



# Gertrude Wortzman

Interview mit

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## Teil 1

**FF:** This is an *Austrian Heritage Collection* interview, conducted by Fabian Füsseis and Matthias Male, with Trudy Wortzman in her apartment. Ms. Wortzman, can you tell me something about your grandparents, your parents, where they come from, what professions they had?

**GW:** Yes, I can. My grandparents...on my mother's side, were in Vienna, and they had...they were not wealthy people, because I only remember them when they were old people, and they were...but they were originally in manufacturing cloth. I remember my father had to help them with money. So that is what I remember here. And then my other grandparents were in Poland, where my father came from. But my father himself...*war ein sehr wohlhabender Mann in Wien, und in den [19]30ern...ich weiß nicht genau...er hatte eine Bank gehabt. Es war das Kontoverein, und ich glaube, er hat es aufgegeben 1936, wenn wir schon...*when we heard about Germany, what was going on. So he...I am sorry, sometimes I will go into German, but okay. [Lacht.]

**FF:** That is perfectly alright.

**GW:** And he was helping out the whole family and then, after that, when he gave up his own business, he was a financier and he financed other businesses. We had a beautiful, beautiful apartment with lots of paintings and silver. He was an art collector and we got nothing back.

**MM:** Where in Vienna did you live?

**GW:** In the 2nd district, Rembrandtstraße 41. And...until the Kristallnacht, where they threw stones in and we lived on – not the first floor – *Hochparterre*, and all our windows were smashed and we had to leave. It was a threat for our lives and we left. We went to an aunt's house and the next morning, when we came back, the house was plundered – not everything, but most of the good things.

**FF:** But even before the Anschluss, before all that: How was your childhood in Vienna, how were your relationships with neighbors or in school?

**GW:** Beautiful. I have very good memories. And I remember when I went to school, there was no difference, who we were or what...it was a mixed class and everybody was very friendly. And I remember nothing unusually bad or anything.

**FF:** Which school did you go to?

**GW:** I went to many schools, first in the Leopoldsgasse, and then Obere Augartenstraße, and then...I went to *Fachlehranstalt für Bekleidungs-gewerbe*, and that was...actually, they called it the *Schneiderakademie* in those days and I did not finish that. I only had two years, and then one year you were supposed to practice – the third year – and the fourth year, you were supposed to come back for a whole year, and then make *die Meisterprüfung*. And then you were allowed to...you could open a salon or whatever. So that was interrupted unfortunately, and I never had the opportunity to get my education. But other than that, I have good memories, until the Germans came in.

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**FF:** So, before the Anschluss, there was no anti-Semitism towards you?

**GW:** There was. I did not feel it was much, because...we were modern people, assimilated.

**FF:** There was no religious tradition in your family?

**GW:** Yes, I mean, there was. I would say my father and my family were moderately religious, not overly and not very orthodox, but yes, I would say so. But nobody was in our way or anything. Sure, sometimes you heard some mentioning, whatever, about the Jews, but not much. It really started later. But that is why my father stopped his business in [19]36, because he heard already what was going on in Germany, and he wanted to leave. And he took a trip to, at that time, Palestine, and he bought some land in Palestine, but we never got it back, because they were building on it. It is very, very hard to think about that, but...he had a Polish passport with a visa, and I remember, when he heard, that the Baron Rothschild, who was a friend of my father, a business acquaintance...somebody of his family called him, my father, "You are on the list. Disappear! Get away from your house! They are coming to look for you, the next day or so." So he went to my aunt's house and from there he went to Poland...*vom Regen in die Traufe*. And there he had, again, a little business, until the war broke out. And then we were with the Russians – you know history a little bit – for about a year and a half, and then the Germans came. And that was why I was under bombs for that many times. And then of course, when the Germans came...would you like to know a little more about that?

**FF:** Of course. But I would also like to focus a bit, right now, on the time before the Anschluss. Your friends and acquaintances, were they mainly Jewish or non-Jewish, and did that matter?

