

>> ... and the little bathtub was just heaven to us because we were in a free country and we could talk and we could say something. And I'll never forget, when we arrived in New York, my boy looked at me and said, "Mother, can I talk now?" I said, "Yes, you can." "And can I cry?" I said, "You can do that too."

But there are other people out where the children were in a bunker and where the children put -- when the mother put the hand in front of the children and the children just finally turned to stone catacomb. But my boy, a real boy, he was eternally grateful when he could talk and when he could say something. There came one lady, a schoolteacher, with a box of 5-cents Hershey bars, and he looked at -- I said, "Yes, what can I do for you?" "I hear that you are just newcomer. I want to bring that boy a box of Hershey bars." And Henry said, "I can't take it because we are allowed only one Hershey bar a month for all three of us. My parents didn't eat it, and I ate it, and to have 20 Hershey bars in one box -- please, take it home." He was -- that was impossible to have a box of Hershey bars, and that lady was so nice. She said, "No, that is for you. Eat one a day."

People were lovely when we came to America. We were not the first ones, we were not the last ones, and there are many people before us and many people after us. And there is such a...amount of goodwill between people, and there is a certain amount of indifference or hate. When we came, we went to synagogue the first Saturday morning, and we looked different. Our clothing was different. Our way of talking is different. Still, after 51 years, it's different. And one lady came to us, "We didn't ask for you. We can't use any refugees. Get going. March. Get going." I said, "We have no money to go." "Well, there is no place for you to earn a living." And I said, "We have to stay,

and you will not be sorry that we stay. One day, you might be proud that we came. One day, you might say, 'Oh, somebody came way over from Germany on account of Hitler and showed what people really can do.'" And that lady, after I established myself, she tried to latch on to me, and I killed her with kindness, so much kindness that she really was ashamed. Up to this day, nobody knows who she was, and I take it into my grave because I will not say to the family they did it. But I never forget it.

But there were other people that stretched out the hand. They were so warm to us. They tried to help us. All our stuff that came over in the lift when we packed in New York -- which was our latest, last belongings -- were terribly destroyed on the "President Harding." She had a hard crossing, and salt water came into the lift bin, destroyed everything from the furniture to the linen, to the dresses we had. Everything could be just thrown away because they stood at the foreign-trade zone for ten months until we could get them out. It was not insured anymore because it was insured just for the crossing, and they thought it was taken off. My uncle in England insured it. He said, "Only for the crossing, and then it was not insured." We lost everything that way.

But nothing really mattered. When we came to America and we saw the beautiful streets and we saw the beautiful churches and we saw the sky and the ocean and the air and we could do what we wanted to do, we could walk around, we could -- the first -- we came in April, and in August, we had a terrific hurricane in Charleston, and we were so overcome by Mother Nature, my husband and I, we went to the Battery to look at the waves, and it was just a spectacle! Until somebody came behind us and said -- that was a policeman -- "Get out of here! This is dangerous!" well, we wanted to see something Mother Nature -- which we really had not seen the last few years in Germany because, when we looked, everything was just full of fear, "Do we make it?"

>> Interviewer: Could I back you up just a little, and could you tell me what happened to your sister and your parents and your in-laws? Did they -- did all of them come over?

>> Freudenberg: Well, my parents came to England half a year earlier than we did, and they came half a year later when we did.

>> Interviewer: To America?

>> Freudenberg: To America. And they stayed half a year with my sister in Greenville and half a year with us in Charleston.

>> Interviewer: Well, how did you and your sister come to South Carolina?

>> Freudenberg: My sister came in 1937 via Cuba to America.

>> Interviewer: How did she happen to leave earlier than you? She just went?

>> Freudenberg: I'll tell you why. They lived in Heidelberg, and one school friend of my brother-in-law's, who was a high SS -- in the black uniform -- officer, went to my brother-in-law, said, "Ludwig, get out now!" And he left. And that was what my brother-in-law did with the children, three boys.

My sister was 41 when she died with a brain tumor. She left three boys, and those three boys are mine. My brother-in-law got married a year later, and those three boys are just like my own. She left me a beautiful legacy, a requiem, with those three boys.

>> Interviewer: And by then, she had been in Greenville.

>> Freudenberg: She lived in Greenville. She died in New York. She was operated on, and she died.

>> Interviewer: How had she come to Greenville?

>> Freudenberg: Somebody wanted to sell a ready-to-wear store. They had a department store in Heidelberg. wanted to sell ready-to-wear store, and they went down, and they thought it's good for the boys not to be raised in New York, and they went to Greenville.

>> Interviewer: And you were still in New York at that point.

>> Freudenberg: We were only six weeks in New York.

>> Interviewer: And your parents were still in England.

