

Transcript:

Nessy Marks

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Interviewer: So you grew up in Lithuania?

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: You've had how many siblings?

Nessy Marks: I had five brothers.

Interviewer: You had five brothers?

Nessy Marks: Yeah and I was the only girl.

Interviewer: You were the only girl.

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you the youngest?

Nessy Marks: No, there were two others and my two youngest brothers were murdered hours before the liberation, turned in by some bastard Lithuanian countrymen of mine. The regular guards had already left and there were some and the few prisoners that were left there thought they were already free. They were hiding in ditches with shrubbery around it, but there were enough Nazi stragglers around and they had some dogs and every prisoner was sniffed out and killed.

Interviewer: Take me back to Lithuania.

Nessy Marks: Lithuania was a good place before the war to live. The Jewish community was very, very remarkable. There were an awful lot poor Jews there, but we were quite a good community. We were all taken care of. A lot of them, young people went to what was then Palestine and as pioneers and, of course, the British would not let people officially into Palestine which is now Israel, so most of them had to be smuggled in, but they gave what is called occasionally in [unintelligible 0:01:54] or they called it a certificate and I was one who raised so much money by hitting my grandparents and my father and my uncles and aunt, it was a very easy job and I won that one certificate where I could have gone to Palestine, but of course my parents would never let me go. So a friend of mine did go and she is the only survivor in her family. If she would have been in Lithuania she would have been murdered with her family. Lithuanian Jews the official is they say 92% of Lithuanian Jews were murdered. There are more and ask any Lithuanian, the few that are left is closer to 96% of the people who were murdered with the help of my Lithuanian countrymen and I hate them. I don't even have words to tell you how much I hate them but anyhow life...

Interviewer: How old were you...how old were you at this time when you started to become aware that...?

Nessy Marks: I was born in 1924. Now Lithuania had a district it belongs to Lithuania again which was at the German border called the district of Memel or Klaipeda, they had an awful lot of ethnic Germans there. Now my family came from a city, I mean from back you know back my father was born called Plungyan that's in the middle of Lithuania and the people of Plungyan were burned alive during the war. They were put into a couple of synagogues and a house. They were starved and then burned alive. I was...when I was in Lithuania four years ago I just couldn't go there, I absolutely couldn't it was just emotionally I could take only so much but anyhow life was...

Interviewer: You were...you were how old at the time of the war?

Nessy Marks: So the district of Memel was taken by the Nazis in March '39 that was actually before the war started in the west which started in September '39 and in the...but in Lithuania it only started in June 1941 and we lived in that district and our companies, our business part of it was there so it was known that the Nazis are going to take it and we fled to Kovno already in October 1938 and but that, I mean the upheaval started then and I was 14 years old. But as children we didn't really know the difference because it was as a matter of fact we were still receiving German refugees in October '38 not knowing how fast we will also be in hell and we...in '38 then something very interesting happened to my family and my parents were such honorable human beings that they would...they died and would never divulge the name of the person who warned them. A bake shop Nazi who use to be a friend before he became a Nazi out of greed I guess came to Lithuania in October 1938 and said, "Take the family and get out of Europe"...and but that time even that the world was close to Jews and my parents laugh into his face, they said, "What can happen to us? Hey, this is the 20th century." He came back and I mean he really could have been in deep trouble if the big shot Nazis would have caught him and warned my parents again but they have to give their word never to divulge his name and they never did. Both my parents survived the war. Papa was in Dachau for almost four years and mama was in Schtudhauf and my brother and I we begged them, begged them please just we wanted to know who that person was and they never gave his name and after they died we looked at every piece of paper to see if there would be the name somewhere on it. Well anyhow they took him seriously in March '39 and we had influence, I don't want you to say that because I come from a very wealthy background so the money was available. Now that I don't want, you know, I don't want to, I don't like to talk about that or even people consider that hey and she bragging though we had lost everything so this is off limits but you know I can't...and so nobody literally could leave, hardly anybody could leave Europe. The world wasn't very good for Jews then, even in 19 early 1939 before the war started but my father who had influence and this very, very honorable man bribed all kinds of people and we were probably the only family in Lithuania who could have left in time. We were holding Russian visas. We were suppose to go through Russia to catch a ship in September 1940 which was before Pearl Harbor of course from Japan and we had entry Visas to Canada and the communist came in, the Russians came in without any warning on a Saturday in June 1940 and then Monday they didn't let us go. It is like Churchill said, an iron curtain was all over the country, and that's where everything started, if we would have left on Friday before they occupied the country they never would have stopped us, they would have let us go. Listen I do have to go to the restroom where is my...