**GW:** They were both. I had lots of non-Jewish friends too, and I had lots of Jewish friends. But even after the war, when I came, I got them all...the ones that lived in the neighborhood, and in my house, and I served cake and they did not have anything to eat. It was a very bad time, and we did have, because the *Joint* [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee] gave us, and also my husband Dan worked for the...whatever it was...from America. For me it was never a real difference, unless I knew somebody hates me. But other than that...and when we came, there was somebody in the building that knew us. Only one person hugged and kissed us. I was so happy. And then some...because we went back to the same house where we had lived, and our apartment was bombed out, but from a friend upstairs...they let us stay there. It was not so good...just for a few months, but everybody in the street was talking that we survived, and they tried to give us more food, or whatever. Everybody...we did not have any enemies. My mother was extremely well-liked.

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**FF:** Did politics play a role in your family?

**GW:** I do not know. My father read about four papers a day: *Die Presse* and *die Kronen Zeitung* war für uns...that was for us, because...and also *The Telegraph* and all kinds...I remember, my sister was a very famous dance phenomenon, when she was six years old. And she was in all the papers, when she performed. And they were saying, that she was going to be great. And she never got anything from that. So she was a big loser in that. But the people were...I would say not as bad, but when Hitler came, they changed...oh boy!

**FF:** Can you now tell me something about that, about the Anschluss? Did you see it coming, that it was going to happen?

**GW:** We saw it...only coming, not really. We did not see that they would march into Austria, but we knew that there were a lot of Nazis there, and were waiting for it. And because of the financials, people...the situation was not so good. So they thought, they would be helped by the Germans. And after the Anschluss, when we went on the street, "This is the rich man's daughter, look at her! Ah, she is afraid." I mean, things like that...and they took us to humiliate us, and to clean the floors in the streets. But this is nothing in comparison to what I went through afterwards...nothing.

**FF:** How did your friends, your non-Jewish friends change after the Anschluss, towards you?

**GW:** Some of them were wonderful, most of them were ugly. Most of them turned away. Maybe they were afraid or...we do not know. But there were a few couples that came when nobody saw us, and they were not for Hitler and they were against... People were...some of them were very good. For instance, I have a friend, it was my sister's classmate from the dance school, and her mother was Jewish and her father was not. And they survived. She is a *Mischling*, and they survived. Her father died of heart disease, and she and her mother, they survived somehow. So they wrote a beautiful letter, about what our apartment used to be, like a museum, and how she envied it, when she came. So I had all these things for...but I do not think that it is really what is interesting you and...what is interesting to you? I will answer.

**FF:** How were the first days after the Anschluss for you, when it all happened?

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**GW:** It was very bad. We were scared, and people turned into animals – some of them. As I said, not everybody, because there were some that were very nice, and did nothing, because they were afraid of other people. But the people that used to work for us, were standing by us...very nice...until we came back to Vienna.

**FF:** You were not in Vienna at that time?

**GW:** Yes. But we left Vienna on 1st February, [19]39.

**FF:** And you went to?

**GW:** Well, my father was in Poland. That is where the worst started.

**FF:** When exactly did your father leave the city again?

**GW:** Right when the Anschluss came, and he had...there was a list. Of course, my father was not a Rothschild, but he was a rich man and we had a beautiful apartment. So we heard from some of those people that he is on the list, and that he should disappear. They would have come for him and they threw these people right away to Dachau and to Buchenwald. I do not know what, at that time...some of them, they let out, some of them they finished, some of them had to sign over everything. With us, they took everything, so my father was not there. But I cannot say – and I say it again – that everybody was bad. No, I am sure that other people say the same thing. But the majority, of course, was euphoric. Hitler came and freed them, they thought. God knows what to expect.

**FF:** So what happened to you and your family after you went to Poland? You stayed with your father?

**GW:** Yes, and then the Russians came, because the war...if you remember history...half of Poland was taken by the Russians, and half by the Germans. And we were in the other half, where the Ukraine was, in Lemberg. In German it is Lemberg, in Polish it is Lwów. And now it is Lwiw. [Lacht.] It is Ukrainian. That was very hard, but again, we had some very nice people that we met. The people that were the superintendents, they would have gone through fire for us, because we were nice people, my whole family. And other people were not so nice. So first, when the Russians were there, my father was still working, and then...that was about a year and a half, not even two years, and then the bombs came and the Germans came. And then, very soon we had to put on armbands...like stars of David, and we had to go to the ghetto. We had to leave everything in our apartments that we had already. And then, I was in the ghetto, maybe a year, and I worked from the ghetto in some other places. Then I worked for the Wehrmacht HKP, which is the *Heereskraftfahrpark*. That is the army. They were good – I mean, some of them were. Again, the same thing: Some of them were very good and some of them not. And later on, from the work we did – slave labor – in the ghetto, and in the HKP for the Germans...they took us to sleep, into the concentration camp, and that is when it began. That was very, very bad. That was...the worst.