>> Freudenberg: They came half a year later.

>> Interviewer: And where were your in-laws? Had they stayed in Germany? Your husband's parents.

>> Freudenberg: They died.

>> Interviewer: They were dead by then. I'm sorry.

>> Freudenberg: They died before.

>> Interviewer: Because they were much older.

>> Freudenberg: Yeah, much older, much older.

>> Interviewer: And so how did you come to Charleston? How did that come about?

>> Freudenberg: Well, the resettlement bureau in New York said that Charleston offered a job for a refugee couple, and we took, with our last money, some -- we came by bus. And my boy was bus sick from New York to Charleston. He was more on the floor than anywhere else. We came by bus to Charleston, and when we came, they said they never asked for us. But we had no money to go on, no money to go anywhere.

>> Interviewer: And this was in Charleston where that woman spoke to you.

>> Freudenberg: Yeah, yeah, at the synagogue.

>> Interviewer: But you stayed.

>> Freudenberg: We stayed, and I made my mark.

>> Interviewer: Did someone find you work as a physical therapist?

>> Freudenberg: No, no. There was one lady -- I was the first one in Charleston. There was a polio epidemic just before, and one orthopedist was sent from Johns Hopkins, and he brought his own physical therapist. But the physical therapist left before I came. She didn't know I even would be coming. And there was one lady, Mrs. Ruth Rubin. She went with me from one doctor to the other. I didn't have any papers because they took all our papers away. And the doctors were lovely. They examined me, what could I do. Now, there was one good thing. We learned all the names of the diseases and the muscles in Latin, and to pronounce them in English, you just have to know the pronunciation. But it all comes down to Latin, and that was so wonderful for me. And she went with me to several doctors, and they all were my friends, and they all sent me patients to try me out because Charleston never had a physical therapist. Now there are so many!

>> Interviewer: So you started working out of your home?

>> Freudenberg: Out of my home.

>> Interviewer: And was your husband able to work?

>> Freudenberg: He was not able to work, but he got a little store on King Street, men's furnishing. And he was so sick. He had a streptococcal and staphylococcal infection during the war. He was so sick. And then he was an amputee. And after then, he was told to give up the store, and he got one heart attack after the other. The doctor even gave me a syringe with morphine in case he got a heart attack, to give him that much of morphine that he would be all right until the doctor arrives. That ill. He died.

He really died of a broken heart. He was as German as German can be. He fought in the First world war, and there was not enough going on in France. He asked to be transferred to Russia. There was going on more at the front. He could do more there, and he was an officer then, and there were very few Jewish officers. And that was against us that he was an officer because "Jews are not officers. Jews can't do that. They can do only the manual labor, but they are not an officer."

>> Interviewer: So when he said good-bye to Germany, he left a piece of himself.

>> Freudenberg: Yes, he left a piece of himself. He was so -- it was his fatherland. America is my fatherland. When somebody says to me, "Oh, we went back to your fatherland, and it's beautiful," I said, "Yes, America is beautiful." People don't realize that there is a piece taken out of one's heart. I was flexible, but there were the older people -- my husband was 50 when he came, with terrific diabetes. They found out here, and

my father was a doctor, who examined all of us. They found it out here that he had diabetes.

>> Interviewer: Now, when your parents came over, by that time were you here in Charleston?

>> Freudenberg: Yes, yes. They came half a year later. They stayed half a year with my sister in Greenville. They came in 1940. Half a year with my sister in Greenville and half a year with me in Charleston. That was wonderful. My father had a stroke then, in 1942, but he said he wished he would have all medical students just around his bed to show them how it feels to get a stroke. He could walk again, haltingly. He could eat. He could speak. It was on the left-hand side.

>> Interviewer: Ms. Freudenberg, did you bring a document to read?

>> Freudenberg: Yes.

>> Interviewer: Would you please read that?

>> Freudenberg: Yes. I found this -- I'm always looking for something. I never find what I am looking for, but I found this. "The world is too dangerous to live in, not because of people who will do evil, but because of the people who sit and let it happen," Albert Einstein. I thought this is beautiful. This is the truth, that it happened. And now when you go back to Germany or when you talk to German people, it never has happened, the Crystal Night and how the people were persecuted and oppressed and so on and how they were slaughtered and how the oven burned them; it never has happened. That's all made-up history, they think. The younger generation doesn't believe it.

>> Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

>> Freudenberg: Oh, I could go on and on, but time is running out. And time is running out with me too. I'm 84, and I have been quite ill, and I said, "I don't come," and then I said, "I owe this to 6 million Jews and 1 million precious children that were burned in the concentration camps. I owe it to them that I open my mouth and tell you what has happened."

>> Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you.

>> Freudenberg: You're welcome.

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