Nessy Marks: One, they immediately...we are not the only ones. They immediately took everything away. My family produced chemicals and paints and we had land and...

Interviewer: Before you go, help me understand where you at right now, you're 14?

Nessy Marks: Well I'm 14 and I'm and I'm in Kovno in Lithuania.

Interviewer: You're in Kovno?

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: And this was after the Nazi had told your parents to take you and get out?

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: OK.

Nessy Marks: But my in March '39 when the man came back incognito my parents took him seriously but again the world was closed for Jews. Don't ever let your anyone say and tell anybody anything else, but again we were able to get these papers and with paying fortunes to get the papers to go to Canada but my family was unable, let's say, to take an uncle or aunt with us. It was strictly for our family and that was a...but then when the communists came in, in June 1940 on a Saturday and we were holding Russian visas to cross Russia, on Monday they didn't let us go. If we would have left as I said before on Friday nobody will ever would have touched us. And my father, who survived Dachau, never forgave himself for the decision was made to stay another four weeks in Lithuania rather than go on and wait in Japan for the ship and he always said he killed his sons and he didn't want to live even after -- he was a broken man. I mean he was super brilliant to the day he died but he never ever forgave himself for that, that the decision was made to stay another few weeks in Lithuania. Well, anyhow just in passing I'll tell you, we were given by the communist, so we had it from both sides. Two hours to get out of our home with what we could carry once. Now we had, again my family had some influence and my parents were able to send some people into our home and they

took out some jewelry and some paintings and don't let me forget I want at the end to tell you what happened to that. So we were...since we were not that well known in Kovno since we had come from Klaipeda or Memel and Plungyan that was the other city. The communist just before the war started with the Nazis about two weeks before the war picked up a lot of people and send them to Siberia and many didn't come back but we were quite kind of unknown were not well known there and also very quiet you know and they didn't pick up...pick us up. Now my father said to us, we will be caught between the devil and blue sea. We won't you know what shall we do, you know, we were squeezed there. One side the communist and the Nazis you know would be coming.

Interviewer: And at this time you're with mother and father and you're five brothers?

Nessy Marks: Yeah. When the war started on a Sunday morning there was a lot of noise and Lithuania was a small country and my brother said, "Oh my God bombs are falling and that's when we realize the war was...started..."

Interviewer: And where you staying now?

Nessy Marks: We were permitted to in Kovno to live in the small building that we actually owned but that was already taken away by the communist and so there was no place to go. We had no place to flee or anything and the reason...I have to go back and forth. The reason I hate so much my Lithuanian countrymen and mind you my family had been in Lithuania for 500 years. They came from Italy and Spain and Greece you know during the time of inquisition. They actually were invited by some of, I think they were still pagan rulers there, you know, I'm not quite sure of the whole history and...but I simply can't forget, forgive my Lithuanians. During the year of the communist occupations, they recruited young man like you know the age of you or something the Nazis and they slipped them across the border into Germany and they taught them in camps how to murder people without guns. The Nazis would not have trusted this bastard, excuse my language but with guns and then they were slipped back into Lithuania and the day the war start and they put them all over the country, in cities, in villages and the way the day the war started it was almost like an uprising against the Jews because that's what they were taught to do and the murder of...in the first week of the war that even surprise the Germans, there was my grandparents is highly respected people were murdered on the second day and they had to be murdered by Lithuanians

because the Nazis didn't have it yet in place. Within the week, we were dragged into "the ghetto" but the ghetto in Kovno Kaunas was called...but labeled to this day if you read the history concentration camp number four. We had electric fences. We had of course we were starving. I mean and we were like zombies. We didn't talk to each other. We couldn't understand what was happening to us. There was absolutely no vision what will we do the next day and we were sort of scrambled together in a small place.

