

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: October 29, 2010

INTERVIEWEE: ALFRED ROSENTHAL, with Dan Anderson and Mr. Rosenthal's daughters, Emily Lurie and Harriet Saxe

INTERVIEWER: Claudia Anderson

PLACE: Silver Spring, Maryland

[Mr. Rosenthal began speaking before the recorder was turned on. He said that he had been able to get out of Germany in 1938 and go to Trinidad.]

A: We're here today with Mr. Al Rosenthal.

R: Well, it's a pleasure meeting you both. I'm very much impressed the way you located me. It's impossible, because the arrival in New York was like cattle. It is true they had a sort of a board, and you had to report to it; you stood in line. And, of course, everything was done long before I ever arrived in New York. The consul in Trinidad, American consul in Trinidad, was a wonderful guy, Melville Smith, an outstanding human being.

I landed in Trinidad out of Dachau in December of what year was it, I'm not sure.

HS: 1940?

A: Probably 1938.

R: 1938, yes. Yes. I was in Austin already when the war broke out. Yes. Anyhow, the American consul in Trinidad, Melville Smith, was a wonderful guy. One day

Rosenthal -- I -- 2

after I arrived--I had already gone to the American consulate--a *big* limousine arrived in front of a house--you must allow me to say that: the blackest, poorest neighborhood of Trinidad. That's all I could afford, and all I had was a suitcase. That big limo came in. The driver said, "Does Mr. Rosenthal live here?" "Yes." "Well, this is courtesy [of] Melville Smith. Mr. Rosenthal, the people that run the Pitch Lake operation in Trinidad to get asphalt from the earth, they are planning an exhibit at the World's Fair in Brussels. Wouldn't you want to meet them? Maybe you can help them." A couple of days after I arrived from nowhere. And he said to me as we went through it--it lasted about two or three years--"I hate to do it; I have to do it. That's what the book says."

There were some wonderful wonderful people that kept me alive. This I must tell you. And one of whom, in the long run, proved to be Lyndon Johnson, because Novy, both Novys [Jim and Louis], helped him to get elected. And there was one or two times where an election took place, and the Jewish community knew me by then, six month, a year later. And maybe they thought I had a fairly good mind; maybe they thought I was stupid, but, they ask me, "Who should I vote for?" because the congressman--what's his name again?--from Austin had died, and they had an election, and Johnson was running. Kleberg, Congressman Kleberg [James P. Buchanan]. And Johnson was running. I said, "You have no choice." [The election in which LBJ was elected to fill Congressman Buchanan's seat after Buchanan's death was held in 1937, one year before Mr. Rosenthal arrived in the United States.]

Rosenthal -- I -- 3

Do not forget as much as I liked Texas, as much as I loved Austin and the people that helped me, it was not New York City. Thank God. But, they realized that I was Jewish, so the Jewish community in Austin was very sensitive to this whole thing. I wouldn't call it anti-Semitism; that wouldn't be right, but, "You are just different. You don't look it, but you are just different. And how come you speak English so well?" So when I met Novy on the first--I hadn't even been anywhere, from the bus on Congress Avenue in Austin--I don't know whether that station is [still] there. There was a man sitting here; he was an institution. I never knew him, had no connection.

About two or three years earlier, when [Adolf] Hitler really got started in destroying Jews, sent them to concentration camps where I was, killed them where I was. My father had committed suicide. Somehow--my father, before he died, he received--the Jewish War Veterans group in Cologne--received a letter from people who lived in Austin but came from Cologne a long time ago. And they had a curtain factory, and they sewed curtains, and they were pretty well settled. I never met them. But they were able, through relatives, to come to Austin. (Inaudible) A friend of mine who really handled it, because Novy was up in high sky, [was] a man by the name of Harold Eichenbaum. He was a designer for the movie theaters that [Louis] Novy ran in Austin. His office was in the Capitol Building [Paramount Theatre Building]. Interstate Theater[s] owned all of these places. And Novy, very early on, I think, put money into these buildings

Rosenthal -- I -- 4

and Interstate Theaters and took them over, because there had been a whole revolution in the United States about ownership of theaters, ownerships--  
(The battery on the recorder died, and a short portion of the interview was not recorded.)

--It was St. James, that where the police barracks were.

(Interruption)

A: I'm just going to get him to recap what we've already tou[ched on].

DA: You think it's going now?

A: Yes, it's recording now.

DA: Okay.

A: The red light is--

R: Do we have to go back, or . . . .

A: Let's just recap a little bit. You told me that there were people who made curtains in Germany, and that they had had a contact in the United States.

R: [It is a] little different. There were people from, as far as I can remember, from Germany having immigrated to the United States and living in Austin. These people heard through the grapevine that the Novys would help at times. So Jim Novy was contacted by Harold Eichenbaum, who indirectly worked for [Louis] Novy. Harold Eichenbaum had been told by his mother, "You have to help, or I am no longer your mother." No question about it.

Nobody wanted to believe it. Nobody believed it. Even after they saw me, they didn't believe it. "You mean you are Jewish? You are from Germany? You speak English pretty well." Unfortunately, I had to learn it; I lived in

Rosenthal -- I -- 5

Trinidad. I never met the curtain people, I never did, the people who really established the contact with the Jewish War Veterans in Cologne.

A: Did you know their names?

R: No.

A: No.

R: No--yes, but I don't recall it. My father was active in the Jewish War Veterans group in Cologne, the only group getting *some* recognition from the Nazis--veterans, Nazis, nationalism--but they dropped completely from sight.

Harold Eichenbaum met me at the bus station in Austin, and I arrived, via bus, from New York, carrying a suitcase and all I had. A New York policeman saw me going to the bus station, "Good luck, son."

The whole progression, to me, even now many years ago, is unbelievable. It *is* unbelievable, and then you see these (points to his daughters), and then I have great-grandchildren who live here, too, the most beautiful creatures you have ever seen.

A: I'm sure.

R: Well, they are.

EL: They really are. (Laughter) My daughter's children.

R: And this is their grandmother.

HS: She is just trying to one-up me. My daughter got married last week. So there.

(Laughter)

EL: But I already have 4 grandchildren.

Rosenthal -- I -- 6

HS: But I'm cuter and smarter. (Laughter)

EL: But I already have 4 grandchildren. (Laughter)

HS: And I can dance. (Laughter)

EL: I will repeat myself. (Laughter)

HS: You had nothing to do with that.

