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Question: We will make the interview in the way that you tell me what you want, and you decide how long you stay on the different topics. I will start with some dates, can you tell me something about your family, names, professions...?

Answer: Yes, my father was actually born in Hungary, in a place called (???)¹, it wasn't actually (???), it was near the place, in southern Hungary. And he then studied in Vienna, he was to become a doctor, he studied medicine in Vienna, and he became a doctor. He is one of three children, he had one brother and one sister. He and his parents...well, the brother...we don't know what happened to him, but the sister and his brother's wife, and all his children and his parents were all killed in Auschwitz. His brother Joschi barely escaped from a camp, a working camp and we don't know what happened after that. So that was my father's immediate family, he was the oldest of the three. And my mother was one of nine. She was the second-youngest of nine, her father was a rabbi...I don't know the translation...in those days, he was the assistant to the main rabbi, he was working together with the rabbi of Lackenbach. So he comes from generations of Lackenbach. My grandfather doesn't come from Lackenbach, my grandmother comes from Lackenbach. He married into Lackenbach, and my mother was born in Lackenbach, so she had eight siblings. The oldest one died from the flu at eighteen, and the second one, my uncle Julius, he came to England before the war, and he became a rabbi in England later. He was before in Berlin, the last place he was before was Berlin, and then uncle Mojsche was in France actually. He spent the war in France and then escaped to Switzerland. After the war he went to America and became a rabbi there. Next one was a rabbi in Czechoslovakia, and he and his wife did not survive, they were also taken to Auschwitz. Next one was a doctor...actually, the husband of my...the oldest of my mother's siblings...a girl, she died of flu, and her husband later married a younger sister...no, an older sister, but they also did not survive the war. Then there was my mother and my youngest brother Rafi, who spent the war years in Cuba, and afterwards went to San Francisco, and he died...oh, I forgot one of the brothers, no, two I forgot, sorry...there was one who lived in Birmingham, he lived quite a long age and died of natural causes, and another one was a doctor in Wiener Neustadt originally and then in Tel Aviv in Israel. Then there was another sister who died...we are not exactly sure, but she didn't survive the war anyway with her husband. Then there was my mother, and then the youngest one who was an eye specialist in Vienna before the war, and then he went to Cuba. He eventually went to San Francisco. So none of these uncles have survived, my mother was the last survivor when she died six years ago in London.

Q: So where were you born?

A: I was actually born in Wiener Neustadt, because...my parents lived in Eisenstadt at that time. He was a doctor, his first job was in Eisenstadt, he was a what you call a GP, a general practitioner, and so...Eisenstadt at that time didn't have a proper hospital, so Wiener Neustadt was the nearest hospital and that was where I was born. When I was about two years old, my parents moved to Lackenbach and my father became doctor in Lackenbach.

Q: You spent your childhood in Lackenbach? Do you remember anything?

A: I have some vague memories, yes. I remember the house where we lived, it had a great garden in the back, with a well in the back of the garden. At that time, there was no tap water in Lackenbach, and many people had to go to public wells somewhere, but we had our own private well in the back...and we had a maid, Mitzi she was called, and she used to take the buckets to bring water from the well, everyday I think, as far as I remember. My father had the surgery in the house, and I don't know whether the house belonged to us or whether it was rented. Would it make any difference to me? No, because I got restitution, but they waited for more than sixty years until they gave restitution, but my parents are not alive anymore, and I don't remember. I remember the synagogue and the (???)², do you know what that is? It is a small synagogue, it was a room, it was across the street from the main school. There we went in winter, because they didn't have enough money to heat the whole school in winter. I remember playing with a few children, the rabbi's daughter, she was a girl about my age, maybe a little bit older. She is now living in a place near Tel Aviv. I met her last year, when I visited...she is a lady by now, and I remember her as a little girl.

¹ Ortsname nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

² Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

Q: Lackenbach was one of the famous seven Jewish communities in Burgenland, I guess it was orthodox. Do you remember some special Jewish traditions in Lackenbach?

A: There was something peculiar to Lackenbach, I've never seen it anywhere else. In the old days, they did what was called "*Schulklopfen*". There was a man, and when it was time for school, he used to bang on the doors, to tell the children that it was time to go to the school. My parents gave a little tip to the *Schulklopfen*, who let me help...I don't remember this story, but I've heard it...somebody asked me "*Wirst du dafür bezahlt?*" and I said "*Meine Mutter had schon bezahlt!*"

Q: These are very good memories of your childhood, but do you remember the upcoming anti-Semitism in Lackenbach?