Interviewer: What did you know that was going right now?

Nessy Marks: We didn't really know anything yet...

Interviewer: Did you know about the other Jewish people?

Nessy Marks: No, we were hearing, but our parents kind of hid it from us children that it was very, very bad in Poland for Jews. Now we kids, I mean I have great respect for teenagers, we caught on just like that and we as teenagers were literally the first ones to say, "What's going to happen to us?" Our parents...the older people said, "Germany, the civilized country you know the most civilized country in Europe will do any such thing, impossible." But we teenagers we caught on. There is something about it, and until this day I respect teenagers but we didn't know what was happening and then the laws came at first you know the first day I mean they still committed to us to bring in whatever we could carry you know one time but then the laws came, stupid laws. No Jews allowed to even to keep a toaster or anything electrical equipment and now we had to wear big stars in Lithuania on the left side and on the right back shoulder. We were starved, can I tell you what starving is? No, you absolutely have to experience it, you know you are not dead and you know you are literally not alive and I don't have too many hang-ups you know. Actually, I have less hang-ups when I marry to an American family, you know, who had been here for centuries, but there are certain hang-ups, I do have. One is I have to have water in the house and if I have less than four cases of 32 bottles each in the house I'll probably go to Sam's and buy some more water. Would I share the water with others if they would have break down? Yes. I have...I learned about sharing but when I was growing up I learned that I would literally give the last bottle away. Here I am telling you how nice I am...but I would do it, but I have to have four cases of, that means 4 times 32 unopened boxes of water in the house. Where the

ghetto was close by there was a river, the Niemen, but we were not allowed to go to the river. If you went to the river you were shot and murdered. The murder in the first week in Lithuania and everything has been written up and it's in the history books. Is to this day incomprehensible absolutely people I mean who were our friends turned you know against the Jews trying to show the Germans that they were better Nazis than they were. Murder in Kovno it was a large city was horrible, many of our friends there were Lithuanian gangs went from home to home and literally murdered people. Again my grandparents they were not that many Jews there and they were herded together and they were murdered and when I was in Lithuania four years ago...there's just a tiny little monument paved, you know they are...there are over 400 massacre sites in the Lithuania of Jews and what is so not to be understood is people took their children to the massacre sites to show them how people were being murdered. There are pictures where they held them up to see. We are talking about the 20th century, we're not talking about 500 years ago and so where they're probably were more civil than they are there now.

Interviewer: So at the time in the camp, in the ghetto when did you start to discover what...that you knew what was happening. I knew you say that knew and...

Nessy Marks: Well, they said it within a week of 1941 in June already and they were bounty hunters in Lithuania. If a Jew was hidden somewhere that they were turned in just like that for a pound of coffee, for a pound of salami, yeah, these were my countrymen but we did slave labor. Anybody who wanted some slaves, you know "We want 50 Jews," "We want 100 Jews," and we were taken out and as I said before most of the times the guards were drunk and sleeping and so you could slip away. Now, for instance, mama worked as a slave labor at the airport in Kovno and they brought in maybe 200 every day I don't...I forgot the exact number and if they didn't have enough work to do, they had stones on one side of the airport and stones on the other side and then made her and all the others take these heavy stones and carry them to this end and then back and forth. I mean the cruelty is beyond anything that you -- one can understand. Anyhow I came home one day and my parents told me that they had made arrangements for me to be hidden with Magda. Magda and Peter, Magda was our cook even before I was born. I mean she loved us all dearly but I was her pet, you know she...So anyhow and I beg...by that time we knew that we are all going to be murdered and what the Nazis did during the...after the...during the ghetto period then surrounded a certain amount of people and took them, Kovno is surrounded by old fortresses and the ninth fort became "the killing field" and to this day I sleep very little at night, it's a nightmare because the war comes back every night to me and I still see where these