EL: I certainly, my sweetheart, I certainly did. (Laughter)

R: Emily's married to a physician, to a doctor, and Harriet is married to an engineer.

HS: So back on the story here, because Emily will always come in first, I let her believe. So back on the story.

EL: That is true, and that should be in your recording. (Laughter)

A: Let me backtrack just a little bit. You said when you were in Trinidad, you worked for a company there.

R: I was really, quote, "in business for myself."

I was able--after I was told by the Nazis in Dachau that I was not worth a bullet, and they were shooting or left and right. So, one morning, about six o'clock in the morning, we were all in the parade ground. Dachau is located on the outskirts of Munich. Munich is located on the outskirts of the Alps. You are standing in Dachau military--they are, not the other things--and the sun rises, and it's red--things you don't forget--and cold. You had no clothes, no nothing, just a jacket.

A: Is that when you got the envelope that you mentioned from Mr. Eichenbaum?

R: Yes.

Rosenthal -- I -- 7

A: And you were able to go then.

R: Yes. I had a letter from Harold offering me help, not knowing anything about the Novys. In fact, I only heard about the Novys when I looked at my paper, because the final authority getting me there, and affidavit, was signed by Novy, who could hardly write his name. [He] had come from Russia, made it. Both he and his brother, I think, had money invested in oil. They were common ordinary people. Louis Novy was a movie man; Jim Novy was the oilman. Jim Novy was a bit easier to talk to than Louis. Louis was a businessman. His English was so-so la-la.

During that period, about a year or so after [before] I got to Austin, the congressman from Texas, Austin, 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, died [James P. Buchanan died February 22, 1937]. Somebody had to succeed him. That's when Lyndon Johnson really, to me, appeared on the scene. Lyndon Johnson was of course a . . . . Did you ever meet him?

A: I met him a couple of times, just shook his hand.

R: Well, same thing here. He was a gregarious man. He projected well. He projected interest. The one who was the brain behind it all was Lady Bird. Because I was on the Ranch not twenty years later, I was at the Ranch; I worked for the Army Corps of Engineers. Army Corps of Engineers builds dams and levees and military stuff. We had to see Lyndon Johnson because his parents were buried in the little cemetery down there. And he said to me, "Al, you don't

Rosenthal -- I -- 8

want them to get wet all of the time." [I said,] "No we don't. We'll take care of it."

Towards the end of my visit there, there was Lady Bird sitting there with the wife of the then-governor of Texas. And he was in that same motorcade in Dallas. And so she was sitting there.

EL: Connally? Governor [John] Connally?

R: I'm talking about Mrs. Johnson.

HS: Who was she sitting with? Tell me again.

A: With Nellie Connally?

R: I don't think it was. I forgot the name of the governor at that time.

HS: So the current governor, the then-governor. Whoever that was. A nameless person.

R: Then-governor, yes. "I'm Mr. Rosenthal." "You are?" Quoting her direct: "Lyndon helped you, didn't he?" Out of nowhere! Out of nowhere! By then I had been in Texas for ten, fifteen years. Now, I saw Johnson a number of times because I was a newspaperman, and Johnson was running for office using the "Johnson City windmill," if you know what the "Johnson City windmill" was?

A: The helicopter.

R: Yeah, helicopter. [It went] all over the state, and that's how he got started. He went to a teachers college in New Braunfels [San Marcos]. And, he was a well-organized person, dynamic, strong, and he made up his mind that's what going to happen. That's how I saw Mr. Johnson again, because we met with him on the



Rosenthal -- I -- 9

little cemetery thing. And she was on the Ranch. And Lyndon Johnson said to me, "Come Al, I will give you a ride of the Ranch." So we got into his jeep. Heaven help me, I'm glad I survived. (Laughter) He went through the thing, there was no road, nothing. Who needs a road to raise cattle? And so we kinda--we behaved, and that's how I saw the Ranch, was with Lyndon Johnson, and Lady Bird figured me out.

A: So did Johnson help you get a visa to get into the United States?

R: I do not know. I assume he did. I do not know this, because I was not there. His name, only his name appeared as a sponsor on the immigration papers. The name and the location of the sponsor, Novy, was on even the visa that I got. So, as the immigration people looked at me, there were two or three ladies sitting there; I didn't know what their role was. So what?

A: This is in New York?

R: Yes. One piped up--what was it? Well, "Mr. Rosenthal, you will see me on Monday morning at 10:30 at my office on Times Square." "Yes ma'am." That's it. So, I went to her, now two or three days later. I had been staying with a cousin of mine who lived in New York. And, [I] knew nothing about New York, of course. That's how I really for the first time truly heard of Novy, because he was in the background. He had the connections, yes. If you needed something, Novy could get it. And Novy would call Johnson, because Novy helped Mr. Johnson to become Mr. Johnson.

HS: How? How? Why?

Rosenthal -- I -- 10

R: Helped finance his campaign.

HS: And motivated the Jewish community to vote for him.

R: Yes. The Jewish community was what it was. And this is perhaps even difficult for you to understand from a personal point of view. Everyone knew what Hitler was doing; no one believed it, and it was inconvenient. Why bother with it? It weighed very heavily on the shoulders of Jews, yes. It was inhuman, yes. Parents, grandparents, what not, perished, but it was across the ocean. It was also like we have, up and down economically. You are in New York City during the Depression, which I was, and you walk down the street, and you see all these jobs offered on blackboards; it was long before computers and what not. You say, "I can't stand here. I can't stay here. I wouldn't want to stay here." I mean, whoever wants to go to New York is nuts. I mean it. I was in New York, I worked out of New York, but this is . . . .

HS: So, I've got a question for you. So you got yourself, they put you on a bus, and you ended up in Austin. Harold Eichenbaum met you.

R: Met me, and John Babcock, who was a reporter for the *Austin Tribune*.

HS: Okay.

R: The two were at the bus stop.

A: They both met you at the bus stop.

R: Yes. I had never met Eichenbaum, except I had been in touch with him for maybe a couple two, three years. I carried that letter from him, a copy of it, with me at all times. I would not let go. Because, when I realized that not one single

Rosenthal -- I -- 11

Rosenthal in New York ever even sent a postcard on me, I said--and when I came to New York--I said, "Uh-uh, no."

HS: So now you're in Texas, and he meets you along with the reporter, and he tells you that there's a job connection.