A: I don't remember any anti-Semitism as a child, before the *Anschluss*. I do remember, I my little book I also mentioned this, there were some young people...there was a blacksmith across the road, and there used to be this young people, and they used to make these funny noises when I was a little child, and I got very frightened. "Boo Boo" or something like that, and it frightened me. As far as I know, they were just playing games with me, I don't think...maybe it was anti-Semitism, but I don't think so, they were just making fun at my expense.

Q: Did your father also have patients from the non-Jewish population, or only Jewish?

A: Both, both. In fact, when I went back twenty years ago, a lot of the old people remembered my father, and they said "I was once a patient of your father". One patient remembered that he lived in the castle, in the *Schloss*, and his little boy picked up a gun and started playing with it, and it went off...and he shot his father in the arm. And my father came and treated him. Another person remembered that his brother wanted to go to America, and they were very particular about diseases, so my father gave him...how many...20, 30 injections, before he was allowed to go to America. So, these were all not Jewish, of course. And one of those that I remember "*Ja, der war mein Doktor damals...*"

Q: We will come to your first visit in Lackenbach later. Now, you were not really aware about anti-Semitism, but do have any memories of the 12th of March 1938?

A: Yes, I do remember that day. I woke up in the morning, and all our windows were broken. The Nazis came in, and they took everything, jewellery, and...I don't remember exactly what. The only thing I remember specifically is that my father had a bicycle, and they took that away. But they took a lot of things. They came and broke in one day...we had a new stove, an oven for heating...*Dauerbrandofen*, I think, it was called, and they just broke into the house and took that away. I suppose it must have been quite heavy, but they took it away.

Q: Was that exactly on that day, or was it some other time?

A: It was a Friday night. I mean they carried on, it wasn't just one time...but that was...I don't remember how my parents explained that to me, but I knew that we were victimized because we were Jews, I don't remember, but I knew we were victimized by the Nazis, I don't know, how my parents explained it to me, they did explain it to me somehow.

Q: So you only remember this tragic day from your parents' stories?

A: No, I remember it...I remember the smashed windows and remember the Nazis marching...*Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil!*...I remember that...

Q: What were your feelings...what was your parents' first reaction?

A: I don't remember exactly...obviously, they were frightened, and they were worried. I don't know exactly what their reaction was, I don't remember...

Q: In your book, you wrote that your maid Mitzi was not Jewish, but Catholic, and that she saw your stolen bicycle...

A: It wasn't Mitzi anymore, she had left us before...it was her successor, Resi.

Q: She worked in your house, also after the 13th of March?

A: She must have been, yes...she took me for a walk. This I do remember clearly...I went for a walk with her, and she said "There's your father's bicycle!" and I look at it...and everybody had those Swastika armbands and all the bicycles had also Swastika flags. And this bicycle also had a Swastika flag, and I couldn't understand my father's bicycle would have a Swastika flag on it!

Q: So did your maid help you in any way before you had to emigrate?

A: I don't think so...the maid...

Q: Because it was unusual that a non-Jewish maid stayed in a Jewish household after the *Anschluss*...

A: I don't know how long she stayed...I think she stayed until we left.

Q: What was the next...

A: A little story...I don't remember if this is true, or if it is just my imagination, but it could well be true that when I went for a walk with her, there was a young man and he said "*Heil Hitler!*" and she replied very quietly...she couldn't...I'm not sure whether this is true or just my imagination, it could well be true. She had to say something to this young man.

Q: How many days were you allowed to stay in Lackenbach, because most of those people had to...they went to the Gestapo and were forced to leave?

A: I don't remember how many days, but it wasn't very long. What I do remember is that one day, there was a knock on the door, and a whole lot of gendarmes came in...I don't know how many, but quite a whole lot, and they took my father away. My mother was very afraid, and she asked one of them, whom she knew personally, it must have been a person from Lackenbach, probably a former patient of my father...and she said to him "*Was wird passieren?*", and he didn't answer...they just took my father away, and they didn't answer at all. It wasn't very long until my father came back, and he said that we had to leave the country, had to leave Lackenbach. I don't know how long it was, a week or two, maybe three weeks, I can't remember how long it was, but it was a short time. You probably know, what was the average time for...?

Q: I know it from Eisenstadt, where the families had to leave in two weeks...