people were being herded to the ninth fort and by that time we knew that they would be murdered and the silence and I'm not trying to be dramatic but the silence was absolutely deafening as far, I mean you...the people knew that once they got to the ninth fort they had to...you know Germans are very efficient of course they used the slaves. The people had to undress and the woman's clothes they put here, the men's here, the children's there and then they were lined up naked and they were ready ditches dug and they were lined up and they machine gun down. In the history of the ninth fort I don't think there were 12 people according to what I've read who were able to escape the ninth fort. Some did come back a couple, young men into the ghetto and they were not believed at first by the lots of people, again Germany civilized you know it just couldn't happen and the...anyhow we were six girls very good friends and they again me...keep that out but I need to tell you this. It's not bragging we definitely were better than average teenagers. We all came from the same private school, all the six of us where two years ahead in school, at that time people would jump from one class to another if you could take it and we made a commitment to each other that, in the ghetto that whoever survive has to teach and talk about it. We were teenagers but we looked ahead and I am the only survivor in that group and I have kept my commitment. I am at times very...and then I'll tell you what then happened to me. I was...I kept it, something...it devastates me to this day but I do go into schools, I do go into churches and I've spoken to tens of thousands of people by now. I have files and files, when I was young and dumb I threw the thank you letters, threw the letters away but I still have on file at least 1500 letters, you know, of students and teachers. I've never taken a dime for it because this is my commitment and it would be obscene to take it.

Interviewer: Let me ask you something. When you knew these six girls this was in the ghetto?

Nessy Marks: Pardon me.

Interviewer: When you knew the six girls this were six girls from the ghetto?

Nessy Marks: Yeah, five and I.

Interviewer: Five other girls and you?

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you were 14 at that time?

Nessy Marks: No, by that time I was going on in '41 now was going on 17...

Interviewer: 17?

Nessy Marks: Yeah. We were all the same age group.

Interviewer: Were your brothers and your parents still there?

Nessy Marks: We were still somewhat together, you know one was...

Interviewer: So you were in the ghetto for about two years, two and a half years?

Nessy Marks: Two years...

Interviewer: Two years?

Nessy Marks: Something like that. When my parents had made arrangements for me to be hidden with Magda...

Interviewer: Magda was Polish, correct?

Nessy Marks: No, Lithuanian catholic.

Interviewer: Lithuanian not Jewish but catholic...

Nessy Marks: Not Jew.

Interviewer: OK.

Nessy Marks: And mind you the law was there they...but they use to you know they would be killed if I would have been caught but they simply said Jesus told us to do it and it was easier for a young girl to be hidden than for a young man you know 17, 18 they would...they could be stopped and say, "Where are your papers? Where...?" But I didn't want to go. I beg and I cried that I want to die with everyone there but my parents instilled in me and still have some of it, that they said it was my duty to survive and the only one who had a chance, the best chance was me, as a teenager my hair was probably even lighter than yours was, you know, you could kind of pass so to speak and...

Interviewer: Where did you know that your parents and your brothers were going to be at this time?

Nessy Marks: I did not know.

Interviewer: Did they know?

Nessy Marks: No.

Interviewer: They suspected?

Nessy Marks: OK, so I did slip away one day when the guards were drunk and when were not counted at the gate and I was hidden for a couple of months there and mind you these people have young children and their parents live there. If they...if I would have been caught they would have...why the Nazi's would have wiped out the whole family and rumors came to me...to us that my parents were murdered. These were rumors. There was a doctor and Mrs. Walpert in Kovno. No relatives, they understand they were murdered but the rumors came to us, it was parents and at first

they didn't want to tell me but they finally did and I wanted to go back to the ghetto because but they also told me that I never under what circumstance, they extracted a promise from me, that I would never commit suicide, never even under the worst conditions. Anyhow so what...it sort of was dangerous now for me to stay with them and I really didn't want to stay but they would not let me go back into the ghetto and again they said, "Jesus told us, we have to save you."

