very bitter about it and have not been active in any of the fund raising or anything here with the Jewish community. I don't think I ever will be because of it. I do donate but I do it on my own totally out of the Madison community. I want very little to do with them. The people that bothered me at that time bother me today and I'm personally not that hypocritically built, so.

SL: Did you run into any blatant incidents of anti-Semitism when you first came?

HD: No, no. The few instances where I thought it might have occurred it was just a mistake in a language problems. No, I never felt it, not really. And neither did my parents. My father was chased off the places a few times because he'd get lost and keep ending up at the same farm until the farmer finally

told him, took a shotgun and said, "I see you one more time, I'm going to shoot you." That kind of thing. But basically, no. There were people that wouldn't deal with him that, I guess because he was Jewish. There is very common language here that is derogatory to Jews that comes up, but nothing's really meant by it. No, I never really had a feeling of anti-Semitism anywhere.

SL: Did you run into a language problem, or were you able to learn English fairly easily?

HD: Well, I learned it fairly easily but, yes, but you have problems and people kid you and they teach you words that aren't socially acceptable and give you different meanings to them so you use them wrong. These things happen, sure. Sure you had problems and when I first went to West, interviews to establish my caliber of education, a question like who or what was Hamlet, you know, I recognized the word Hamlet and I said it was a piece of a pig, you know. Recognizing the word ham and not thinking about Shakespeare, but these type of things. But it didn't last too long, I caught on fairly quickly so it wasn't a real problem for very long.

SL: Do you recall any special acts of kindness that particularly stand out in your mind from the first year or so that you were here?

HD: I suppose in looking in the true retrospect, the people where my parents stayed, the Becker family, that would be considered an act of kindness. Herman Mack, where I lived with, they were very kind. They put us up, they fed me, never took any money for it. Yeah, those were acts of kindness. Can't consider them any other way. Beyond that, the only man that I gained an immense amount of respect for at the time was Rabbi Swarsensky. There's something very honest about that man, intelligent and honest. The other, in a general sense, no. Well, I think they tried to get the most out of you for the kindness that they bestowed. The Franks would tell my father, "Well, if you weren't a refugee you wouldn't be working here, so put in a couple extra hours to show how thankful you are." No, I don't think so. None that I can put my finger on, other than those types of things.

SL: The schooling that you received here, your high school education, you told me before that it was tough on you in some ways because you had a lot of knowledge in one area because of being in hiding and reading and that, so how did they try to fit you in school?

HD: Well I started, I was 15 when I came, and I guess they put me in ninth grade to begin with because my language was poor. In American history and English and so on I was less knowledgeable than anybody else who was there. Then when we got to math and physics and sciences and general literature type of thing it became very quickly obvious that I was way beyond what they were teaching. So I was put in tenth grade. Then I think I was taking ninth grade English, beginning history, and senior math. That was also too soft so I enrolled in the university in math classes. I took math and languages, history, other types of history besides American history at the university while I was going to West High. I graduated the first year that I came here in 1950. Then when I went to college I took what they call foreign student English, or subzero English and I was supposed to make up courses in American history. I was taking sophomore math or junior math and it was a whole mixture of courses at the time. Yeah, I only went to West for one year.

SL: How long did you end up at the university then. You went for four years?

HD: Yeah. I put in the equivalent of four years. I took an average load of 43 credits and found college generally boring and dull. My biggest argument was that I was enrolled at first as an engineering major with an art minor. I found engineering boring. I wanted to be an architect and so I ended up to being an art major and a philosophy minor as to the courses I took. And then I was told I couldn't take those courses and I told them I'd take what I want. Anyway, by the time I got done I think I had enough credits to graduate in two or three different fields if I was willing to take the requirements, and I wasn't. So I never did graduate. As a matter of fact, my finals I walked out, because I considered the final examinations dumb and still do. No, I never did graduate. I went to the University of Oklahoma for a semester and went to the University of Southern California for a semester. But I attended the school and never took the finals, either one of them.

SL: How many years was it that you were actually then in Madison in some sort of University setting?

HD: I started at the university in 1951, I stayed there until '53. I left in January of '53 and went to Taliesin. I stayed there until 1955, and that was February or March of '55. It was a little over two years. Then I joined the army, spent two years in service spent a little over two years, and I came out in July of '57. Went back to the university for a semester and again left before the finals and went out to the West Coast.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 1

TAPE 5, SIDE 2

SL: You related something to me in the pre-interview about having been given a hard time by the university officials for the way you looked and I wondered if you could just explain that a little bit more

HD: I'm basically a very natural person and I am most comfortable, still am, without being very well dressed— open shirts, sandals or bare feet, and I had grown a beard. I had already concentrated on art as my fine major and I spent a lot of time and a lot of hours— way, way over what was required. Anyway I was told that I could not wear sandals and have a beard in class, especially not my open shirt which had no buttons. It was just tied at the bottom. I told them that it was just too bad, that I was dressed, and that's the way I wanted to go. Anyway, I was expelled for thirty days. I was supposed to go in and tell them that I was willing to change my clothing, and as it turned out I did go in and I told them that I was willing to change my clothing and so forth. When I came back in I clipped my beard very short, but my hair was long, and I started wearing one shoe for about a month. Anyway, nobody said anything after that. I was a joke for a long time and kind of went along for about a year. I lost my temper once. I threw an easel out of the window and I got expelled again. Mainly because there was some art teachers in there that, I rebel against authority. I rebel against people insisting that their idea is the only one. And I'm a firm believer in that once you know the basics of anything you must develop on your own. So when a teacher lays down this is the only way that you present anything, this was in art, I kind of lost my cool. I had a very bad temper in those days. At a drop of a pin I'd be off my handle and ended up throwing an easel out of the window, out of the old art building, the old education building which has since then been torn down also, and got expelled again for thirty days. Then I was expelled for not taking my finals. Finally it was agreed that I could take the courses I wanted but I just wouldn't graduate and that's the way it ended up.

SL: When were you naturalized?

HD: While I was in Korea.

SL: They drafted you before you were a naturalized citizen?