A: Yes.

Q: Did any non-Jewish people or neighbours from Lackenbach give you any help?

A: Yes, now this is story I heard from my mother many years later. Actually, it is in connection with how we went back to Lackenbach and one of the people...I don't remember his name anymore, and it's also in my book, and he hid our silver for us, so the Nazis couldn't get hold of it. And he obviously gave it back, otherwise...because many didn't give it back, but he hid the silver and gave it back so he was a good man, this neighbour...I forgot his name now, but anyway.

Q: He gave back the silver after 45?

A: No no, before we left.

Q: So you took it with you?

A: Yes, we had a beautiful silver candlestick which my mother lit the Friday night candles, not quite until she died, because she was a bit worried about it being stolen, so we bought her some cheap ones. And she said...since I was the only child...everything that she possessed would go to me, and there is only one thing that she gave to someone else...this silver candlesticks she gave to her oldest niece, who lived in Haifa. I don't know if she still lives there, but at that time she was living there. So...but there must have been other silver things and jewellery which I...

Q: After you had to leave Lackenbach, what were the next stations?

A: The next station was actually Wiener Neustadt, where I had an uncle. He was also a doctor, I told you about him. I think he must have been around Passover, because we spend Passover in Wiener Neustadt with this uncle, because in Wiener Neustadt, they didn't have to leave as quickly as that. In the meantime, my father went to Vienna...He tried to get...we had to leave within two weeks, because we knew that Wiener Neustadt wasn't much safer than Lackenbach. And we had an uncle in Prague, he was rabbi in Prague. He didn't survive, we heard about him later, but...so we wanted to go to Czechoslovakia, and again, I heard the whole story some years later. So my father went to Vienna to the Czech embassy to go and get a visa, and it was a long, long queue at the embassy...so, it's no use, you'll never get it. And then my father met my uncle, my mother's youngest brother, who I said was an eye specialist. And he said he knows the *kindermädchen* of the Czech consul, and so spoke to her...and so we got a visa to Czechoslovakia.

Q: In the meantime you stayed in Wiener Neustadt?

A: I do not remember exactly how long, a short time, perhaps a week. A very short time.

Q: What were your feelings as a child about all that happened around you? Did you have a special feeling at that time about the change? Were you aware of the fact that you had to leave your home?

A: Yes...I don't remember my exact feelings. I was worried of the change, I don't think I was worried for my life. At that time I certainly didn't know that there was any risk to life. But I was worried that we had to leave from one place to another, and I was unhappy about it. Exactly how I felt about it I, I don't remember anymore.

Q: Did you leave Prague by train or by plane?

A: By plane...left Prague? No, Vienna...Wiener Neustadt.

Q: You went directly from Wiener Neustadt to Prague?

A: Yes, by Vienna, I think we must have changed at Vienna...I remember that my uncle met us at the station there, so it must have been by Vienna into Prague.

Q: And that was before November 1938?

A: Yes, oh yes...in November 38 we were already here.

Q: And how long did you stay in Prague?

A: Must have been about six months.

Q: You stayed with your uncle...?

A: With my uncle, yes. For a time, we stayed in another place, where another uncle and aunt were, my mother's sister and her husband, they also didn't survive, in a place that was at that time called Mis³. In my book, it tells you what it's called today, I can't remember now. It's in the west of Czechoslovakia, so when you come from Nürnberg into Slovakia, I think you have to pass it. I can't remember the name right now, but at that time it was called Mis. He was rabbi there.

Q: How old were you at the time?

A: I was six. I started school...first class...in Prague.

Q: You started in a Jewish primary school?

A: I don't think it was specifically Jewish. It was a German speaking school, and as far as I understand, it was a school for German diplomats, but most of the students were Jewish at the school, because they were all people who fled. And I remember the children asking "*Bist du legal oder illegal?*"

³ Ortsname nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

and I didn't know what they were talking about, so I asked my mother *"Mami, sind wir legal oder illegal?"* So, we were legal, because we had proper visas, but a lot of people had just crossed the border without papers.

Q: How long did you stay in Prague?

A: Must been about six months.

Q: You couldn't finish the first grade in Prague? And you went on from Prague...obviously before the war started, before September 1939?

A: We left Prague on the 10th of November 1938. You know what that means?

Q: Yes, this was the exact date of the so called "Kristallnacht". Did you know about it at that time?