R: Well, he, Harold Eichenbaum, wanted me to meet [Louis] Novy because Novy had sponsored me. So before I even did anything, Harold took me to the theater, the Paramount Theater building in Austin, and had me meet Mr. Novy. And Novy was busy. Novy was minding a movie theater, but he really was running the candy counter. The candy counter was important. Another thing, the movie had a projectionist. I then met Novy in his office, and Harold was with me, and Novy was quite interested, to a degree. And then I told him about newspaper and journalism and photography, which I was pretty good at. Novy just took the phone, called the editor of the *Tribune*, competing with the *Austin Statesman*, which survived. He got the editor: "I have a young man here. He is a newspaper man. I want you to meet him. When can he see you?" in some broken English. Next day, next day. I did not realize--I have gone forwards and backwards--I did not realize that there was ill-blood between the Jewish community and that newspaper. One called the other one a "son-of-a-bitch," on a Jewish holiday. You don't do that. Maybe other days you did. (Laughter) So, all the rabbi had to do, get up there on the pulpit and say, "Uh-uh, no money there." So they cancelled every ad run by any Jewish store in Austin, up and down Congress Avenue and elsewhere.

Rosenthal -- I -- 12

A: And the movie theater.

R: Yes. So when Novy called the *Tribune* guy, and had him come over, it so happened that at that time the *Tribune* was building a new tower. You know where the Tribune Building is? Well, below the Capitol. Right almost across the street from the Governor's Mansion, because I walked to the Governor's Mansion. [The building is located at 920 Colorado Street.]

HS: Maybe it's not there anymore.

DA: I don't think it is.

A: Yes, I probably--well, there may be a building there, but . . . .

R: It was a modern st[yle] . . . .

HS: The *Tribune* does not exist as a newspaper anymore, right?

R: No. No.

A: The *Tribune* went out of business, so I wouldn't know which building.

R: The *Tribune* closed, out of context, a couple of years later on Christmas day. It was pretty bad.

HS: So they were interested in hiring you because?

R: And the editor told Novy--I didn't listen in on the conversation--"Have him come over." So I then went to the *Tribune*, which was then on the other side of Congress Avenue, not too far from the old bus station, an old dilapidated building. They were very kind to me, but said, "There is nothing for you to do. We don't have space; we don't have anything. It may take some time, but we are interested in you," which, of course, gave me an entrée into the newspaper. I did some

Rosenthal -- I -- 13

freelance work, and word of mouth, and I was pretty good at it, and much cheaper than Christianson-Leberman. Do you know the photographer? There was a fancy photographer in Austin, Christianson-Leberman, fancy, expensive, expensive, hoity-toity. I handled it very simply, because they offered me jobs. Until I got into the newspaper; I had no money. So, I decided a dollar a print, whatever you want, a dollar. You want ten prints? Ten dollars. I didn't do sitting fees or panting [?] fees or desk fees. A dollar, and it worked.

HS: And you did weddings?

R: I mostly did weddings, yes. One or two times, I did one for the funeral parlor, because he was going to submit a bid about the closing and the box, and he needed pictures. And to me this is gross, it *is* gross, but I did it. It was a buck.

A: And you did this before or after you worked for the newspaper?

R: Before, and while I worked for the newspaper, both. By the time I worked for the newspaper, I already knew my way around Austin. Austin was small. I walked to the Tribune building. I lived in an apartment on Sixth Street, way out.

R: I have a picture that you took.

HS: Oh my god!

EL: Let me see it before I go to the bathroom.

A: You took that picture.

HS: It's in a sleeve.

A: That is the Jewish Brotherhood in Austin. Those are their names. And that is Lyndon Johnson right there.

Rosenthal -- I -- 14

HS: Son of a gun! And you took this?

A: He took it. This is a print, but we have one of the original prints, and it's stamped on the back, "Al Rosenthal."

HS: No.

A: Yes. That's a duplicate.

HS: No. Do you remember this at all?

R: No.

HS: No, this is one of many. Well, it cost a dollar; I can tell you that much. And if you want another one, it will cost you another dollar. (Laughter)

R: Well, I had to take the picture. I had to develop the film. I had to show the proof to whoever approved it, and I had to get orders.

HS: Lyndon B.

A: This is Louis Novy.

R: Yes.

HS: (Gasp) Oh, let me see him!

A: And this is Jim Novy, right there.

HS: Oh, wait, wait, wait, wait. I have never seen photographs of these men. I only hear of them in reverential terms. This is Louis?

A: That's Louis.

HS: And that is Jim. Short little men. I pictured them being short.

R: How did you get that?

A: It is a little deceptive, because Lyndon Johnson was very tall.

Rosenthal -- I -- 15

HS: Yes, but look at the average height of these other guys.

A: Yes, but next to Lyndon Johnson . . .

HS: Yes, anybody looks like a peanut.

A: But, yes, you're right; they're short. The picture was given to the Library a long time ago by one of the men who's in the picture. They must have made prints for all of these people.

EL: That would be how many dollars? (Laughter) One, two, three, four, five--this was a seventy-dollar photo, baby.

R: Well, that was the only way to do it. I was not--first of all, not known. I was good at it, yes, but, "Who are you? You surely can't compete with the high society photographer like Christianson-Leberman."

EL: That is really wild.

A: Well, I saw this picture at the Library, and I was talking to our audiovisual archivist, and I said, "Do we own the rights to this photo?" She said, "No, we don't know who took this photo." I said, "I really wish I knew who had the rights, because I am going to want to publish this with my article someday, and I'll need to get permission." She turned the picture over, and there stamped on the back is "Al Rosenthal." I said, "Al Rosenthal, I just talked to him!" (Laughter)

HS: So you need his release to use this in your book.

A: Yes, or my article.

HS: You need to think this over. This could be your money-making proposition.

(Laughter) I suggest three dollars minimum. (Laughter) Minimum. (Laughter)

Rosenthal -- I -- 16

R: Well, I don't know. It's a dollar. (Laughter) I want you to know, honestly, that gave me a lot of money.

A: I bet.

R: Who wanted me? I'm sorry to say, blacks. They invited me to the house; they invite me to the wedding, turned me loose. (Inaudible) I got cake; I got this. I did what I wanted to. I gave them the proofs, and they were good. Good. Good.

End of CD 1 of 2, Beginning of CD 2

[Interview stopped briefly to get drinks.]