**FF:** Could you tell us...only if you want of course, but could you tell us something about your daily life in the ghetto? How was that?

**GW:** It was very, very rough, because...this room, which is a normal sized room, not too big, not too small, where we are. About twelve people had to be in one room, to sleep and everything. There was one kitchen, and I think twenty-four people needed to cook in that kitchen, and we...it was a very difficult life, and it was hard to get food and everything. And then the actions came – *Aktionen* –, where they took old people and children. And only the people that had papers, that went out to work from the ghettos, could make it. So then it started very, very bad. And it was about a year that I was in the ghetto. But I could get out, because I had the papers. And to this day, my husband and my sons – and I have another son –, they know, that when I

lose a piece of paper, I get hysterical. Because it meant to be alive or dead. Did you see *Schindler's List*, where that guy was on the train, because he forgot his papers in the morning to get out? You remember that?

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**FF:** So, the civilian population there, did they know what was going on?

**GW:** They knew. They were very anti-Semite. The Poles--

**FF:** --even more than in Vienna?

**GW:** Very much! The Ukrainians were, for instance...where I was, there were Poles and Ukrainians, because it was a mixed city. The Ukrainians...the Germans did not recognize that this is a Jew, and that...they did not know, but these people knew exactly. They looked for the Jews, they gave us out and they denounced people. It was a hard life...very, very hard. But we had a wonderful person that prepared for us...when we were in concentration camp, and...she was this woman who lost her husband, my father got her an apartment and they built a bunker for us, up on...in the bathroom, on top...very interesting. In order to get there, you had to put a ladder. But to be up there, if somebody came to look, she put some...something there, where the door was...to pull. And when the Germans came, we were only so scared that they should not come with the dogs. Because they would have smelled us. Do you understand? Yes, but it was very hard. So my mother was there first, from the ghetto, and my sister was a child, she had to work. They all were working and exploited, but they...my mother was the first one to be up there. For one person, it was not so bad, but then, when my sister came and when I ran away from the camp, it was terrible, because we could not sit, nor stand or anything. We were lying down, with no air, and we could not light a candle in there when the door was closed. So it was a very, very hard thing. When I think about it, I cannot understand how I survived this. But I was young. I was your age.

**FF:** So, I would like to go just a small step back. You were working for the Wehrmacht, when you were in the ghetto. You were working for...on trucks or something?

**GW:** For nothing! Oh my God, we were working...we had to do everything, but not as bad yet as in the concentration camp, because when they heard my German, "Can you write German?" – "Yes." So another girl and me, we came from Vienna, so we helped them with everything, with the *Kartothek* and everything. At the beginning, they were pretty nice, and they even gave us a basket with some food – not to the others, only us, because we spoke the language. The other Jewish people, they spoke a German which was Yiddish, not German, and we spoke a beautiful German. I think they gave us a little special treatment. But it was nothing like in the concentration camp. When we had to go into the concentration camp...do you want to know that? There was one SS man...there was an *Appell*...do you know what that is? I was looking down...I

could not look in their faces, and he said, "Look up!" – "Okay", I said, "I look up", in German. Dann sagte er: „Schau' mir ins Gesicht, ich spreche zu dir.“

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So I looked at him. He took his fist, and he...three teeth hanging out and bleeding. And I said in a perfect German, „Warum erschießen Sie mich nicht? Sie würden mir einen großen Gefallen tun.“ So he said, „Woher sprichst du so ein gutes Deutsch? Wo kommst du denn her?“ He was German, not Viennese. And I said, "I was born and raised in Vienna." And he took the next one, hit the next one, one got a shot in the head. I mean, it was terrible. From that day on, that same *SS-Mann* did never say a word to me – not a bad, not a good. Except about a month later, he came out and he said, "We need somebody that can sew and that can speak a little German." He said, "Can you sew?" He remembered. And I said, "Yes, I can." So he said, "Out!" So I went with six other people, and that was better for us.