A: No, not until some years later. I don't...probably my parents knew, they read newspapers and so...I didn't know until quite long later, but I'm sure my parents knew about it much earlier.

Q: So you took the plane to London?

A: Yes.

Q: Was it easy to get visa for Great Britain?

A: No, it wasn't easy. But England allowed 50 Austrian doctors, Jewish ones, to come to England. I think somebody pulled some strings somehow, but we managed...my father got on that list of 50, and so that's how...my father...we went from embassy to embassy trying to get some...my father later told me that he once subscribed to become a agricultural worker in Argentine...he didn't really want to, but he had no other choice...he knew that Czechoslovakia was the next on the list being invaded, which must have been shortly after we left.

Q: You arrived in London before the war broke out, in 1938?

A: 1938, yes.

Q: What are your first memories of London?

A: A big double-decker bus. I never saw a double-decker bus before, I thought it was a house or something in front of us.

Q: Where did you stay first?

A: We stayed in...my father had to study, that was the condition, he had to study again three years. They didn't accept his Austrian diploma, his medical diploma, so he had to study again. For him, it was difficult, because he didn't know the language properly either. My mother said that he had a medical book on one side and a dictionary on the other side.

Q: What were the biggest problems you and your parents had to face after arriving in London?

A: Well, the language, I suppose. And being in a strange country. We lived in Stanford Hill⁴, which was a Jewish area then, and still is a Jewish area, I don't know if you know about it. But I went to school there, I went to a Jewish school...

Q: English-spoken school, of course?

A: English-spoken, yes, of course. I couldn't hardly understand a word. The first thing I leaned was I think about Humpty-Dumpty. I didn't know what Humpty-Dumpty was, do you know it?

⁴ Ortsname nicht sicher verstanden, Anm. AP

Q: No.

A: Oh, it's a nursery rhyme. You know what a nursery rhyme is?

(erzählt den Reim von Humpty-Dumpty und wie er ihn in der Schule gelernt hat)

(jemand kommt rein, seine Frau?, geht wieder)

Q: We were at your first time in Hampstead in London. You told us that Hampstead was, and still is, a Jewish quarter, so did your parents live in a kosher household?

A: Yes.

Q: Was it a problem in the beginning in London to live in a kosher household?

A: No, it wasn't. We only stayed in London for a short time, then we moved to other places. The only problem was...my father was very peculiar about the milk. The milk has to be...we had to watch the milking, because we sometimes suspected that they mixed it with milk from other non-kosher animals, which they used to do sometimes. So, the milk had to be watched. Now, you get it commercialised, that time as well, but not everywhere where we stayed. So, my mother had to go to the milking and had to get our milk from the farms. That's the only problem that we ever had, otherwise everywhere we were, we could get kosher food, so that wasn't a problem.

Q: How are your memories about your childhood, about your time in school for example? What was the reaction of the local neighbourhood towards your arrival?

A: The neighbours and the school? I don't think they really minded. Much later, we lived in a place outside Birmingham. We stayed with a woman which was rather nasty. Whether she was nasty because we were foreigners, or...she just was nasty to everybody. She didn't treat us very nicely...but that's the only time I remember. But I remember my grandmother was always scared, my mother was always scared "Don't tell your friends you're Jewish! When you go to the school, don't tell them that you are Jewish!" So to my very closest friend, I used to whisper "You know, I'm Jewish, but don't tell anybody!" Whether it was justified to be scared, I don't know, but maybe it was a remnant of the Nazi regime..."Don't tell your friends you're Jewish!"

Q: Your parents and you moved very often in that time. You also wrote that in your book. How often did you move until the beginning of the war?

A: Yes. The beginning of the war? We moved from London, because they had all those 50 doctors, and they didn't want so many foreign students, they spread them all over England. We landed in Liverpool. So, the war broke out while we were in Liverpool. I was evacuated, though. Just before the war, the children were evacuated. Everybody knows the story of the big evacuation. I was in Chester when the war broke out, living with a non-Jewish family, actually. Talking about kosher, you couldn't get kosher there. They weren't supposed to serve me meat, but what else...I wouldn't eat in that house today, but as a child...and because of the circumstances, it was...we had to take it a bit easier. That's when the war broke out. In fact, my parents visited me in Chester, somebody gave them a lift to Chester, must have been the parents of another child, and when they arrived, I think they were told at the petrol station that the war had broken out.

Q: So the blitz...the bombs...you do call it that way? How did you experience this time?