A: Well, I brought--you can keep this. I brought this to give to you.

HS: That's cute! That is great. That is totally great.

R: That is the story.

HS: Isn't that something?

R: That's the only thing I have of Novy.

HS: So they wanted--you might've not caught it--they wanted my dad on their staff at the newspaper because it would establish that they really were not anti-Semitic. So if you have a Jewish [employee] and you introduce him down the street--

R: No, it was a little different.

HS: No? Okay, tell me.

R: Almost that.

A: They wanted the advertising back.

R: Long before I came to Austin--six months, a year, I don't know--bad blood developed between the newspaper and the Novys, especially Jim Novy. Why, I



Rosenthal -- I -- 17

don't know. The newspaper turned around, and as it was described to me, I wasn't there, made some derogatory remarks about Jews and the whole thing. And that's when I think Novy got into the act, I am surmising. And Johnson was starting out in the "Johnson City windmill," and that's when Novy and Johnson became . . . . Johnson invited the Novys to the White House. He had arrived, for a little Polish guy who came without money and education. Pretty damn good. And Johnson, being what he was, a strong-willed person, determined to get where he wanted to go, encouraged by his wife, Lady Bird. Lady Bird had the money. Lady Bird bought the rental housing in Austin to add income and their own radio station in Austin, the only radio station in the United States that had all three networks, Columbia--NBC, ABC, and CBS. And they had a monopoly. The closest monopoly, as far as radio was concerned, was in San Antonio, Clear Channel station. Johnson, I am sure, was the guy who made it happen.

A: Let me show you this other file that I found. It's arranged with the earliest thing in the back, so let me get that. It looks like a friend of Johnson's went to see your sister. This woman, her name, it sounds like a man, Gene, but actually--

R: Lassetter, yes, Gene Lassetter.

A: Eugenia.

R: She was a friend of my sister, yes.

A: Yes, and she says in this letter, "You will remember having helped the Rosenthals in Austin."

HS: She is writing to, "Dear Lyndon Johnson."

Rosenthal -- I -- 18

A: She is writing to Lyndon Johnson, and she is talking to your sister. Your sister said that you wanted to go to work for the State Department. And so she writes to Johnson and tells him this. This whole file is on Johnson asking about him going to work for the State Department, but he finds out that you have to have been a citizen like fifteen years before they will hire you.

R: At the Driskill Hotel in Austin, they had State Department people at that time interviewing people.

A: Ah, well, he . . . .

R: Austin and the State Department are pretty far removed.

HS: Senator Connally.

R: Yes, the Lasseters--

A: That's Tom Connally, who was senator at the time.

R: Yes, Connally was, he was also from Texas.

HS: "I had a card from (inaudible)--"? Isn't that something.

A: Anyway, and the rest of this is all correspondence back and forth with your sister.

R: How did you find [this]?

A: This is in Johnson's files. We have the finding aid in a computer file, and I just searched the computer file for the name Rosenthal. Then I went down and looked at the file, and it was your sister.

R: That's my sister, yes. My sister died of cancer about a year ago, in Fort Worth.

A: So when did you go in the Army?

Rosenthal -- I -- 19

EL: He went into the Army because he had to go into the Army. That was one of the conditions of his immigration.

R: Oh, I did not want to go. I had a sister there; I had my mother there. My mother was already in somewhat advanced years.

EL: Fifties. Wait a minute.

HS: Wait a minute, yes. She was mentally not well, but she was chronologically--

EL: She was in her fifties. She was younger than we are. (Laughter) Okay?

HS: Okay, but she [was] mentally not well.

EL: Because of the trauma.

R: I think the (inaudible) .

EL: We have to clarify. (Laughter)

HS: She was not old. (Laughter)

A: I'm with you. She must not have been old. (Laughter)

R: Anyhow, thank you for showing me this.

A: Well, you can have--I brought it to give to you, too. You can have this. I thought you all might like to have it.

R: You are most generous.

A: That just tells where in the files it came from.

HS: Wow.

A: And one other thing I found. This I found at the National Archives. This is an index of correspondence. It just shows that Jim Novy wrote to the State Department about--

Rosenthal -- I -- 20

R: My mother.

A: --your mother coming.

R: Wilhelmina. Yes. Yes, here it is. Wilhelmina. In 1941.

A: I don't have the correspondence, but it shows Jim Novy was working to get her . .  
..

R: I didn't--it escaped me. I did not realize, but I guess I asked him to help.

A: You must have.

R: 'Cause I was not a citizen.

A: When did you become a citizen?

R: Well, I was in the Army at Bergstrom. I can't remember the year. It was done in the Federal Courthouse in Austin. I was stationed at Bergstrom. I was stationed at Bergstrom because I covered Bergstrom while I worked for the newspaper. And then I told the commanding officer, Colonel [Lloyd] Sailor, "Colonel, I have to say goodbye; I am going in the Army." "Al, you send me a letter and tell me where you are; I'll get you." I finished basic training, towards the end I wrote a letter to Colonel Sailor, little old PFC [Private First Class]. Four days later, "Rosenthal?" "Here." That same group, that same day, went to the Battle of the Bulge.

HS: Not a cool place.

A: Oh my goodness.

R: I wouldn't be sitting here.

EL: And the ship was lost.

Rosenthal -- I -- 21

A: Really?

HS: How did you come by these two artifacts, Dad? (His daughter pointed to a pen and lighter given to him by Lyndon Johnson.)

R: He gave them to me.

HS: On what occasion?

R: When he told me, and the Colonel I was with, "You don't want to have my parents get wet all of the time."

A: So when you were out at the Ranch, he gave you these?

R: He called his secretary in, and he said, "You give them . . . ."

HS: You have to imagine, he carried those things. We moved as a family very frequently. Emily and I attended, I don't know, seven--

HS, EL: --elementary schools.

HS: And my mother was a thrower-outer. That's why there are no papers. (Laughter)  
Okay?

EL: I think he has immigration papers in a safe deposit box.

HS: But anything else, mom would just pitch it.

EL: I'm a thrower-outer, too.

HS: I make piles, just in case.

A: I am an archivist; I save everything. (Laughter)

HS: That's what my new name is, archivist. I'm not a packrat; I am an archivist.

EL: But he saved these. I mean, and this went in the thing with his work from NASA.