But what I did when I came into the concentration camp...there were the right way and the left way...you know what that was? The left way were shot and gassed, or whatever, and the right are the people that could work. And there were two young girls...this I will never forget...one was eleven and one was twelve. And they looked like women – developed. And their mothers were going to the other side. And then, at night, when we were sleeping, I sort of took them under my wing, because they were crying, "mommy". This is heart-breaking. They were children, but they looked like women. So, they worked and I helped them a lot. One survived, and one was shot in front of us, in the back of the head, because she was not feeling well, and two people held her from the back – she should not fall down or something. And the other one is still alive and in touch with me. When I went to work inside, because it got cold and freezing, and they had us taking stones and move them. It did not matter, if it was a woman or a man – it did not matter. We had no gloves, nothing. So when they took me in there, and the other women, that was a very good thing for me, because I was sitting in the warm...at least for the time when I was working. And I knew what I was doing. I even showed the others that did not know, that were new. One helped the other...not everybody. Some were going over dead bodies...not all people. I am not going to tell you, that everybody was good. There were good people and bad people.

So anyway, what happened? When the Wehrmacht came and brought those uniforms, we had to sew on buttons, shorten the sleeves and all kinds of things. Someone says, "How many are there?" I recognized he had a Viennese accent, that soldier, a *gewöhnlicher* soldier. *Einer war Feldwebel*, another soldier. So I said, "Are you from Vienna? *Sind Sie aus Wien?*" – „Ja, warum fragen sie denn?“ – „Ich bin auch aus Wien.“ „Ist das herrlich! Wenn jemand kommt, darfst du nicht zu mir sprechen.“ He was afraid, of course. He helped me quite a bit, gave me extra bread, brought some things. And I gave it to the young girls, because we got a piece of bread, and had tea or whatever, extra soup in there. And it was warm. We did not need that much.

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[Übergang/Schnitt.]

**FF:** You just talked about the one officer that helped you, the one soldier that helped you?

**GW:** Yes. He was from Vienna and he was asking me questions, where I lived and...we were talking about the Prater and *das Riesenrad*. My God...it was like I was at home. It was so nice. I can remember If somebody comes in, I have to be...*er sagte: „Ich verstehe das.“* – “I can understand that.” So anyway, when it came...I ran away from there, with his help.

**FF:** You ran away from the concentration camp?

**GW:** In January...in [19]43, I think it was. That, I remember.

**FF:** Did many people try to do that? Did many people do that?

**GW:** They shot them when they...sure. Some of them went through the *Stacheldraht* and things, and they dropped dead.

**MM:** Just briefly, in between: Where was the rest of your family? In other camps?

**GW:** My father was in the camp, in the same, but women and men were separated. I knew that he was there, but then, my mother was already hidden in the thing, and my sister was at a German *Volksdeutsche*...this was Polish and German. She was a twelve-year-old child and she was *scheuering*, like cleaning, the floor and so on. She was very rough, but then she went. We knew we had that place, that my father had built. It was a wonderful Polish woman that did that for us. Of course, he paid her a lot, but later, when we did not have money, she still kept us. So she was one of the rightful Christians and Aryans that did not...that did a lot for us.

So, that German soldier was helping me. – “How can I help her to get out of here? I cannot, but let us think of something. The only chance that you have, is New Year’s Eve.” And he got very chummy with the people on the door – on the gate and upstairs was one, sitting. On New Year’s Eve, they drink a lot of [unklar].

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And he said... [Telefon klingelt.] They will take it. – “I will start out loud, with *Prosit!*”, and then the drinks were done. He drank very little, but he gave them. Then he called the guy down for a drink. He gave him the bottle upstairs, I remember. And he said, “At the sixth time, remember, that is when you move out.” Then he got



him drunk, but then the word was *Prosit Neujahr* or something – out loud. – “Then I will hug him, and sort of embrace him, and we will drink together. You go behind my back.” And that is when I heard shaking, and it was pitch dark, of course. And they were drinking. They continued drinking, but he was not drunk. When he saw that I was gone, he said to him, “Here, take the bottle.” I never saw him again in my life. That is what he told me, that he will give me at least ten minutes to go in the dark.