A: I think we were in Birmingham then. We had to leave Liverpool, because there were what they called "protected areas" at the docks, and all the foreigners...they thought we were spies, and all the foreigners had to leave what they called "protected areas", so we had to leave Liverpool. And my other uncle, I told you about him, he was also one of the 50 doctors, uncle Aladar, we used to call him uncle Ali...So he was in Birmingham...so we moved to Birmingham, this was already 1940 sometime, and there we got the blitz, in Birmingham. Very bad, actually, every night, nearly every night we had to go and spend the night in air raid shelters. In the morning, we would go...we would hear the bombs all night, I remember hearing all those bombs, the whistling and the rattling and banging...and, in the morning we would go out and see all those houses, rubble houses, big craters in the street. At one day, I went with a cousin at the same age, and we was a son of uncle Ali, and we used to go to the

same school, went together in the morning. Oh, I forgot to tell you, in the meantime, my father and my uncle were interned, that's also a part of history. Because all the foreigners were interned.

Q: Was it on the Isle of Man?

A: Some were on the Isle of Man, but my father and uncle were at a place called (???)⁵. I never found out until many years later where is this (???), I had to look it up on the map. It's somewhere in the middle of England, I don't ever know now where it is, but I looked it up on the map. And there was a camp of canvas tents, the most primitive of all the internment camps, apparently, Isle of Man was a little bit more nice. This camp was very primitive, barb wire, British soldiers walking at the barb wire fences, so nobody would escape. It was only for ten weeks, but it seemed an age to me. In the meantime, my mother and I moved in to my aunt's, who had two sons, one older than me and one about my age. So, one day we went to school, and the school wasn't there, just a pile of rubble after the air raid.

Q: So it was a very frightening time in your life?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: You also changed schools back then. Where did your (and your parents' friends) come from? Were it all Austrian refugees, or were they from Jewish families from England?

A: Both, I think. In Liverpool, we were actually very well treated, with open arms. All the local Jewish people wanted to befriend us. In Birmingham not so much, I think most of our friends came from Austria or Germany, they were refugees like us, not all of them, but many.

Q: Was it a difference to be a Jewish refugee from Austria or from Germany?

A: I don't think it made any difference. We were German-speaking, and I don't think they distinguished between Austrian and German Jews.

Q: In what language did you and your parents talk at home?

A: We had our grandmother stay with us for a long time, and she could speak hardly a word of English, so we spoke a lot of German at home. Until I was evacuated, I liked to speak German with my parents, and my father was trying to speak English, but...I still liked German better. After I came home from evacuation, I was only evacuated for a few months, because at that time there were no air raids...we call them air raids or blitz, means the same thing. There were no air raids until much later, so slowly, all the children came back home, and then I only wanted to speak English, because I had spoken English with the people I was staying with in Chester. I spoke both, and my grandmother certainly spoke German, and (???)⁶

Q: I just remembered the tape with your interview of your mother. You asked her in English and sometimes, she fell back into a typical Lackenbach dialect. It was very interesting. In the time of the first air raids (1940-1941), there were also the first deportations of Jews from Poland or Germany. When did you or your parents learn of this tragic events?

A: I know we heard about it. I don't remember exactly when we first heard about it, the...I do remember in Hebrew, we have a little prayer, and it includes how people die, by (???)⁷, by fire, some by earthquake, and so on...it tells you how you can be a (???)⁸, predicts who's going to live, who's going to die...and my father said "who can die by gas chamber", and that was in 42, 43, I don't know exactly when he said that, but obviously...and I didn't ask him "Daddy, what's a gas chamber?", so obviously, I knew at the time...so this remains in my mind, this particular incident. Just when exactly I first heard about that, I don't remember.

Q: So, after that, did your parents follow the news about the war, and did they hope that Germany would be defeated?

⁵ Ortsname nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁶ Satz nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁷ nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

⁸ nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

A: Oh yes, we followed the news...

Q: I mean the end of the war...the day of victory was celebrated all over the world, obviously not in Germany, but...in the USA, in England, there were celebrations. Do you remember this day?

A: I remember, yes. I was thirteen...going on thirteen. There was a VE Day and a VJ day, because there was still fighting in Japan, but...so VE Day, Victory in Europe, was May 8th...and so, I was going on thirteen, and I remember that quite very clearly.

Q: Were you also on the street with the other people celebrating?