Interviewer: Where were you being hidden? Where in the house?

Nessy Marks: In their little house which we actually have bought for them and was a very small house and the communist didn't take that little house away.

Interviewer: Were you in a room or a basement or where in the house?

Nessy Marks: Oh dear there was a basement there, I was you know in the house. The children knew what...

Interviewer: So the family knew you were there?

Nessy Marks: Yeah.

Interviewer: Right.

Nessy Marks: But it was...I didn't want to stay. So they made arrangements for me to be hidden in Vilnius which is now the capital of Lithuania with some relatives of theirs. When I was growing up you couldn't even get a visa to go to the district of Vilnius because the Lithuanians and Poles were always fighting over the district they said it was Polish, the Lithuanians said it was Lithuanian and the Jewish said it was Lithuanian too but anyhow, they manage even to borrow a car for the day to take me to Vilnius which wasn't that far and there was a curfew. They...even for everyone they have to be off the streets too at a certain time. Anyhow so I -- they let me off blocks away so it wouldn't be so obvious that the car was coming into that poor neighborhood and the young woman was coming out you know, that no, and they left. I had the address and once I got there

was nobody in that little house it was like a shack, what little furniture was there was turned over and these are Catholics so I supposed the Nazis had arrested them for something and I didn't know what to do. I've never been there in that city. They gave me the little bit of money that they had. They were very, very poor Magda and Peter. Anyhow so they...and there were slave groups going into the ghetto of Vilna, its Vilnius. Let me call it Vilna that's to me what...and after the war it turned out that it so was horrendous, horrendous ghetto and they had a massacre site right next to it, but they were so guarded and the priest did not make up a name. He felt that he'd rather give a birth certificate of a girl who actually was registered with the church and he figured that if I am caught I would have another 30 minutes to live before they would find out who I really was and, unfortunately, I always very facetiously say, there were six good non-Jewish Lithuanians and I met every one of them. I say that so anyhow I worked there with that false birth certificate and on the basis of the certificate I had some Lithuanian papers which I have but the...I don't know you see when I moved back into Tennessee I was already sick and people packed up things so I until we get our own home which we would have gotten easier but my daughter had a broken foot and also bypass surgery so we have to postpone. We rent a home but we have to postpone...had to postpone it this year.

Interviewer: I want to ask you a couple of questions? How old were you at this point when you were working for the family?

Nessy Marks: In the 1943 I was going between 18 and 19.

Interviewer: Had you known at that time where your parents were?

Nessy Marks: No. I didn't know for...

Interviewer: How long had it been since you talk to them?

Nessy Marks: Since I left the ghetto which was sometimes when I'm 14...

Interviewer: Two years, three years?

Nessy Marks: No, no...but sometimes in late '42 or something or '43 you know they...times just sort of get away from me.

Interviewer: So in '43 you're working as a maid?