HD: No, I volunteered because I wanted to get in under the GI Bill just in case I wanted to go back to school. My father insisted that if I was going to be an architect, at the time I was thinking of maybe becoming a professional artist, that degree would be important later in life. So, okay I thought that the GI Bill benefits might be pretty good. And at Taliesin I was having some problems with Mrs. Wright who teaches a kind of a philosophy which was very interesting to read and certain parts of it I enjoyed, but insisted that it be practiced as part of the format at Taliesin. I and a few other people decided that we weren't there for that purpose. In general it was eleven, twelve of us that left all at the same time. Partially by request, partially because we didn't want to do what Mrs. Wright wanted and she was beginning to run the school because Mr. Wright was getting to be old. Anyhow, I volunteered thinking that I would end up in Europe possibly. Ended up in Fort Leavenworth, got into trouble because I couldn't take orders. I got very ill to punishments that they gave me and luckily the people moved on while I was in the hospital. Eventually I ended up being trained as a clerk typist. That's a six week cram course in how to learn how to type and I managed to learn really fast typing, twenty words a minute with mistakes. It never got me anything. When our orders were cut we were supposed to go to Japan and I was to be a clerk typist. I was a private of course. Some colonel at headquarters there noticed that on my sheet that I had spent time at Taliesin and the big portion in Korea was the rehabilitation, the rebuilding of Korea. Since he was an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, I became the architect in charge of the rehabilitation of Korea, myself and there was an electrical engineer, structural engineer, civil engineer, all privates, that were taken out of boot camp and put in Korea to do this under the Special Services handling, and with a private party attached to the army to oversee the whole thing. The experience was a good one, but the basic setup was that the only party that could give us orders was Secretary of State [Dean Acheson] at the time. We were attached to [USAPI? 6:20], stayed at the [Panda? 6:20] hotel, worked with Korean personnel and Korean contractors. The only army personnel were the supervisors which were sergeants and master sergeants who were overseen by a lieutenant. The very first job we had was permanent quarters for the Eighth Army

headquarters, general quarters, and colonels and so on, which was a rehab type deal where you would take good buildings of Korean nature, either leave a little bit or whatever could be saved, and then Americanized them. The very first job we had was the permanent quarters for General White, which was a four-star general and head of the army there. He took the best house, of course, which was a very unique Korean house, anyway. In Korea the old means of building is if you start with a center post and everything is balanced, nothing is nailed. Everything is balanced and counter-balanced. So we had to leave this one post and in one of my inspections on the job they were about to remove the post and I said, "Stop! That post does not go." Some Colonel turned around and he says, "I ordered it to be removed." And I said, "I order it to stay." He said, "Don't you meddle in my business." And then a man turned around, he had a coat and collar up, this was about April, still kind of cool, and he says, "I want it gone." And I said, "I want it to stay, and that's where it stays. I'm the boss around here and nobody removes anything without my say-so." Anyway, nothing more was said. When the people got into the jeeps and took off, some sergeant says, "You know who you were talking to?" I said, "No." He said, "That was General White." "Oh my gosh, I'm in for it now!" Because, after all, I was wearing a uniform. And the next day I was called to army headquarters and had to go and see General White and I figured I'm due for a court martial because I wasn't being very polite. Out in the field, I'm never very polite. I sat out there for about a half an hour and was called into the general's and the general said that privates don't go around ordering generals. And I said, "Well, General, when it comes to army affairs I'm sure you know what you're doing, but here I'm in charge and I knew what the results was and I had no idea who you were, therefore I could not have anybody give instructions that didn't go through me. After all, if I'm in charge I'm in charge." So he says, "Well, we can't have privates ordering lieutenants around, so I have to make you at least a lieutenant." And then some major in the background said, "You can't do that, sir. Because of the nature of his job he has to be cleared for top secret and to be cleared for top secret you must be a citizen and this gentleman, this soldier is not a citizen." So the general says, "Raise your right hand." I raised my right hand and he

- says, "I herewith command you to be a citizen of the United States." And that's how I became a citizen. That was it.
- SL: And it stuck?
- HD: That's it.
- SL: Do you have any papers or anything?
- HD: I have that paper. And then when I came back here I got the formal papers and that was it, never anything else.
- SL: Did they every take that post down?
- HD: No, it stayed, and I never had any interference after that either. Of course, I didn't really know what I was doing, but I was very good at bluffing.
- SL: I wanted to go back and ask you what were the circumstances surrounding your going to Taliesin since we talked a little about it?
- HD: Well, it was my big mouth again. I had an art show together with another student at the Memorial Union, and this was at the main union, myself and had a fellow by the name of [Bowman?]. The opening night I was standing in front or next to one of my pictures talking to some people and I heard somebody making some comments that were, as far as I was concerned, derogatory and off the point as to what I had intended for the painting they were looking at. I forget the exact comment that was made, but I just turned around and I did not recognize Mr. Wright at all, said that if he didn't know what he was looking at and couldn't put himself into the position of the artist, he should refrain from making comments. At which time, the man said, "If you ever decide to be an architect come and see me. With your audacity you ought to be an architect. Should you ever decide to become one come and see me." When he walked away, [Bowman?] next to me said, "Do you know who that was?" I said, "No." He said, "That's Frank Lloyd Wright." I hate to admit it, at the time I did not know who Frank Lloyd Wright was because even though I wanted to be an architect I was just beginning in everything and reading. Anyway, immediately after that I started reading some books on Frank Lloyd Wright and I

liked what I read. I liked the organic principle much more so than what I had already been reading about the other architects, known architects like Le Corbusier and [Wytewski? 11:50] and [Alvar] Aalto. And I liked it enough to where I felt that I would like to be an architect, to work under those principles. I went to Taliesin, I guess it was in May of '55, '53 rather in April even. I went in and was stopped at the gate and I said, "I'm here by invitation" and gave my name and nobody heard of me of course. And I said, "Well, Mr. Wright said if I ever decided to be an architect to come and see him, and here I am." So after about an hour-and-a-half I did get in to see Mr. Wright and Mr. Wright said, "Yes, you are welcome to come and try. It is \$1200 a year." And I said I had \$86 which I needed for clothing. And he said, "Well, come anyway." And I came and I stayed. And that's how it came about.

SL: What kind of life did you have there? Did you study all the time, did he lecture you? I don't know anything about it.