A: Yes, we went...we were living in Leicester that time, and I remember we went to the main square near the Town Hall in Leicester, where there was dancing. We didn't take part actually in the dancing, but we joined...we were happy, we listened to the music, we watched dancing. It was a very happy day for everybody.

Q: Were you searching...I mean, you were at an age when one starts to wonder about his family and what is going on in the world...what did your parents tell you what happened to your family?

A: Our family? We didn't know what had happened to them yet. We exchanged letters with my grandparents for a time, and then they stopped. We didn't know what had happened to them until after the war. From my mother's family, her brother...we just didn't know what happened. Of course we were worried, everybody was worried what had happened. I don't remember exactly when my father said...actually, I got a letter...actually, it is printed in my book, the excerpt of a letter from a cousin of my father, dated four months after the war, telling that my father's parents, sisters, sister-in-law...so, we know the exact date when they went to Auschwitz.

Q: After the VE Day, what were your parents' first thoughts? Your father had already finished his studies and got his M.D. at that time...did he or your mother think about the possibility of a return? Did they want to go to Israel, or did they just want to stay in England?

A: My grandmother wasn't alive by then anymore. In England...it certainly didn't enter their minds that they ever go back to Austria, no...I don't think they wanted to go to Israel either, they wanted to stay in England.

Q: Did they have any property in Lackenbach which was taken by the Nazis, maybe land or houses?

A: They took away my grandmother's house...I don't know whether that house belonged to them or was rented, I never asked her about it while she was alive. I have a feeling that it was rented, but I'm not sure...but of course, his library was taken away. He was a doctor there, with a reasonably...and it was taken away...and the small properties, jewellery, bicycles, and things like that. They just knocked on the door one day, maybe...it was the day after the 12th of March, they knocked on the door and said "We want all your silver, we want all your jewellery!" And all the money as well.

Q: Did your parents ever ask for restitution after 1945, or did they...? And did they get it?

A: Yes, they did, and they got a pension, yes.

Q: But the library and the jewellery was not given back, it was only the pension?

A: Only the pension, yes. As far as I know only the pension, yes.

Q: Did your parents ever come to Austria after the war?

A: No. No.

Q: But you came to Austria?

A: I was there later. I was in Austria when my children were...my oldest son was already twenty, and the youngest daughter was 12-14 at the time. They wanted to see where they came from, so we had rented a caravan and we went to other places on the way, including Prague. And then we stayed for two days in Vienna, and one day down to Lackenbach.

Q: So it was the idea of your children to visit Austria?

A: They wanted to see it, and it was a good idea.

Q: The visit was in 85. Was it the first time?

A: The only time, yes.

Q: How were your feelings before you started your voyage back to Austria and Lackenbach?

A: I wanted to see the place I grew up. Even the people there...

Q: How did you meet the people there, the neighbours, the people on the street...what sort of reception did you get?

A: I didn't think...I wasn't afraid. My mother said, just before we left on the caravan "Don't park the car in Lackenbach, because they will break the windows!" Of course, we weren't scared by that anymore. When we were there, we had a feeling...we didn't know who was Nazi, everybody was talking about how good their relationship with the Jews had been, and so on...we met a lot of the older generation, but we didn't really know who was Nazi at the time and who wasn't Nazi.

Q: You were in Prague and in Vienna. Did you also visit Wiener Neustadt?

A: Wiener Neustadt, we just drove through. Actually I stopped in Wiener Neustadt, because I wanted to see the hospital where I was born. So, we stopped and asked a lady in the street "Is there a hospital?" She was about 50 years old back then, and that was 16 years ago and I'm 69 now. So, I didn't know what to expect, so I went round the corner and there was this huge...do you know the hospital in Wiener Neustadt? A huge big hospital, a modern block with all glass and so on...and next to it is the old hospital, an old red brick building...between the little hospital and the big hospital, so I assume the little one was where I was born, not the big glass structure.

Q: In Lackenbach, did you try to find the house where you and your parents used to live?

A: Yes, I did, but it was pulled down. It was a big, block of flats with a bank there, where I used to live. The only thing remaining was the well that used to be in the back of our garden, they showed us the *Brunnen*...

Q: Did you meet any people who remembered your parents?

A: Oh yes, lots of people remembered my parents, yes. And even my grandfather...some people even remembered my grandfather, so...

Q: How did you approach the people in Lackenbach...because you didn't know them either?