Nessy Marks: In that orphanage and what the nurse did every week or 10 days she called in, the Lithuanian and German Nazi authorities and they went from crib to crib, from bed to bed and any one "with a so called Jewish look" they pulled out the children of course the little boys with circumcision had then even – could have been and blonde and blue eyed they would have pulled that child out and the orphanage stood on land maybe like the size of a football field and at the end they had fence and garbage heap and the Nazis surrounded the garbage heap threw the kids there and just had a ball waiting until the children stopped crying and were suffocated, sometimes you know if it took too long they shot them. To the credit of the some of the nurses at the orphanage and including myself we try to save some children, but we never could. So one day I was called into the administrator's office, he was a doctor, that's one of the six good Lithuanians. He was very polite to me and he gave me a chair and said the rumors have it that a Jewish girl under false papers is working here. Everyone had to work and carried papers you know fake like this. He said he watched me and there was absolutely no doubt that I must have been the Jewish young woman or girl like what they've said. He said to me, he even watched me eat. He said, number one your language is better than what the other maids who came away from the country, Lithuania have an awful lot of dialect. They are some Lithuanians you don't understand and it's a small country what another one is saying. Your language is better, you have good table manners, you are just different and he said, "Are you a Jew?" And I look him straight in the eye and I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "You know what I've got to do with you. I have to hand you over to the Nazi authorities." I said, "I don't care. I won't live..." You see at that time I thought my...everyone was dead and as a matter of fact I've said, "If I do survive, I'll probably am the only Jew left in Europe and I don't want to be that way." Then he wanted to know my real name which I gave to him and he had heard of us but he did not know us and then again that wonderful, wonderful man look me straight in the eyes and said, "But I don't want to have you on my conscience. I'm going to help you. I can stall the authorities for a few days." And during the war there were seven million foreign workers in Germany, non-Jewish workers many like from Russian and Czechoslovakia and Poland were picked off the street literally and taken to Germany where they lived in

compounds, they had probably half the food rations that you know the Germans had and that was already bad enough and he said to me, "In a couple of days. . ." Oh yeah, he had, pretend that this is round, he had a cup of coffee on his desk or maybe just hot water you know of course didn't have coffee there anymore. He said, "Pretend that the rim of the cup is Lithuania." He said if you stay in Lithuania and pretend that the hot coffee is Germany, if you stay in Lithuania with the bounty hunters you know turning in Jews right and left. They would...you will be recognized one day and you'll be turned over to the Nazi authorities and he said he has yet to meet, know of men, of a strong man who has withstood German torture. He said they're not going to kill you immediately, they will want to know who helped you and you will drag everyone down with you, their families and grandparents and everything. He said he knows that if you jump into the hot water meaning Germany with seven million foreign workers from all over Europe working in Germany, chance you'll have a better chance to survive there than in Lithuania and then he said by mere chance 800 volunteers, the scum of humanity volunteered to go to work in Germany, but out of Lithuania they found 800 scums and they...he said to me we will...and then we started to talk about we so I presumed he was one of the few Lithuanians who fought against the Nazis in the underground. He said we will give you the...we will have the necessary papers and you know so you can go with that convoy into Germany and two men are going to pick you up in two days you would be...will not say a word to you and you are not to say a word to them and they'll bring you those papers and they'll push you onto the train while the train is already moving and sure enough these two men came. I don't think they were Jews. I think they were some Christian people. We never said a word to each other. They handed me the papers and they, they even brought a couple of sandwiches with me...for me and sure enough that when the train was moving they pushed me onto the train. It took eight days because you know the armies went we always have to be on sight to the lines to go which now takes maybe eight hours to travel by train then. Now we were let out, I mean we were not prisoners but we were according to the Nazi authority we were still second or third class human beings but we were let out when the train was stopped and we were given water and a little bit of food, not enough not to be hungry but so and once we got to the destination in northern Germany, I was a little lucky. I was...it's called the State of Mecklenburg where we were...was where we stopped and I was...

Interviewer: Say that again the state...

Nessy Marks: Mecklenburg, M-E-C-K-L-E-N-B-U-R-G and I was sent to a farm rather than to an ammunitions factory. Tens of thousands of foreign workers were killed

by air raids in the munitions factories by the west but they had no choice, you know the west doesn't have the choice. They bombed the factories and the foreign workers were there.

Interviewer: When you were on that train, did you know where you were headed?

Nessy Marks: Into Germany, I didn't know where.

Interviewer: You didn't know where? You knew you were going to Germany. Did you know what you were going to do?

Nessy Marks: No, they brought you into a camp of some sort and then they chose people for, it was sheer luck that I was sent to a farm owned by a lord, he had three big farms and he committed suicide the day it was over. He was a big Nazi supporter and his wife committed suicide to. But anyhow so I worried, now we had to live in a building in farm compound and we were locked up at night and if you wanted to go to visit somebody in another village, you had to have a permit to go. So we were not free but we were also not in a concentration camp. We were foreign workers, quite badly treated by the Nazi overseers. One day, of course you know I was still young...