HD: No, you don't study at all. It's very similar to a kibbutz almost, without any formality. You do your own cooking, you grow your own food, you do your own farming, you do your own building, you rotate as to who works on the drawing boards. And while I was at Taliesin I never worked on the boards. I ended up cutting stone with the mason, I worked on the farm because I had farm experience, I did the road grading, I ended up being one of the superintendents at the Guggenheim Museum and at the Price Tower in Oklahoma. You worked very hard. You did drawings on your own for critique on Sunday by Mr. Wright. After hours, any help that you wanted was there if you wanted it from students with the education, or Wesley Peters who was the Taliesin engineer, who would give their time to help you with your problems. But you instigated them, you did it. During the course of the day you worked on Taliesin projects and then it was your education. If you worked hard and you didn't beef and you did your part, you could stay. If you became too much of a copier or not willing to work, you were asked to leave. You either became an addition to the group or you were not permitted to stay. When I was there, that first year, there was about 240 new pupils and six of us lasted for the first four months because it is hard work. You got up at four o'clock in the morning and you worked till ten o'clock at

night, essentially. It's a beautiful life in many ways because in essence you were totally divorced from the world. You lived, read, and talked nothing but art and architecture and the philosophy surrounding it. And you become totally involved with the principal of things and not with the technique of it and that was the value at Taliesin under Mr. Wright. The second year Mrs. Wright, Mr. Wright was beginning to feel his age, Mrs. Wright started bringing her dance groups from Chicago. She was the predominant student from [Georges Ivanovich] Gurdjieff, who was a Hungarian French philosopher who took Oriental philosophy and westernized it. He was a kind of an egotist that wrote one book in his life called All and Everything. It looks like a Gideon Bible and reads the same. Where he westernized much of a combination of the philosophies of Lao-Tzu, Zenism, and Confucianism, and some Buddhistic thoughts brought in, and put them into a Western language and this became the philosophy of Gurdjieff of which Mrs. Wright was the American exponent. Anyway, she started bringing in the groups, which is fine. Then she started giving lectures, which was fine. Then her daughter, Ivanna Wright, became one of the lecturers because she was a star pupil of Mrs. Wright and as far as I was concerned Ivanna Wright was an absolute spoiled brat and I had told her so many times. I mean I thought she was a real spoiled brat and I didn't want to attend her lectures. I told them that that was an interpretation of what I was reading, I didn't need her, and I had no respect for her. And that was the beginning of the end because I did not want to partake in an active way in that philosophy. So it resulted in my leaving Taliesin and ending up in the army. From the army, I became quite ill. I was discharged in San Francisco after being in the Letterman Army Hospital for about four months and came back to Wisconsin, enrolled back in school here. Then the girl that I was engaged to, I moved out to the West Coast and I kind of followed her down there but got stuck in Carmel with a friend of mine who was a writer, fellow by the name of [Svitbat? 17:45] and ended up living in Henry Miller's house for about five months in Carmel where I did some painting and handy work—carpentry, odds and ends jobs. I liked Carmel, you just couldn't make a living there. I had gone out with a friend of mine who was black, and who was about ten years older than I was, but couldn't find

a job because of his color. So we decided to move out to Los Angeles. I had taken an apartment when I first got there in Hollywood by myself while he was looking for a job to go with the Post Office. When he arrived as my roommate we were asked to leave because the blacks weren't permitted. So we ended up in the south side of LA, which was a predominant black neighborhood, we ended up living there for as long as he stayed in Los Angeles. I went to work for Richard Neutra in Los Angeles at no pay and took a part time job working for an architect by the name of Strong that did pay, because I wanted to work for Neutra. I worked for Neutra for about two-and-a-half years.

SL: All that time without pay?

HD: No, after about six months I did get paid. But when I applied for the job he had no openings and he gave me other people that I could go and work for. I said, "No, I want to work for you because I like what you do." And most of my jobs that I held were based for the people that I respected and if I didn't get paid, I didn't get paid. I did something else to make money and in those days making money was easy. I didn't need much and the idea that I had was that I wanted to learn architecture, I wanted to know it on the basis that I could associate with it as to the way I wanted to practice it. Which is not the way the world likes to see it practiced, but that's the way it is. And I've been doing that ever since, as far as I've never left that tack no matter what else I did. I've done a lot of other things besides.

SL: Well I know that you have a great interest in cooking and the articles that have appeared about you in the paper and the cooking angle they mentioned even your experience at Taliesin as kind of getting you into that.

HD: The problem of being independent in thought, untactful in practice, and persistent in what you want to do: it's hard to make a living. So I started cooking, partly as a hobby and partly because I had an opportunity to take over the Purple Onion in Los Angeles, which I did, which is a restaurant. I operated it for about a year-and-a-half as a means to be able to be independent as an architect. So I made a living cooking. From that I got married to a girl from France, also a survivor.

SL: Is she the girlfriend you had followed out to the West Coast?

HD: No.

SL: So you were engaged when you met her?

HD: Right, I met this French girl at one of my open house parties that I used to give also to earn money. Boys a dollar, girls free. We had some big blockbusters. But anyway, I was teaching beginning art to people in the house that I had rented where I gave the parties. And that's why I met this gal. And she was a student of [Pierre] Cardin in clothing, the couturier. So with her we opened up Michelle Originals, which became de Michelle. But Michelle Originals was a clothing wholesaler in evening gowns, cocktail suits and evening coats, which we operated for a couple of years. For a while we had the restaurant and the fashion business and we started about the same time as [Blackstone, Black Galanos, Travia? 22:30]. We were a pretty tight-knit group. That ended up in a divorce.

SL: What was your wife's name?

HD: Rochelle Vogel.

SL: When were you married, what was the date?

HD: In Los Angeles. The date was the 12th of July, 1959. I got divorced six years later, '64.

SL: Were you doing any art at this time?