Rosenthal -- I -- 22

R: You think about it. You deal in this stuff all the time. I don't, although I studied history, but I didn't do it in a professional way. You unearth things; it is unbelievable that it even exists to be unearthed.

EL: That's the pity though, that so much of our communication now is on the internet, and we don't write to each other, and we are not going to have anything.

A: Yes.

HS: Yes. You know what I am going to do for you, Dad? You gave me a collection of envelopes that you had had saved through the decades. I am going to look in that collection of envelopes. Who knows what's in that collection. Do you remember it?

R: No.

HS: You put them in an archival box. They go back to the early 1900s, possibly earlier than that. Not the correspondence was saved, but the envelopes because of the stamps.

R: Now, my father collected stamps.

HS: But there may be some[thing.] You never know.

R: My father collected stamps, and he wanted me to collect them.

EL: That was not your speed. No. That was not going to be a successful endeavor.

R: No, thank you. Anyhow, you have the floor.

A: So when did you go into the Army?

R: I went into the Army about a year after Pearl Harbor. Because I was still a civilian, and I shot pictures from the balcony of the Paramount Theater in Austin

Rosenthal -- I -- 23

of the parades, and they were normally reserves. And that's when I did a pretty good job. I was good in photography, and I like it. And it also is something that you can do pretty well by yourself. You do developing, enlarging, selling. I didn't have anything. The *Tribune* gave me a space for the darkroom. They didn't give an enlarger; they didn't give me nothing. The *Tribune* was always dithering on disaster. They didn't make it against the *Austin American*.

HS: Did you connect with the Eichenbaum family at all? Has that name come to you at all?

A: That has not come up. I'm very interested in looking into that, since he mentioned it. Yes. I will look into it. I'm wondering if there might have been other people connected with the curtain family too, that he might have helped.

HS: You need an old phone book, or the census for the city.

EL: Who is alive now? They're gone, the Eichenbaums. The son is alive, right?

R: The son is alive in Colorado. The son was born Harold Junior.

HS: What was his name? Harold Junior. Jewish with a junior?

R: Yes.

EL: German. Germans with a junior.

HS: That's actually in Chuck's family, too.

R: The son was born just about the time the Nazi . . . because he told me they had a baby, and it was a long time ago. He has died. Harold has died; his wife has died. He was a very good man.

Rosenthal -- I -- 24

EL: And I met them because my husband was stationed in San Antonio. And we went to--

HS: You met them who?

EL: The Eichenbaums.

HS: The son of Harold?

EL: No, the parents.

HS: Oh Harold? You met him?

EL: Yes.

HS: That would have been in the early 1970s.

EL: Yes.

HS: Oh, who knew?

EL: And the son came to our house at Fort Hood.

HS: Oh. Interesting. And he's in Colorado?

EL: He wasn't in Colorado at the time--or maybe he was; I don't know.

HS: Okay.

A: How did you get your mother and sister into the United States?

R: Well, first of all, I came. And this in itself is a story you wouldn't believe. My mother happened--black market, I don't know how; she never told me--to be able to get a ticket for me to leave from Amsterdam to get to Trinidad, the only rat hole open at the time.

EL: How did you get Grandma and Aunt Margot from Trinidad to the US?



Rosenthal -- I -- 25

- R: I made the affidavit; I could do that. I could do that. I don't think I needed Novy's . . . . This--
- HS: But then why was this correspondence about Aunt Margot and Grandma?
- A: This would be to help her get a visa.
- R: I must have used him. I must have asked him to help me.
- A: It could be that he asked for a letter just of support, because the State Department sometimes wouldn't believe that a sponsor could support someone.
- HS: That was my question this morning.
- A: So Novy may have been inquiring about that, or sending a letter of support, or something like that. It is hard to tell, but that could've been how it--
- R: A formality to confirm what I told them.
- A: I know Lyndon Johnson sometimes would send a letter saying that, "I know this man, and he can support the person that he wants to sponsor." Because the State Department was afraid if they gave a visa to someone and they came to the United States and couldn't get a job . . . .
- EL: Public dole.
- A: Yes.
- R: On top of which, the State Department was not very friendly.
- A: That's what I have heard, yes. They were not very cooperative.
- HS: Well, they were friendlier to some than others, perhaps.
- EL: Now when Grandma and Aunt Margot came, you were already in the United States?

Rosenthal -- I -- 26

R: I was in Austin.

EL: So were you a citizen already?

R: Yes.

HS: No, you hadn't been in the Army.

R: No. That's right. Now I was not. I guess you are right. I was still working for the *Tribune*, yes.

A: So, they may have helped find a sponsor.

EL?: Yes, that's probably what it was. Because if you had been an American citizen already, then you could have sponsored them.

R: Assuming that's right, it's possible, yes.

EL?: So you were *not* in the Army yet, and therefore you were *not* a citizen yet.

R: That's right. When the draft board interviewed me, pre-drafting, Colonel DeZavala [?]. Do you know who [De]Zavala is?

A: No.

R: He fought at the Alamo, his great-grandfather. If you go to San Antonio to the monument in front of the Alamo, there is a monument there. Zavala is in there. He was the grandson of whatever, and Zavala was in charge of the draft board in Austin. He interviewed me because I wanted to get a deferment. DeZavala said, "No, I'm sorry; I can't support your deferment. And if I defer you, you will not become an American citizen *ever*." Well, that kind of closed the box, quickly. And I must say, to be honest about it, I hated every day in the Army, and I liked it

Rosenthal -- I -- 27

every day in the Army. I found the true America, the true decent person, in the Army. And I never, never, never had any trouble with anybody.

I will get completely out of context--getting shipped from New York to Naples--Napoli, Naples. There was a PA system; thousands of people standing there. "Rosenthal." Just came off that damn ship. Someone comes over, "You Rosenthal?" "Yes." "I'm supposed to be discharged, but my colonel said I have to have a replacement before he lets me go." "What is the job?" "Editor of a newspaper, and public affairs." I said, "You got your man." From that moment on, as I landed in Naples, and for the rest of the war, I saw no war.

A: So you were in Naples during the war?

R: Outside of Udine [?]; it's in the mountains. We landed in Naples, the troop transport.

A: You were at Bergstrom for awhile?

R: At Bergstrom for awhile, and since it was a transfer from one branch to the other, that was before any of this was put together. The question was again, one more time?

A: You said you were in Naples, but you said you were in Bergstrom. I was wondering about the chronology.