Interviewer: You were 19 or 20?

Nessy Marks: Yeah. If I would have known what I know now I would have never let on that, I understood German you know and spoke it fluently but I didn't know any better, you know I was young. They ask me questions I answered in German. One day we were loading potatoes, frozen, rotten potatoes into railroad cars and I still feel the stench and we were...I was at the end of the train there working with others and the overseer with a rifle you know this older men, you know they had them on. Sent me to the other end of the train with some papers to hand to one of the other overseers so I handed the man the papers and that man said, "Hey! Wait a minute." In German and he said, "Do you know where this is going?" I said, "No. I've never even looked at it." He said, "Read it." And it said, "SS Auschwitz." Never heard of Auschwitz and then he said something I still hear his laugh, "Hahaha that's where they make soap out of Jews." There is a question of whether soap was made out of human beings. It is true that they

made lamp shades out of skin but the soap some historians say yes, some historians say no. I never heard of Auschwitz until then. So if you ask me whether the Germans knew what was going on, the murder, the unbelievable cruelty, I'd say yes and I have never ever changed my mind as long. As the going was good. As long as they robbed countries blind, not just from Jews, you know, from everything. They knew and they liked it. They liked it. They like the idea of being the super race of the world. They even...I heard it and then I read it in some books, where they said they are going to take the United States without a shot. They would...they liked it, only at the end of the war you know maybe a few months before, even then the German farm workers were saying "Oh the Fuhrer" you know Hitler, he has a special bomb and at the end he's going to destroy every, you know and we'll win the war. He had then in the, I don't know, were they hypnotized? I have no idea but it kind of look to me that way. Only at the end of the war maybe six months starting before we kind of were hearing...I was because I understood them when they were talking to each other that maybe something is going to...it's gone the wrong way for Germany, but for some reason they...Hitler had them in their hands almost up to the end of their lives. So when I came to United States and I love country music, there was a song very popular. I didn't...this woman cries, "I didn't know the gun was loaded, but she shot her husband a dozen times," you know, that she was crying then in that song and that's what I say about the Germans. They knew what was going on, but they...after the war and it made me even angrier, no. After the war I didn't meet one German who said, "Well, I was a Nazi and I was wrong," not one. They all hate Jews. There wouldn't have been enough Jews around for everyone to hide them and they were...and I don't trust them to this day, but there were too many collaborators in many other countries. There was an enormous amount of collaborators amount the French, who you know out of greed it's always out of greed. Dutch Holland is only now in the last few years coming to terms with their Nazi support, you know, we had read the books you know but Corrie ten Boom whatever name was and every...well we always thought that every Dutch person was so wonderful. Yeah, there were Dutch people there, but before the war the Nazi was forbidden in Holland and they had over a 100,000 in the Nazi party there though it was forbidden. So all the countries had these supporters except Denmark, beautiful little Denmark, Finland when Ribbentrop the former, their Nazi Foreign Minister went to Finland and said to the government we want the Jews, there weren't too many Jews in Finland and they said, "No. We don't know who's a Jew or who's not. We are all Fins." And they left them alone and I have the figures I think in this file how many people were murdered in each country and the only Fins, Jewish Fins who were murdered who were caught you know on the continent not in Finland and then another country, Bulgaria. I would have thought as a backward, little country you know back a thousand years not the Nazis but with tears in his eyes, he said, "Nessy." I would

never have recognized my father after Dachau, never. You know if I would have...I would have walk pass by him on the street and I actually walk pass by him there too...

Interviewer: Where were you when you were reunited with your parents?