HD: I was constantly painting, yes. I stopped painting— I really haven't painted since the divorce just about. Things started coming to a head; I was becoming too busy, architecturally speaking; I had a lot of problems in my life at that time. The kind of life she had led was one of absolute insecurity. She had been in hiding. She had been in the camp. Her parents were killed at the beginning of the war. She and her sister, her two year older sister, had been traveling and moving and hiding through France, Italy, and parts of Germany for three years then they were caught and spent one year and nine months in the camp. [She] ended up in Israel where her sister got married to a survivor of Auschwitz, came to the United States. During that time my wife had made an acquaintance with a fellow originally from Algeria whom they had met in the woods of Italy and she had lived with him in

France for a couple of years and then they had gone to Israel. But he couldn't stay anywhere because he had no nationality. Rochelle's big problem was that when she became married and no longer had to fend for herself on a very hard basis, the past kept cropping up and she would go from an extreme of not being able to get out of bed and boil water to absolute genius. She was very competitive and a very, very beautiful woman, very beautiful-figured, extremely talented, and in a clothing business in her high points she did the work of ten. In her high points when she decided to become a artist or an art teacher, she just made up her mind in one of her high points to get a master's in art and she did that entire curriculum in less than eleven months. The moment she received her master's she went into a deep, deep depression that lasted for almost a year. Then we got her out of that and after this roller coaster for five years it was the general consensus that because of my general attitude it seemed to forever bring forth something in her past that made her want to either outshine me or try to make me knuckle under. And since I just didn't react to it, I'm not a competitor, it was fuel for the ashes, that if our marriage continued she'd end up in an insane asylum, and in California [? 26:42] a divorce so we decided to get a divorce. At the time I was doing very well and by the time the divorce was over I was broke.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 2

TAPE 6, SIDE 1

SL: What did you do then, did you remain in California after your divorce?

HD: Yes, I remained in California. I was broke and putting in a lot of hours. I played cards once a week with a group of guys and one of the guys there fixed me up on a blind date from a relative of his who had just moved from Panama. European background, they had lived in Panama. And after a seventy-two hour session of working, we went out on a first date. She was three years younger than I was and I picked her up and we went dancing. I was so tired and when I'm tired I never say anything, so I hardly said anything all night. And when I dropped her off I kind of felt bad for having such a rotten evening, [which is] what I thought she had, and asked her for another date and she accepted. Her parents were very much against me because I look very old for my age. I was turning gray, I had the beard, and my hair was rather long and I looked sloppy and they were of the old-fashioned German background where they wanted their daughter to marry a doctor or somebody financially well, set and not an old man that was divorced and looked like a bum. Anyway, we really hit it off and the third time I took her out I asked her for a loan to pay off my last debts left over from the divorce, which she gave me, and about six months after that we got married. She was working and had a degree in business law and was working for a title company, a branch at the bank, and we took an apartment there. Just about that time my father had a heart attack and my mother asked if I would come back to Madison to help out for a little while and I did. It so happened that on one of my previous visits here a neighbor across the street from where my mother lived wanted to build a house which I designed, which is the house that [Apples? 2:30] built at the corner of Blackhawk and Regent, and I was designing it while I was in California. So when my mother said, "Come over," it was the beginning of the summer, I came to help my father and I went to work for a fellow by the name of [Carlson], thinking I'd be here for four or five months. In the meantime, Max Hurvitz, who I designed the house for, said, "Why don't we build it?" So I said, "Sure, as long as I'm here I'll help you build it." So he and I started building that house, just the two of us and then labor. My father got a little better and I was

making preparations to go away again when he fell down a set of steps at my sister's house, had a brain concussion, was operated on, and the operation was a success but my dad died of a heart attack.

SL: At that same time?

HD: Yes, during that operation. So now I was here to— my father was one of those guys that kept everything in his mind and still dealt predominantly in cash and my mother didn't know where the cattle were because he would loan cattle out and so on, and I had recalled from helping him before as to the people who he dealt with. Anyway, it took me two to three months to find all the cattle that was spread around the countryside. By that time my wife had come home also and she liked Madison and we had no kids and for all practical purposes started a new life. She said, "Why don't we stay?" So we stayed. I was doing another house for Bob [Bermen? 4:35], another fellow here. Before you knew it, here I am. And that's how I ended up back here.

SL: What was your wife's maiden name?

HD: Monica Freund-Fasslicht.

SL: When were you married?

HD: In June '64.

SL: You have two sons by her?

HD: I have two sons, presently twelve and nine years old.

SL: What are their names and birth dates?

HD: Brian is the oldest. He was born December 30, 1968. Todd was born July 20, 1971.

SL: When did you go into business for yourself, when did you finally open up DeLevie and Associates?

HD: DeLevie and Associates is four years old now, but I went into business for myself as a builder/designer since I was not licensed in Wisconsin, almost the moment I made the decision to stay here. So that was within five months after I'd been here. I've been on my own every since.

SL: Did your reputation spread by word of mouth from the house that you built?

HD: Combination, word of mouth and the type of thing I was doing was quite different from what Madison was accustomed to. I did some houses on Whitney Way to attract a lot of attention and I had some fairly good newspaper coverage. They were quite different from the average type of building that was being built and I was doing it with a guarantee: if I didn't have a custom I would spec one. So I created my own business. Yes, word of mouth went very rapidly. "He is good, he is contemporary, and he's a bastard." That, I guess, is the reputation I still have. The bastard part is not true.

SL: I just want to round out this area on your marital status, when was it that your wife passed away?

HD: My wife passed away November 5, 1975.

SL: You're presently remarried?

HD: I remarried two years ago on August 7, 1977.

SL: What is your wife's name?

HD: Deena. She is a Madison native. Her maiden name was Slafer. She's divorced. She had one child who happens to be within one month of my youngest one and I've been now married going on my third year.

SL: Her child is also a son?

HD: He's also a son.

SL: What is his name?

HD: Scott, so now I have three boys.

SL: Does Deena work, does she have a job?

HD: No, not at this point. She was working in an advertising firm, a private secretary for the owner, and she put out a Sunday supplement that went to the Midwestern states. It's like a flyer, like the Parade in the Sunday Times. Which was her job, she worked there for ten years. She is seven years younger than I am.

SL: What did Monica do when she got to Madison, did she get a job?

HD: Yes, she worked. At first she worked in the bank for a short period of time again, then she went to work for Marshall, which is now bought out by one of the big companies, I can't think of the name. She was a foreign export secretary. She spoke six languages and took shorthand and typed and had a business law degree, so she handled the export business for the firm, chemical type of export. Upjohn I think bought it. And that's what she did until she decided to quit, which was about the time that Brian was born.