R: From Bergstrom during the Battle of the Bulge. From Bergstrom, while I was at Bergstrom, there was a tremendous drain on manpower, like we have now. Since I had been in the infantry, and now it [Bergstrom] was transferred to the Air Corps,

Rosenthal -- I -- 28

now the Air Corps said we can't keep you. You've got to go back to the infantry.

And that wasn't all that great. My time wasn't there, that's all.

Digressing for just a moment, the military experience was a difficult one, but I must say it taught me a lot about the United States. It taught me a lot about American men and women. It's a remarkable country. It is a remarkable country. Not all perfect by *any* means, but more perfect than imperfect. And you had in Texas especially, there was the Ku Klux Klan. You had, "You don't look Jewish. You are Jewish? I don't believe you," quite often.

A: Well, going back to your mother and sister, when you were in Trinidad, you were able to get them out of Germany?

R: Yes, that's right. I got them out. I had been in Trinidad when the war started, not the American but . . . .

A: The British and German . . . .

R: Yes, but my mother and sister were in Cologne. Unbeknownst to me--they never told me about it--the house that we lived in in Cologne, four-story old European house, all were evicted. It became an *jüden haus*, a Jewish house. They were given the bed, the room to the bathroom and the--that's about it. Nothing. And that I did not know while I was trying to get them into Trinidad. And I succeeded.

And this is a story completely different than that. It's a remarkable story. Remarkable story. I go to the post office in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The lady, the cashier (inaudible) who handled money, and my accent was perhaps a little more

Rosenthal -- I -- 29

inhibiting than it is now. She said to me, the lady said to me, *Sprechen sie deutch?*" I said, "Unfortunately, yes." "Oh, I went to college in Heidelberg German University." "My mother went, too," I told her. She listened to that. She said, "You come with me this afternoon. I would like quite to have you over for tea." And from that moment, she was really--an unmarried lady--she was really a wonderful person, an absolute . . . . She never mixed, never mingled, but she had something worthwhile to say. And so the last night I was in Trinidad, she wanted to be sure I had a good cabin. I asked her for Thanksgiving dinner on the ship. I had asked the *maitre' d'*, can the lady have Thanksgiving dinner? "Yes, do it." She had dinner, and then she said, "I want to see your cabin before I leave." Wonderful lady.

HS: So you left Trinidad before Aunt Margot and Grandma left?

R: Oh yes, about a year and a half, two years.

HS: Okay, and then it took something to get them into the United States.

R: That's me basically. Basically, me and Novy. Because they had no money. The Germans wouldn't [have] given us money. I needed money for the train ride.

HS: For them to take a train. So they landed in New York as well?

R: Yes. They landed on one of the same ships. The *Argentina*, *Uruguay*, they had three of four ships.

A: They're in Ancestry.com, too.

HS: Oh really?

A: Yes.

Rosenthal -- I -- 30

HS: My grandmother and my aunt?

A: Yes. This is the record. Well, that's the printout of the record. And this is the manifest right here.

EL: "Friend's name, December first, 1941."

HS: "Hennef, Germany," yes.

EL: "About 1891." She was born in 1890. "Age: fifty."

HS: See?

R: And Hennef is the town--

HS: A young chickypoo.

EL: That is very young, yes, but--chronologically--

R: And Hennef was the town where she was born, which was a suburb town about thirty miles from Cologne.

A: Yes. And this is the ship manifest.

R: I don't remember the name [of the ship] that they were on.

A: I think it's the *Brazil*.

R: Yes. They had *Uruguay*, *Brazil*, and *Argentina*, I think these were the three ships, that went back and forth.

HS: It's going to be a long last name, so which one--

A: No, here, maybe it's on this one.

R: But how *you* got all of this . . . .

HS: Here. Here. Rosenthal, Wilhelmina, age fifty, female, white.

EL: Aunt Margot was nineteen.

Rosenthal -- I -- 31

HS: She was young. Wow.

EL: Yes, been through a lot.

R: Margo wasn't married then, either.

HS: No, she didn't meet Uncle Paul until they were in Texas.

R: During the war.

EL: I have to break with you a moment. I am so very sorry, but I have to leave. I  
have a closing. I'm a realtor.

A: Oh.

EL: I have a closing, but Harriet will be here. Here are the bylaws. You can turn that  
off for a second.

A: (Laughter) Okay.

(Interruption)

R: --remarkable job, getting all of these people . . . .

EL: --have to lay down the law, because--

HS: No more Germany.

EL: No more Germany.

HS: We're out--no more long, drawn-out--we're out of Germany. Germany is--

A: This is the--

EL: Nice meeting you.

DA: Pleasure meeting you.

EL: Claudia, nice meeting you, too. If you need me for anything, Harriet lives on the  
West Coast; I live here locally. So if you need anything--

Rosenthal -- I -- 32

HS: Do you have a business card for Claudia?

A: Oh, that'd be wonderful if you've got some business cards.

HS: I have one as well so that you can--

DA: Oh, Harriet, you don't live in D.C.?

HS: No, I live in Portland, Oregon.

DA: Oregon, okay.

HS: I was here for my daughter's wedding, and this just happened to be . . . ahead.

A: Oh, well, I'm so glad.

DA: Oh. That worked out. We're having a family reunion here, which is why we're here this weekend.

R: And then, the wedding was in New York.

HS: Oh cool. You have family in . . . .

DA: My two sisters moved out here years ago.

HS: In what town do they live?

DA: Burtonsville and Crofton.

EL: This was a good hair day. Okay so, if you need my email, I prefer you to use this one.

A: Okay.

HS: Mine works.

A: Okay. (Laughter.)

EL: Mine works. I just prefer you to use this one.

A: Okay.



Rosenthal -- I -- 33

EL: And this is my cell, my office, my home, and my office fax, okay? But I prefer that you not mess with those other two emails. I don't go to them as much.

A: I'll use that one. Thank you very much.

EL: You're very welcome. Thank you so much for coming.

A: Well, this is wonderful for me, too. It was my pleasure.

EL: It was wonderful.

HS: I wish that we could get a little bit more connect--you know, I asked my dad, "Do you have anything, anything, anything?" He remembered he had this stuff, but in terms of paper, Mom was ruthless.

EL: I don't know that there was so much paper. I just don't think he had a whole lot of stuff.

HS: I guess it wasn't . . . .

A: It may not have been . . . .