However, I was picked up, as I was entering the street where my mother and my sister were hidden. The Gestapo picked me up and threw me into the Gestapo [Geheime Staatspolizei]... – “What are you doing here?” I took off everything. They did not know I was running away from...what was a Jewish girl doing in the street? Anyway, it was not as bad as the concentration camp, because they immediately put me into the *Nähstube*. Of course, I was beaten and it was not...it was hard. But then, one day, all of us went to delousing – you know what this is –, to the bath, and I was kicked that time. We already knew...I do not know what happened to the others. I do not want to know. They for sure saw it, when they...I knew where to go and everything. Then I was hidden for seventeen months in that--

**FF:** --did you ever hear what happened to the soldier that helped you?

**GW:** I knew his name. I do not think he made it, because I searched all of Vienna for his name. I know his name was Rudi, and Hart...now I do not remember exactly. Hartmann or Hart, or something. I got in touch with other people, and they said that he never made it, that he did not come back. A lot of people did not come back. But I would have put him on pedestal, you can imagine. I will never forget him...what a good face, and how he changed his face, if one of the SS men came.

**FF:** Then you escaped from the Gestapo prison?

1/00:40:01

**GW:** Yes, when we went to the bath to the delousing – that was always once a month or so.

**FF:** And how did you manage to escape?

**GW:** I went up there, where my mother and my sister were, and the Polish woman took me in. It was not easy. We had very little to eat. I remember, that the only time that we felt safe at that place up there – the three of us – was, when it was a thunderstorm, or very bad weather. So we said, nobody would go out to get us now and get us. Can you imagine? It was raining, and we loved it. We heard that, when otherwise, all the time, we were scared. And a lot happened later. Her sister was telling the Gestapo that we were there, and she did not want any witnesses, but she was the devil – the sister of the woman. The woman that kept us was an angel. And they had the same parents. She had a doctor that she was hiding in her room, in her house, because she gave his whole family away. I mean, she denounced them...*angezeigt*. And we went into the...we heard the Gestapo coming, and she did not open the door, so we were safe. But they will be back.

And I remember...I actually really saved my family, my mother and my sister and me, because we went to the cellar and the woman was telling us, that they built from one house to the next house an opening to the third house an opening...if one house gets bombed, so they could run all the way through five houses. So my mother said...my sister was cold, and I said to her, "Yes, she is cold." She says, "What do you care? She is almost dead." I said, "No, not yet. You know what we are going to do? We are going to run. As soon as it gets a little darker, we are going to go one at a time. I will be the first." I said, "We are going out to the fifth house, and there we can go." Because the Gestapo was waiting. And then, when I came out, I was woozy, and a Polish man in uniform – he was a conductor on a train, and he was in uniform –, he came over to me and I thought, "This is it." And he said to me in Polish, "Do not show that you are afraid I will help you." Imagine! And I said, "My God, are you an angel?" – "No, but a human being." And with a smile on the face, "You just go and talk to me." I said, "But the Gestapo is on this side...I mean, the police." He says, "No, we are going on that side, but I will have my arm around you. And I may hug you and give you a peck on the cheek, so they should not think that you are afraid." He said, "If you go on the other side, they may recognize you." So anyway, he took me to that woman. I said to my mother and my sister, "I run out and we go into the lion's den, *in den Rachen* [meint: Höhle] *des Löwen*." But the woman...we knew that denounced us, and maybe fifty other people...but she had this one man, that she used to be his girlfriend, and she kept him alive, because she wanted...when people say she murdered so many, she denounced them, she could say, "I saved a Jew." And we figured all this out. And when we came, I said, "We all go to her house. And we come there and tell her that she is the only one that can safe us. Of course not telling her, that we know that she was behind all that."

1/00:45:35

So she says, "*Doktor Sperberl*." It was this doctor, a lawyer, but there it is a doctor. Is it in Wien too? Here it is. – "*Doktor Sperberl* is on the roof, *am Dachboden versteckt*, and I am not going to have him down when you are here." Somehow she changed her mind, because she said, "Look, we are going to get a lot of things from Vienna." The war was already almost over. The Russians were already close. She knew of all this. Almost! So she kept us. And nobody came, but there was one person living in her house. He was very nice, a Polish guy or Ukrainian, very nice. So she kept us, she fed us and then, when we heard one night...we heard, „*Fritz und Hans, haut ab*, the Germans!“ We were shaking. We knew they were already fighting and--