SL: The next series of questions that I want to ask you are, they are attitudinal questions that we ask everybody to compare how people feel about their families and the situation that they're in now, so it won't exactly be your sitting down and telling me a whole lot. I hope that you don't mind if its more rapid fire than it had been before. First of all, do you speak English at home with your kids?

HD: Yes.

SL: Do they know any foreign languages, do they know any Dutch?

HD: I am trying to teach them Dutch, German, and French, and not being very successful.

SL: When you and Monica were married, did you converse in English?

HD: English and German, some Spanish.

SL: How much do your children, even at their young age, know about your Holocaust experiences?

HD: Quite a bit. I bring it up quite often, especially by comparison. My youngest one, Todd, asks the greater amount of questions for it. He seems to be more sensitive to it for one reason or the other, maybe because he has a slight case of cerebral palsy, is very bright, and thinks about it a little more deeper than my older boy. I talk about it quite often. I don't go into it too deeply but I do bring up instances by comparisons: what I didn't have that they have, or why do we have to go to Sunday school. Or if you do not practice Judaism on a regular basis by keeping kosher and so on, why do you insist on keeping Friday night and do the traditional things? Like Pesach is right around the corner. I will keep Pesach, but they don't understand why do I like bacon. I try to explain to them that I am a Jew, I'm proud of it, what they do at their later age is their business, but they're going to be raised as a

Jew on the traditional sense. Religiously speaking, I am nothing. I do not believe in the traditional sense. I do not believe in the religious aspect of religion. I do believe in the traditional aspect of my upbringing and the values that it taught me and that I want to pass on to my children. I guess I want to emphasize and, as they get older, put in perspective, what happened to me in my age, when I was young. More as a lesson in life and what can be, and that by keeping your eyes closed and turning the other cheek is not necessarily a solution to any of the problems one does not like. That one may have to take the initiative to do something about it, make a stand, and that this stand is important at whatever point you make it.

SL: Do you think that your children have faced any bad experiences in school as result of unusual family circumstances that you went through as a child? You were luckier than most in that you did have your parents and your sister that did survive with you, but still again there having extended family not there?

HD: No, I do not believe that they experience anything because of my youth, no. They've had their share of bad experiences, but because of today's life, not anything that was before.

SL: Have they ever complained of anti-Semitism that they see in the schools?

HD: No, no.

SL: In comparison to other families, do you see that your family may be closer than others? Closer responsibilities or caring about one another that might reflect for instance on what you went through?

HD: That we are closer? Possibly, yes. Is it a reflection of what I went through or because of the Jewish traditions that we are practicing? It is like which comes first, the chicken or the egg in this respect. Also, my being European, as free thinking or as American as I am in many ways, traditionally I'm still very European. From that standpoint, again, I do not think that my present actions as a whole is a direct result of my experience, no. It is a part of, but it is only as small a part of it as any other experiences that one bases one's life on. So, no, I do not, I can't say that because I went in the underground, I was in hiding, this all has a effect on my children. It has a very definite effect as to

what my attitude is as to what is important and isn't important. And the main things that I try to teach them, that it does have, yes. Those kind of things are, I think I said it earlier, are the independence, the self-sufficient thing, the value of life, and the enjoyment as to what can be taken out of it. My lack of interest in money other than the means of commodity. Sure, I enjoy the fine things in life, but I don't grow attached to it. I have very few material things that I'm attached to. My general coldness is probably a result of the appearance I give to most people. My adaptability to things, circumstances, things that go bad, I don't have many sleepless nights because these things just aren't important. The things beyond my control are beyond my control. They have an effect on that aspect of what I try to teach my children, yes.

SL: And those are attitudes that you developed because of what you had experienced?

HD: Yes, indirectly because it is the experience that made me aware and gave me the opportunity in a way to do all the reading I did. It developed my mind in a kind of a different channel than most children's go. My method of thinking is different and one thing leads to another. You learn to walk before you can run and, yes, those were formative years and they did set a pattern of thought of importance and, if not an absolute direct result, it certainly is a basis as to what happened afterwards. Yes, I would have to say so.

SL: Also in comparison to other families, do you see yourself as a more concerned parent than others? About your children's welfare, about the way they grow up?

HD: No, I don't think so. I think the contrary. I think that being who I am, resulting from what I do not know as to pinpointing it, I have a very high sense of responsibility. So as long as the children are my responsibility, I will do my best to care for them properly as I can in the eyes of society and in my own viewpoint. By the same token, I do not feel that the children are my wards, that once I have gone through the basics there has to be a point where they must survive on their own. I do not feel a continuing, at least not at this point— that I owe my life to them or to their continuing welfare. This is the one thing that I want to teach them. No, I don't think that I am more protective, if I have your

question correctly, to my children than others. On the contrary, less protective. I probably demand more from them than most people.

SL: What types of things would you demand from them? Would it be in some sort a relationship to what you know you were capable of at their age?

HD: Not really by comparison. I demand that they do their best. Half-measures are no measures. If they're going to do something, to give it all or don't bother. I demand honesty and I demand respect. Beyond that they're on their own.

SL: Do you have a strong contact with the family members in the United States? Your sister, your mother, your aunts, the one that you lived with in New York?

HD: I have no aunts left, they died recently. My mother, I talk to her once a week. My sister, we talk occasionally. We have a very, very strong family tie but it is not one of closeness of a daily report. A good example would be my cousins in Israel. Some of them I haven't seen in twenty-five or thirty years. But if they said, "Help," that's all they would have to do. They would get everything I had. My sister would feel the same way. So does my brother-in-law. I think this kind of tightness is part of the European upbringing as well as a sense of mutual obligation that you're left with. So, we are not close on a day-to-day basis. We are extremely close and kind of secure in the knowledge that, no matter what happens, the family is there, that somebody within the family will be able to help if it is a financial or physical type of thing that they can do. It's almost automatic. Yes, we all know it.

SL: Are the cousins in Israel the ones that you lived with in hiding? So your father's brother went to Israel?

HD: That's right. My father's brother died two years after the war of a heart attack.

SL: He was very young.