R: First of all, physically--look, I lived like a gypsy; I had one suitcase in Austin when I--

EL: But things got pretty good, I mean things were rolling. Things were rolling; they were fairly positive. To hear your stories through the years, to start with zero--I mean, he always says, "Everything else is a profit." "How much did it cost?" "Oh, I don't know." It's all profit if you start at zero, right? (Laughter)

R: I started with a piece of paper that cost a nickel, to make a print. Maybe it was film, another nickel. This is how . . . .

Rosenthal -- I -- 34

EL: Okay, thank you so much. I apologize. It was just . . . everything got rearranged yesterday, but I wanted to be here for as long as I could.

R: Thank you, Em--

A: I'm so glad to meet you.

HS: Okay, hit the road, girl.

EL: Okay, I'll talk to you later.

R: Be careful.

EL: Keep things in check.

HS: We're out of Germany. What else do you have in that goody bag?

A: That's about it, but I did want to show him the ship manifest that had--

HS: So, could I get a co[py]--I think my cousins would be thrilled to see something like that.

A: Well, I'll tell you what. I can print this off again. I've got . . . This is the . . .  
You can, yes, you can have it.

HS: Do you want to make a note that your file has now been decimated?

A: No, I will remember that.

HS: Will you?

R: If you want to make a Xerox . . . go to the post office.

A: I've got his, too.

HS: Yes, that's true.

A: I can print another one off.

DA: Easier to print another one.

Rosenthal -- I -- 35

A: It's not any problem at all.

HS: Yes, get a better quality.

A: I have the one that showed him. Did I put it back in here?

HS: The *Argentine*?

A: Yes, [I'll] give you that one, too, or is that in those . . . .

HS: It might be in my dad's hand, I don't know. Did you take it back? I really didn't watch. Dad, could you let Claudia just double check this?

A: I don't see it here. Let me just look through here. Let's see. That and that.

HS: That is just totally cool.

A: Those are the people in the picture there.

HS: Yes.

R: Oh, I see. These were . . . .

A: No, this is just the file. It's on . . . must've put it back in here.

HS: Or maybe in that other folder.

R: Karotkin, he was a furniture dealer.

A: That's the folder I had those things in; it should be in this folder.

R: Earl Podolnick was Louis Novy's son-in-law.

HS: So you must've had a stamp, an official business stamp, that said, "Made by Alfred--Al Rosenthal," a rubber stamp.

A: Yes.

R: Oh, yes. No.

HS: Not rubber?

Rosenthal -- I -- 36

R: I had a--I dreamed that one up. First of all, I had to have something.

DA: (Inaudible)

HS: Yes.

CA: (Whispered) That's it.

R: So I developed a folder, and the folder on the inside could have additional envelopes.

HS: But you somehow imprinted your name--

R: I had some--yes, but fancy pictures, no. They were put into a folder. They looked beautiful. And that was for about--

HS: Interesting, you would put--so there would be ink on the back side of a photograph. Wouldn't that bleed through at some [point]--I guess not.

R: Not necessarily.

A: No, it didn't. No.

HS: I guess not. It must not have, because it's not there.

R: There's something else that may happen. If I don't use enough hypo [an emulsion of sodium thiosulfate] the damn picture is gone in ten years.

HS: Yes. Yes, it fades out to nothing.

R: Oh yes. One time, I had to print a negative, a four by five, (inaudible) had to print a wet negative. A wet negative, for quick, for a newspaper. I put the thing in there, put the paper down here. I look at the print, and most of the heads were elongated. They looked like idiots. (Laughter) I had taken the picture. I said, "That's not it." To make a long story short, the negative was wet. The water on

Rosenthal -- I -- 37

the wet negative became a lens, and that's how the damn thing happened.

(Laughter)

A: Oh, my goodness.

DA: Oh.

HS: See? See? If you ever see elongated heads in archival photos, you'll know what happened.

A: --you know what happened.

HS: It was long before Photoshop existed.

A: Well, let me ask you about this photo. Do you remember this event?

R: No.

A: No?

R: No.

HS: Do you know where it was taken?

R: Zilker Park, I think.

A: I was told that it was at Jim Novy's lake house, that he had a lake house.

R: Jim Novy had a boat. The lighthouse I don't know anything about.

HS: Lake house. Lake house.

R: Lake house? I don't know. I went to his lake house once, because he had invited me to take a boat ride on Lake Austin, LCRA [Lower Colorado River Authority].

It could've been there. It was on the--

HS: Why did you call it Lake Zilko? What did you just--?

A: No, Zilker Park.

Rosenthal -- I -- 38

R: Zilker Park is a natural park in Austin, but if it was on a lake house, the Lower Colorado River Authority by then had already built a number of dams, which, in turn, resulted in a number of lakes.

HS: Why would these people be together with Lyndon Johnson do you think?

R: Novy may have invited them.

HS: Yes.

R: And that's, again, the uniqueness of Johnson. First of all, he was a gregarious man. He was a good open person. He was sharp. He knew what he wanted, and he knew how to get there. And Texas politics is not all that pretty.

A: Yes. (Laughter)

R: Well, one of the Texas governors was found exhausted (laughter) in a Pullman berth outside of Houston.

HS: Exhausted from . . . exertion?

R: Exertion.

HS: Perhaps with a friend?

R: Female friend. (Laughter)

HS: Just checking. Okay. It happens in the best of families.

How's your tape doing, by the way? Don't--

A: It's fine. Yes.

R: No, Johnson was--that's not necessary what you wanted to hear--Johnson knew what he wanted. She knew what she wanted. And together, they really made this

Rosenthal -- I -- 39

man who he is. His education--he went to teacher's college. He was a unique person.

A: Well, let me ask you one last question maybe. You said that the Joint Distribution Committee helped you some. What did they do?

R: Joint Distribution Committee was really the outfit established in New York, and later on throughout the United States, that gathered these people, who were on the ship when you arrived, and then took over. When they came to me, the lady from the Joint Distribution Committee said, [in a] bossy [way], "You'll see me at 10:30 on Monday morning."

A: Oh, she was from the Joint Distribution Committee?

HS: Okay Daddy, but you have also referred to HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society]. Is that the same or different?

R: Different, but doing the same thing.

A: But they're different organizations.

R: Yes. HIAS was quite towards Israel. The Joint Distribution Committee was more universal. They both did good work, and they were both very hard to find because they were hidden in some building.