**FF:** --but Fritz and Hans were who?

**GW:** In her house, the woman that was denouncing us...but she got already the doctor down, and she kept us and we promised her a lot of things. And she kept us. I said, "Look, your sister kept us until now. If you will not help us, then we cannot make it." Anyway, she did it. Then, when we heard about five minutes later, after they said, „*Hau' ab*, the Germans“, [Spricht russisch.] in Russian. The Russian people, the Russian army came and they spoke Russian, and we decided, we are running out with them, because in another city, in [unklar, Telefon klingelt.], the Russians came for six hours and the Jews all ran out, and then the Germans

made *eine Offensive*, an offensive, and they came back for two days and they killed all 300 Jews. We knew that. And we said, "No, we are going to go immediately with the Russians, and wherever they go to fight." And that is how we survived. And I remember, when I came out, and I had small legs...it did not look as if I would make it. So I said...the Russians came over to us and said [Spricht russisch.], "Where are you going? What are you doing in the street? There is fighting around." We said, "We want to go to your side." And they said, "It is all our side", which was not true. They came into a *Keil, in einem Keil*. And we said, "We want to be with you." And so he said...there was one guy coming over to us, and he said – in Russian, we speak Russian. That is the only thing we learned, all these languages: Polish, Russian, Ukrainian. He said, "Are you Jews?" – "Yes." And he said, "So am I. I am a Jew too." He said, "Come over there." And there was a school. He took us to a school, and we stayed a night in that school. And he said to another woman...she was an officer...he said, "You see this girl there? She must have once been a pretty girl. Too bad she is not going to make it. She made it that far." And I heard that, and I said, "You are wrong." I did not say it. I said to myself, "I will show you I am going to make it." Of course, this was me. You see it? [Zeigt ein Foto.]

1/00:50:47

**FF:** I think, you also sent this to us. Did you send a copy of this picture?

**GW:** I could have, yes. So anyway, then we went...he came in, and he said, "Again, the Germans are trying to get to our side. You can stay or you can come with us. If you come with us you have to take a rifle and you have to shoot." We said, "We are going to do everything, we want to go with you." We were under citadels. You know what a citadel is? On the top of a mountain for three days, and lots of casualties...and then he came and brought me chocolate and everything. He wanted to revive me. He brought noodles with butter, and I thought it was a soup, so I started eating it. People said, "Do not eat it, because you are not used to eat that fat thing, it may kill you." – "No, no." So I had a piece of chocolate, a little piece, and just a few noodles. Slowly. But then, one day, he came in and he said, "Now all of this is ours. The Germans are already gone. You can go home." The next day...and he said, "You take good care of yourself. Maybe you can find a doctor that could help you still." The next day, he came and we told him that we wanted some food. They did not have any more, they gave everything away. He said, "Today, you already look better." One night without fear, that is about it.

**FF:** Do you know what happened to that woman that hid you, the sister of the woman who denounced you? Did anything happen to her, when the Gestapo came?

**GW:** No, because the woman that helped us died, with her sister, of a heart attack. And she helped her then. We would not do anything, because she helped us escape. What am I going to do? I mean, she helped us live, and that doctor that she helped, too. So we did not. On the contrary, my sister, after the war, when the other one had died and this one still was alive – the bad one –, she sent her packages. She says, "If not for her, we would not be here." I did not. I said, "I cannot." She had so many people on her conscience.

**FF:** Can you tell me, what happened to your father, all while you were in hiding?

**GW:** Yes. He contracted typhus. [Pause.] And he died of it, and...I do not know exactly. I only knew, that he did not make it. And my brother was in Holland, in [Durchgangslager] Westerbork, in Theresienstadt, and they took him to Auschwitz, and there he perished...and 37 people of my family. And in Vienna, wherever we had aunts and uncles, most of them left. Most of them went here, but the ones that got stuck in Vienna, they all...I do not know what they did to them. They sent them to Poland. So this is my story.

**FF:** And after the war ended, you went back to Vienna, to try to get some things back? I would be very interested to hear, first of all, how that was for you, how it felt to come back to Vienna, how the people were to you, what excuses they made?

**GW:** I started with that. I told you that, when we came back, people were very nice, because we had a very good reputation, with the people that knew us.