HD: Yes, he was. And that was right after the birth of another son. It was with the baby that my aunt decided to go to Israel instead of coming to the States, which was what my father wanted. They moved into a kibbutz, she is still in that kibbutz.

SL: Which one is that?

HD: Dor Afula, it's an Orthodox kibbutz. My cousin who is equal to my age, he is a farmer, a cattle dealer there. He is also a sergeant in the tank division and, I believe, the only sergeant ever to be decorated twice. The youngest son right now is in the air force in Nicolet and until a year ago was still in the kibbutz with his mother. Willy, which is my other cousin, works for the Israeli airlines, is married for the second time. His first wife died in an automobile accident. The oldest, their daughter, Salma, who is my sister's age, her husband just died last week. And that's the status of that family. The youngest boy is not married yet. The only one of the cousins I have seen is Willy, who came from Israel. My sister has gone to Israel a few times. My mother refuses to go altogether.

SL: We try to ascertain the closeness of survivors with other survivors, there are some in Madison. Do you see them at all in any kind of social basis?

HD: I see other people who happen to be survivors. I do not see them because they are survivors. Initially, when we came here, it was natural for the people who were in the same boat to more or less gather together, the Deutschkrons are a good example. He was a tailor. They were from Germany. They spoke German, my parents spoke German. [Fritz Aron? 22:20], who just moved back, who used to be here and before that. Fred Lowe. They're all from German background. There were other Dutch people here who have since moved away that my father knew from Holland because of the common language and the common tradition is why you get together. I can't think of any reason that you look each other, seek each other out, because you are a survivor. On the contrary, it is my feeling that on the average equal experiences do not necessarily make good bedfellows. On the contrary, they do not. Very rarely are these things brought up, occasionally these go back and forth. The reactions are so different. Good examples would be, again I'll bring up the Deutschkrons. I don't know whether this should be erased from the tape or not. We all had opportunities as survivors to collect large sums of money from Europe, whether it be from Holland or Germany. They went after it tooth and nail and they got every dime and then some for it. So did the Lowes. My father wouldn't hear of it. I don't want to hear of it. I don't want the money. Neither did my mother. Right there, there's a tremendous

amount of difference. They say they owe it to us. I say I don't want the blood money. It has no meaning, it isn't worth the effort, nor is it worth the, I would not want, and my father didn't. We just had another thing that we can get something from Holland because of the certain things that are lasting, like my eyesight is bad, my feet are bad, these are all leftovers from the war— where you're entitled to monthly sums. My mother has certain problems in her resulting. In dollars and cents it is like collecting disability. It's the same reason I can't go into the unemployment line. I cannot demean myself to do this. I've been talked to those people who might be responsible. I just can't do it. These people can. Right there, that's a big difference in reaction. My sister couldn't either, neither can my brother-in-law. These are differences of attitude within the people, and my father, when he was alive, was very mad or had big arguments with the Deutschkrons because of it and for a long time they wouldn't even talk to each other because of this type of an attitude as to "give me" and "keep it." My in-laws are the same way. Monica's parents, my father-in-law was the kind of a man that even though he lived in Panama for twenty-five years, had never left Europe. He was insulted by the mere fact that a janitor would go in the same elevator with him. And he moved back to Vienna and we went to visit there. My mother-in-law bought an apartment facing the statue erected on the site of the SS headquarters commemorating the death of all the Jews. You can see still the old buildings and the old gutted buildings that weren't rebuilt in that particular section, which was the Jewish sections, that's where they bought. In Austria, it's still very pronounced. Yet, they can live with it. I could never and this is the difference. And because of this basic difference, the moment these thoughts are brought to the foreground you no longer talk on an equal basis of "Here you are and here I am and this is our life." You then begin to live in the past and the moment you begin to live in the past, ugh, you can't do it.

END OF TAPE 6, SIDE 1

TAPE 6, SIDE 2

SL: As far as the people that are now your closest friends, would you say that you have an equal number of Jewish and Gentile friends or do lean more one way than another?

HD: What I can really say is I don't have any close friends. I have a lot of acquaintances. I know I associated with more Jewish people than Gentile people on a more social basis. I don't socialize much. I don't think I have a close friend. I don't think I ever did.

SL: There has been a traditional animosity between Eastern and Western European Jews in the way they view one another and one another's cultures. Is this something that you ever felt or that you felt when you came into this community?

HD: Mainly traditionally. Here there's a big predominance of the Eastern Jews. Their traditions, their language, like Yiddish, which I can understand because of my German, are totally different from what I grew up with. The first time I had gefilte fish was in the army, you know, and then even then I didn't know what it was and everybody was surprised. Animosity, not really. The big difference is that culturally the Eastern Jew, on the average, is or was not as advanced as the Western, the ones that came from Spain. It seemed like, at least from the ones that I know. And the general level of broad experiences were much more limited for the Eastern Jews and this is probably because they were much more confined to the ghetto life so they were more Jewish-orientated. Where we, like in Holland, were more nationally orientated. I think that's where the big difference lies.

SL: Do the American-born Jews with whom you have some acquaintance ever ask you to discuss your Holocaust experiences with them?

HD: Rarely, rarely. As a matter of fact, a few years ago, ten or twelve years ago, we had a Halloween party at a Jewish affair and I came wearing the Jewish star. I hate to tell you that people that asked me what the hell that was. No, very rarely.

SL: What about your Gentile acquaintances?

HD: More.

SL: How do they react to what you tell them?

HD: "Oh my! Is that so?" Everybody's reaction in that respect is pretty much the same. They can intellectualize. Some find it a little hard to believe. Some say, "Was it really that bad?" It is more one of intellectual interest than anything else— curiosity type of questioning. And what else can it be?

SL: Have you have any particularly unpleasant experiences with non-Jews?

HD: Because I'm Jewish?

SL: Yes.

HD: No. None that I recall. Not since I've been in the States.

SL: Do you belong to any political or social clubs?

HD: I just joined the AIA,¹⁶ that's it.

SL: You talked a little bit about the religious life that you have at home. Do you attend synagogue at all?

HD: Occasionally I go to the Yom ha-Shabbat when my sons are doing something because of that. I go Yom Kippur for sure. Sometimes on Rosh Hashanah. I do not like synagogues. I have an immense distaste for them and I don't like what I feel when I'm sitting inside of them either. I just don't like them. But I do go occasionally, and my sons are being educated and when they go, we do go Friday nights occasionally, and I do go to services for the High Holidays, yes.