Nessy Marks: Oh well I -- they wanted to come, they were in Munich. Oh let me tell you about mama. That's what the communists did. Mama was liberated from Stutthof about four months before the war was over. She was less than 70 pounds and a bunch of, six [unintelligible 0:54:24.0] caught, she didn't know what to do so she...they hitched a ride back to Lithuania to Kovno and they were let off on a square and mama had lost the, you know they had taken away the glasses and so she...way in the back in the square, a sheer coincidence, she saw a woman in a fur coat as a matter of fact it turned out to be mama's and the girl and she knew that woman had a daughter, but at first she thought it was me because of what that girl was wearing my coat, it was a very special coat with fur in the inside, you know were very conservative and she saw. When she came near and these were friends, absolute friends my parents had taken trips with them to other countries and mama less than 70 pounds, no strength, tried to hug her and the woman pushed her backwards onto the cobblestone and said, "You goddamn Jew, if you ever come near us, we will hand you over to the communist authorities." You see the communist had gone back to Lithuania and mama knew already that the communists people like her would deport her right to Siberia, after being in hell that's what the communists did. So that woman knew the friend, so called friend, that she would never go to the communist authorities and why did that woman do that's where we had left the jewelry, the paintings the, the fur coats you know that we were able to retrieve from our own home you know after... So mama was actually injured, she was skins and bones but she managed to drag herself to Magda's house that we had bought for them and she opened the door and collapse without a word and they nursed her back to health still not knowing and there, now these were wonderful Christian people but they had no education, you know what they were. He was a janitor, she was a cook but they were magnificent people. We had left there some rings and a couple of bracelets and a couple of necklaces, every bit was turned over to mama, nothing...I didn't even know because they had, they promised that they would keep it you know for my parents and these people was so poor they could have use some to barter you know during the war and they too were hungry...mama told us later on...

Interviewer: Where are you at this time?

Nessy Marks: I was in Bremen you know, no, at that time the liberation of the west was four months later than when mama was liberated. They nursed her back to health and mama handed Peter you know a ring and he was a terrific negotiator and he bartered for medicine and for food, and then when mama found out that papa was alive, she didn't know yet that I was alive and the communists would not permit them legally to go from Lithuania into Germany to you know to get reunited with the ones who survived and so people use smugglers to smuggle them across the border. Nine out of ten were taken by smugglers to the border of Germany, and then handed over to the communists authorities and these...most of them were sent to Siberia and were lost and never came back, but Peter hired, when mama found out that papa was alive and two of my brothers there, in different places, they didn't even know for a long that they were in Dachau, but in different places. Peter hired two smugglers and plainly told them in front of mama and mama was able... there was enough jewelry left to pay again for five other women who also found out that some you know their families were alive in the West, in Western Europe and he told those two smugglers if they turn over these women at the border to the communists authorities they're...even if they wouldn't come back, the smugglers wouldn't come back to Lithuania, their families life wouldn't be worth a penny and I mean the way he told it to them they knew he meant business and he said you take these women to Berlin and they took them to Berlin. One of the few who were smuggled across, who really was you know and then the smugglers came back and they got what little was left you know of course you know he negotiated it and that's the way the communist wouldn't even let them back. The worst part to me of the war is not my life, my family, my brother has a list. I had a brother in England during the war. My brothers were educated in England, I was too young you know my two younger brothers were young yet and anyhow he...they put a list together of family members some of them he or I wouldn't have known maybe third and fourth cousins or so but if they would have been a family reunion they too would have been entitled you know to be invited and there is a list of two, excuse me, 217 names of within our family group who were murdered. Lithuanian jewelry was totally wiped and when I was in Lithuania for 10 days, life is gone. There are a few Jews in Lithuania and I couldn't even understand them, just the ones I met not one was Lithuanian born, they came from Russia, they spoke Yiddish. I never spoke Yiddish in my lifetime, but I spoke Hebrew fluently and so I couldn't and if they would have spoken the Lithuanian type of Jew...Yiddish I probably would have understood some, but this was totally foreign to me. I remember me talking to some people and all I could hear was E for some reason. That was and of course my two

children did not know a word. The few Yiddish expressions that I picked up is from my American-born husband whose family had been here 200 years...