1/00:55:29

**FF:** And all the officials, that you went to, to get your stuff back?

**GW:** Nothing. The Germans took everything, we have nothing. Later on, we had the [Kartause] Mauerbach. It is too hot to talk about it. But right now, we have a big...the thing to fill out, and again...I doubt it. They are trying their best. I think they are doing very well in Vienna, but all these years they did not.

**FF:** That is unfortunately very true.

**GW:** You know that.

**FF:** I would just be interested to know what you did after that? You stayed in Vienna for some time?

**GW:** Yes, for about four years. And then, we saw that there is nothing there, that we could not get anything, and our family from the United States sent us packages, and also, the *Joint* [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee] gave us...did you hear about that?

**FF:** Yes.

**GW:** Okay. So we did not go hungry or anything. But there was no reason for us to stay, and we wanted to come to our family. And somehow, we left and we came here.

**MM:** One thing...excuse me that I ask, I hope it is okay to ask: When did you get to know your husband? In Vienna?

**GW:** Oh, you mean...this is my second husband. My children are from the first husband, that I met right after the concentration camp, when we were freed in Lemberg. And then he went with us to Vienna. He was very

good. He got a little bit of some jewelry back from some people in this city, but he was near Lemberg, and he took care of my mother and my sister and me. It was not love or anything. It was just a marriage of convenience. But I had the two children with him, and we were good friends, even when we decided to separate. I am already married to this man going on 39 years. So I have another family with his children and grandchildren.

**FF:** So your kids were born in Vienna?

**GW:** No, only him, only Jack. The other one was born here.

**FF:** After you moved to the United States, how was your life?

**GW:** Very hard at the beginning, until we got something.

**FF:** How was your first impression of the United States? Were you happy to be here?

**GW:** Yes, and we spoke English. Do not forget, I was growing up in a very rich home, and we had a private teachers, and also in school I took English as my foreign language. You could take French or Latin or English. And so we knew how to communicate, and then I got pregnant right away. My sister started working in a candy store, at *Barton's*, and it was rough times in the beginning, but later on it got better and better.

**FF:** Did you visit Vienna after you came here?

**GW:** Oh, yes. Well, we were there for four years right after the war. And then we were invited in 2000, my husband and me, and that was so beautiful. That time, they were already completely different, very nice.

**FF:** How do you see Austrian society? Do you think they learnt their lesson, or do you think they did not?

**GW:** Most of them, not all. Is there not still...I do not know...what is his name? [Jörg] Haider? I do not know how popular he is there. I think pretty much.

**FF:** Too popular.

1/01:00:18

**GW:** That is right. So what can I tell you? That is the story. Any other question that you can think of?

**FF:** I have one question, I hope it is not too personal, but what would really interest me is this: When you came back to Vienna, right after the war, in [19]46...before the Anschluss, and after the Anschluss, there was a very strong anti-Semitism in the society, in the population. Did you see a change in that, after the war? Were people as anti-Semitic or not?

**GW:** They did not show it that much if they were, but people who knew us from before were very nice. We had cards, that you got a certain amount of bread, and whatever. The *Milchfrau* gave us twice as much,

because they knew us. We were good people. Maybe not to everybody, but my mother had a very good reputation – my mother especially, because she helped everybody.

**MM:** Did some of the people, who right after the Anschluss, turned away from you, come back after the war and try to be friendly to you again?

**GW:** Yes.

**MM:** How did you react to that?

**GW:** The people that I went to school with, we got very friendly. I do not know about everybody, but most people...just nothing. But we were mostly with people that came after the war. It was a little bit separated. But look, I love the city. It is the most beautiful city in the world for me. Not because I grew up there, but I went through so much. I do not even know...I would not want to live there forever. No, I would rather be here, but I think, I would feel safer. At the moment, I would feel safer there. And I would like – once more in my life – to go back in peace, for a week or so. And we have lovely friends there, Non-Jews and Jews, and *Mischlinge* that survived.

**FF:** Did you ever teach your children German?

**GW:** Pete still speaks German. My other one too, because my mother, she never learned English properly. She only spoke German to them. They both speak German. I mean, with an English accent. But when my friends came from Vienna, he was talking to them. He speaks French and lots of languages, of course.

**[Ende des Interviews.]**

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