SL: What synagogue do you belong to?

HD: Beth-El right now, reformed.

SL: Do you observe traditions within the home? You don't keep kosher, is that correct?

HD: I do not keep kosher. We do observe the traditions. Friday night we light the candles. We have a Friday night meal. I rarely go out on Friday nights and I, so far, insist that my sons do not sleep over or go out Friday nights either. I'm told this will change when they get older and get involved in the school activities, but I will discourage it.

SL: Do you feel that your feelings about religion changed as a result of your holocaust experience?

¹⁶American Institute of Architects.

HD: No, not directly. Indirectly, yes. It's the holocaust experience that caused me to read a lot, among which were a lot of religious books. And I studied philosophy and read a considerable amount on it. I know a lot, in general, about religions, Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Buddhism, Hinduism. Intellectually, I find it a very good philosophy. Dogmatically, I find it a weakness in humanity and for this reason, for the weakness that it seems to support, I cannot believe a religion for the sake of religion, but I can believe it, I can accept it as a philosophy. And this is more because of my own education in it and an indirect result of the reading. Not as a direct result, no.

SL: Another aspect of your life in sort of a cultural sense, what newspapers and magazines do you receive in your home?

HD: I receive the Wisconsin [State] Journal and I read it rarely. I find it boring. I get the Wall Street Journal, which I read quite religiously. Magazines, we have Time, Reader's Digest, Smithsonian. I subscribe to two different art magazines and Antique World; I get the publications from the Museum of Modern Art; I get the Chicago Playhouse; I get the architectural magazines, all of them, and a different assortment of other kinds, interior decorating types. I belong to a literature club where I get most publications that come out and I read them. Usually those things I go through cover to cover.

SL: So much of the reading that you do is professionally oriented?

HD: About fifty-fifty. I averagely read three books a week now. I used to read a book a day.

SL: What types of books? Any type?

HD: Depends on my mood. I read most books that come out. I go on spurts. Lately, I read a lot of detectives for enjoyment. It takes me an hour and half to go through a book, sometimes less. I'm a skip reader. I enjoy historical-type books, like the life of Tito. I definitely read the better works that come out for whatever they are, whether they be of whatever nature. Yeah, averagely three books a week.

SL: Is this love of reading something that you try to instill in your kids?

- HD: I try, yes. The appreciation of reading, that the world opens up in books, the understanding of things start with books, and the education is there, yes.
- SL: Have you read any books on the holocaust?
- HD: Yeah, not for quite a while. Yes, I read some.
- SL: Do you recall what your reaction was to them?
- HD: Intense sadness, I think, is the biggest word. Almost to a point of feeling extremely depressed for a few days. Sadness more than anything else. Incomprehension is a good word for it, of even of having been close to it, and having talked to people and known people well that have gone through some of the worst aspects of it, realizing that you just can't fathom what it was. It's still inconceivable. And sadness. Yeah, sadness more than anything else.
- SL: With your own situation having been very much parallel to the story of Anne Frank, which so many people are familiar with. Upon reading that if you have...?
- HD: I skimmed the book, I did not read it.
- SL: Did you feel that it would...?
- HD: To me that story was one of the milder ones. You know, it's very comparable in many ways to mine. My ending happened to be much happier. To me it was a very common story. There was nothing exceptional about it because of all the people I knew who had gone through the experience in almost the same sense. But then I skimmed the book, I did not go into it as a lot of people seemed to have. I'm not that familiar with it.
- SL: I know that you offered some suggestions when there was a theater guild that was putting on a play.
- HD: Suggestions more of explaining what the feeling was of being in hiding. I can definitely associate myself with the story of Anne Frank. I can at least put myself in her position. Temperamental, she was older, temperamentally of course there is a difference. Her circumstances were different, location. It's the same and it's not. The discussion, the question was more in order to give them an insight as to the role that they were playing and I guess according to them was of some help, which I'm glad of.

SL: Did you watch the Holocaust program that was televised?

HD: 80 percent of it.

SL: What was your reaction to that?

HD: More or less saying to myself, "What am doing here sitting, watching this? I don't want to watch it." And again saying, "I don't care what they show, they can't show it. It is still very superficial." Yes, for those portions that I saw, in my case I'd have to go a step further than what they were showing, recalling some of the things that I saw or heard firsthand, that wasn't there. It gave an image. The story has to be told. But you can't show the facts. It just can't be. Certainly not in a television program. It would have to be an X-rated showing.

SL: Did people become more interested in your own experiences after the program was aired?

HD: No, I don't think so. No, not really.

SL: Did your kids watch it?

HD: I think they saw a few episodes, yes. I'm not quite sure because they were not with me when I was watching it and I was not with them when they were, so, no. They did watch it because my sons did ask me some questions. Again the youngest asked the most and I think he watched all of it. Yes.

SL: Have you traveled much in Wisconsin?

HD: I've traveled much, period. All over.

SL: We're especially interested, of course, in the Wisconsin part so I want to ask you just on the Wisconsin travelling if there was any particular place you liked?

HD: All over. I camped in the Mississippi sand banks. I've done a lot of camping. We go for a week at a time to backpacking or with a tent. I got out on Sunday or Saturday at Sunday outings. I just pick a road, no map, go from one place to the other. There may be some towns I've missed but I've gone all over. Yes, I've criss-crossed and I enjoyed it. I like Wisconsin. I like most states except Kansas, a few of those.

SL: How much does Wisconsin remind you of Holland?

HD: Not at all. Except for the cattle that are black and white, the Holstein cattle. Otherwise not at all.

SL: How satisfied are you with the cultural climate in Madison?

HD: The underlying culture climate is very good. Underlying is that there is a university-orientated cultural factor which is very high-caliber. The city of Madison is making some of its attempt. The general city of Madison, I feel, is very backwards and small-townish. It just hasn't kept up. The Civic Center, I think, is a good example. In general, compared to other towns of its size, it's very good. The availability of good culture is definitely here. It's here if you want to look for it.

SL: How much happier do you think you would have been living in an area that had a larger Jewish population?