A: I tell you what happened. Of course, it was Sunday afternoon, and we drove into Lackenbach, and the first thing we saw way down was a big petrol station...a very big petrol station. And the name was *Prokopetz*. And I remembered, as a child, there was a person who owned a little bus...at that time most people used to go by horse and cart when they travelled, but he had a bus, a coach, and the name was Mr. Prokopetz. So, I parked the caravan, and there was a older, middle-aged man and I approached him...and, anyway, he turned out to be Mr. Prokopetz, the son of the old Prokopetz. He was also...older than me already, and so we started talking, and suddenly the whole street became full of people who all remembered either my father...also they took us to their houses, and then...they didn't take us into any house. We didn't walk into any of the houses, but they showed us around Lackenbach. One person took us, actually it was Mr. Prokopetz, to the old cemetery where my grandfather and...no, my grandmother was buried in England, so...my grandfather was buried there and a few other relatives, so he took us there and...it's quite different to what I remember Lackenbach, because I remember Lackenbach being dirt tracks on the street with mud, and now of course everything

is nicely paved. It's funny because a little while before that I had a dream just like that, that I went back to Lackenbach and everything was mud and (???)⁹ and so on, and that's how it was.

Q: So did you feel like a stranger or tourist there, or...because Lackenbach was so different from what you remembered it?

A: Like a stranger, yes, I was a tourist there, yes. I don't think, from Birmingham, I was the first tourist from there...I think that other people from Lackenbach, older people from Lackenbach came from time to time, but my parents never came. They had the idea once to come, but they never did.

Q: Do you have children?

A: Yes, two sons and a daughter.

Q: Your two sons accompanied you to Lackenbach, your daughter as well?

A: Yes.

Q: How did your children feel about visiting Lackenbach?

A: Oh, they were very interested, they talked to the people, I mean...my two sons, they speak Yiddish, which is very similar to German, so they managed to converse with the people there. My daughter didn't speak any Yiddish, so she had to...she didn't speak to anybody. But my two sons managed to talk to the people there. They spoke Yiddish, and the...any the Austrian accent is not proper German anyway, so...

Q: Did the Jewish community back in Lackenbach speak Yiddish as well?

A: No, they spoke German...they spoke a special type of German, I think...nothing like...my grandmother spoke a special dialect. I don't know what it was, it was not the normal Austrian dialect, and it certainly wasn't Yiddish, it was something.

Q: I know that the Jewish community in Eisenstadt used some words from Yiddish, but only a few words. The people didn't speak proper Yiddish.

A: It was the same in Lackenbach.

Q: This was your first visit in Lackenbach and Austria after 1938. What were your feelings towards Austria and Austrians after the war?

A: After the war? I thought there were terrible people there in...the way they treated us.

Q: Of course, but...you never thought to go back to Austria, it was your children who wanted to go there? You never thought about it before you visited Austria?

A: Oh yeah, maybe I thought about it. Yes, I probably thought about it, but I never came to it...

Q: So, it was your children who finally made you visit Austria?

A: Yeah, probably they were...

Q: And your children are interested in the family history?

A: Yes. I wrote this book mainly for my children, actually. Then, all of a sudden, people were interested in it...all the wider family. And all the people come to me and say "I'd like a copy"

Q: Now let's return to your school time? When you decided to study chemistry...can you tell me something about your profession where you studied, and when you finished?

⁹ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP

A: I studied in London, because in Leicester there wasn't very much Jewish life, and I wanted to be in a place with more Jewish life. So, I lived in London and I studied in London. I took my first degree in...it was called at that time "Northern Polytechnic", everything's changed now, it's called the "University of North London" nowadays, but at that time it was called Northern Polytechnic. It was a small college university in London, and then I got my BSc degree, and then later I went to a bigger place, University College London, and I took an MSc there. And then I...my first job was at Lion's...you ever heard of Lion's, it's a food manufacturer. And then later on I joined a small company outside London with a Jewish owner, somebody we met once. He had a chemical factory, and I thought it would be nice...so I joined that company doing research. I spent the rest of my working life there.

Q: Did you meet your wife there?

A: I met her in London.

Q: In London. You worked as a scientist?

A: Yes.

Q: Was it a company producing kosher food?

A: No, nothing to do...no...Lion's? No, no kosher food. No, Lion's is just general food. No, this wasn't food, it was chemicals for (???)¹⁰ industry...nothing with food.

(Ende Band 1 von 2)

¹⁰ Wort nicht verstanden, Anm. AP