HD: I don't think it would have made any difference.

SL: How do you feel about living in Wisconsin with its high percentage of ethnic German population?

HD: People notice the things that they want to and are offended by the things that they look for. I look at people for what they are. I have no animosity because they are of German heritage, none at all. No.

SL: What effort have you made to become familiar with Wisconsin history?

HD: An outright effort, no. Effort as my general habit, I have read it; we stop at all of the historical markers; we research what it said whenever we come across something. It's just habit. If you find out what caused it to be and what went with it before and after. I do this with my kids, I do it about every subject. Anything we don't understand we look it up, we research it. Wisconsin history, per se, I've not gone out of my way, but at the same time I think that generally I'm beginning to know what it is.

SL: How do you feel that you've contributed to the Wisconsin community?

HD: Wisconsin community. The only contribution that I can give anything is by being myself and by honestly presenting the best that I am able to do with my chosen profession. The contributions that I can give as to a day-to-day basis are indeterminable. I don't think this is something anybody could put a finger on. I'm an architect, I would like to practice my architecture my way, and I think I'm capable of giving a lot. But to be able to give means that there has to be somebody willing to accept and I am

not the kind of a person that will go out and say, "Hey, this is what I got. Now listen to me and do it."

So my contribution to the community? The mere fact that one is means that one contributes even if it's negatively, which becomes positive. That's the best I can answer that question.

SL: Have you felt an obligation to Wisconsin or to Madison for giving you an opportunity to start a new life in the United States?

HD: No.

SL: What was your reaction when the American Nazi Party planned to march in Milwaukee?

HD: My reaction? I'm glad I wasn't there. I am one of those that believes in physical defense. I'm not a pacifist. My reaction is one of fear, as much fear of that as I was of [George] Wallace or some of the other implied politicians. At the same time, I am American enough to be an absolute believer that if the prerogative of the freedom is denied to anyone or anything, you have lost a basis of what really makes this country tick. Which is why I'm against as much government interference as there is. I'm a capitalist; I'm a free thinker; I'm a believer in everybody's right to be and to do provided it does not infringe in their rights of others, which includes the government.

It's getting tougher and tougher to be an individual and a true American in America in its original sense, the free spirit. And the Nazi Party, anybody who becomes violent about their activities, then I'm against. I was very much against the blowing up of the science building.¹⁷ To me this is not a proper extension of a democracy. This takes a different form. And the moment it takes that kind of form I think that my right is equal [to] theirs. Therefore, if they want to destroy me I definitely can destroy them. It doesn't work that way, but that's my attitude.

SL: How satisfactory do you find the American system of government to be?

HD: All I can say is the old saying: it's the best we got.

¹⁷The Army Math Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was blown up in 1970 in protest over the Vietnam War.

SL: How do you feel about the prominence of Jews in the American political scene or the media or other areas where traditionally people say there are a lot of Jews?

HD: Prominence? The influence they wield? I guess I don't feel about it one way or the other. If you work for the right to be heard and you have ascertained that position in life or in society by the efforts that you put forth, you are entitled to the fruit. If this means a voice in government and that is your desire, you are entitled to it. I give everybody that right. I am against lifting somebody up because you are black or because you are a Jew. But if you earned the right, you've earned it. And if this means that the Jews, because of their nature and because of their heritage, bring themselves forth into this upper echelon of decision making and monetary value then that's their right. They have earned it, yes.

SL: To what extent do you believe there's anti-Semitism in this country?

HD: In every society there are those pockets of anti-Semitism, whether they are directed against the Jews, the blacks, the Hungarians, the Italians, or because you're cross-eyed. Bigotry is just part of the smallness that we have to live with. In some parts of the country because of influences and lack of education or whatever the cause may be, they're more pronounced than others. Regretfully so, maturity in the human mind and education has been culturally lacking in pace with the rest of its achievements. Bigotry and anti-Semitism in the scale that we find it here is acceptable only as to a reminder of how much we are failing.

SL: Do you think it's easier for you now to talk about your experiences than it might have been five years ago?

HD: In some respects, I suppose. Some things are still not so easy. As one grows older and "more mature," you build more calluses and, therefore, you become a little more separate in the world in which you are involved. The beauty of youth in general is the vigor through which it attacks the things beyond its control and how it can engulf itself in the problems of the world and mankind. As you grow older, you find less resistance or desire or you're beginning to give up and say, "Hey, I can't make the difference. I'll leave it to the next guy." I think that's the difference.

SL: How do you feel about an increasing awareness in this country towards the holocaust?

HD: I am not sure that there is an increasing awareness. I think there is, probably, and I'm not even sure it, an increasing desire to learn about what happened because now it is another generation. It is now part of history and it is something that more people feel one ought to know about. I think it is more because it is another generation and a time span that the interest is there. It's in some ways similar to the finding of an archeological find. The interest is there and all of a sudden everything surrounds it. I do not see any real interest that is beyond intellectual and educational approach. I see no movement to greater understanding of mankind or a greater emphasis on the things that surround that type of thing. On the contrary, it's the other way. It's still materialistic and "I-and-I-and-first-I-come-and-then-I-come-one-more-time-before-I'll-think-about-you" type of an attitude in general.

SL: How do you feel about the fact that the federal government is providing some of the money for us to conduct this study?

HD: No different than the study that they are money providing for about the killer ants in Brazil. Somebody asked for it, it went through Congress, they thought it would be a good idea, it doesn't hurt particularly, and it's part of the funds set aside for the education and transcription of our past performances, good or bad. I don't think about it at all.

SL: I've got one last question for you and we're racing against the end of the tape. Why do you think it's important to participate in an oral history project such as this one on the holocaust?

HD: Because, hopefully, as time goes on, if there is enough of it, and there is enough, even intellectually, interest, that maybe people have enough character and enough influence to make a difference to be able to actually, possibly, maybe fifty or one hundred or two hundred years from now, who knows, say, "We have studied this and we are heading for exactly the same spot and, for once in our life, let history not repeat itself." It hasn't happened so far but it may.

SL: I want to thank you very much for sharing all of this with us.

HD: Ok, you're welcome. **END OF TAPE 6, SIDE 2** **END OF TRANSCRIPT**