A: You said one helped you get a visa to go to Trinidad.

R: No.

A: No?

R: The visa to go to Trinidad is a horrible story. The Nazi stormtrooper tells me in Dachau--

Rosenthal -- I -- 40

HS: Dad, dad, we're not going there.

A: No, let's just go from the--

R: --"You are not worth a bullet."

HS: Got it.

R: So when I came to Amsterdam, the man said, "I can't let you board the ship. You have to have a deposit," of \$500, whatever it was, in Trinidad. I was supposed to go back to Dachau now. I was sitting in Holland; they will send me back.

A: So you went to the Joint Distribution Committee?

R: I went to the HIAS. There is--was HIAS.

A: Oh, HIAS.

R: Yes. HIAS had an office right at the port in Amsterdam. Have you ever been in Amsterdam?

A: Yes.

R: Then you know the red light district.

A: Yes.

R: And that's exactly where their office was. (Laughter) And to stand there in line starting at eight o'clock, nine o'clock in the evening in winter, nothing on the head, was not comfortable. Anyway.

A: So they got you money?

R: But they got me the money, and this is unbelievable. I would say there were maybe a thousand people lined up on the edge of one door at eight o'clock in the morning when they opened up. Dark, winter, December. I wore no hat and had



Rosenthal -- I -- 41

no hair. They had cut it off. The guy points at me, okay? "What do you need?"

Out of thousands of people! "I need to go to Trinidad and deposit." "Don't go, I'll take care of it." Ten minutes later, he came out; done.

A: So Mr. Novy wasn't involved in that part.

R: No, the Novy involvement was US only.

A: Okay.

R: Yes. No.

HS: Let me ask you something. When you first sat down, Claudia, you said that there's this story from the Ph. D. dissertation [by Louis Gomolak] that there's all this subterranean mumbo-jumbo. Where did that gentleman get that from? What kind of historical background--I mean, [it is] an academic document.

A: Well, yes, it is. Well, first of all, in 1963, President Johnson came to Austin soon after the--well, actually, he was supposed to come two days--November twenty-fourth, 1963. There had been a new synagogue built in Austin, and he had agreed to dedicate the synagogue. This would've been when he was vice president. Well, of course, he came to Texas, and the assassination happened. They canceled the dedication of the synagogue. So Johnson was contacted by Novy and asked if he could do it later, and Johnson said he would. Johnson came home over Christmas of 1963, and he was there for about a week, and he said that if they would have the dedication on December the thirtieth, he would dedicate the synagogue.

Rosenthal -- I -- 42

So he went to the synagogue. At the synagogue, Mr. Novy made a speech, which is *very* cryptic, about Johnson helping to bring people in during the Holocaust. He also mentions that they used the NYA; Johnson had been the [Texas] director of the National Youth Administration before he ran for Congress. That was immediately before. He had left that position to run for Congress. He said they used the NYA to house some of the young men who were coming in. Well, there really isn't much more documentation than that. There's not much paper.

This man who wrote the dissertation interviewed an awfully lot of people in the Jewish community who said that Johnson helped, but they couldn't remember how he helped. And part of the reason I think they can't remember is that there wasn't very much written down about all of this. And Johnson's office didn't save the papers from 1937 and 1938. I guess they didn't know he was going to become president. So it isn't until later that they really saved everything. I was surprised to find that they had saved this. So, he interviewed these people who said, "Well, if he put them in the NYA, that must've been illegal, and if he did this and that, it must've been illegal."

And then this Ph. D. candidate also connected it to earlier in the century a lot of Jews came into Galveston. And there was this move to bring Jews, particularly people who had been victims of the pogroms in Poland, to New York. They brought a lot of people to New York, and there began to be an anti-Semitic backlash in New York. And there was a man who decided if they could change it

Rosenthal -- I -- 43

so that these people weren't coming to New York, they were coming to Galveston and into Texas, they could continue their operation, but not face the anti-Semitism, so there were actually a lot of Jews. And Novy was part of *that* wave of immigration that came into Galveston and settled in Texas. And most of those people became merchants, ran department stores, owned a lot of businesses in Texas.

So this Ph. D. candidate says, "Well, they came in then; there must've been a second wave during the beginning of the Holocaust in 1938, 1939, 1940. But if you actually go back and look at the records of who was coming into Galveston, there was not a big wave of Jewish immigration into Galveston. Mostly, people were coming into New York, some into New Orleans, but not into Galveston.

Anyway, so he kind of set up this whole hypothesis, and in the dissertation, he quotes people as saying if this was true, this must've happened. If this was true, this must've happened. And, for the most part, you know, what Novy said in his speech I think was true, but these extrapolations aren't really true, the illegal part of it, because *everybody* I found had a visa number to come into the United States.

HS: Everybody had a visa number.

R: Oh, you couldn't get in here.

A: Everybody, and there simply was . . . .

HS: No, it was tight. I mean, getting that number was an act of divine intervention.

Rosenthal -- I -- 44

- A: There simply was no large-scale illegal operation to bring people into this country. That didn't happen.
- HS: The Novy brothers, at least through the years, become almost--they say, "Novy," and I'm never sure if it's Louis or Jim. Is that what you are discovering during your work?
- A: Most of the time when I've found the Novys, it's been Jim Novy. But I don't know if that's because Jim Novy did more, or if it's because I think that Jim Novy is actually the one who was a little closer to Lyndon Johnson.
- HS: Okay. He was the oil man, right?
- R: Yes.
- A: He was into scrap metal. He owned a big scrap metal business.
- R: He had an office in the Thing[?] Building in Austin. I've forgot the name. Sixth Street, Seventh Street.
- A: During the war, he was dealing in scrap metal and collecting a lot of scrap metal for the war effort. Louis Novy owned several theaters in Austin.
- R: Interstate Theaters.
- A: Yes, and became quite prominent. Both of the Novys became very wealthy and were very very active in the Jewish community. Jim Novy was president of the synagogue at the time--no, he was chairman of the building committee at the time the new synagogue was built.
- HS: That would make sense. It's the biggest (inaudible) chair the committee

Rosenthal -- I -- 45

R: I was present when Lyndon Johnson got his first suitcase to go to Washington at the synagogue.

HS: They gave it as a gift?

R: Yes.

HS: Oh that's a sweet idea.

A: They gave him a suitcase?

R: Yes.

A: And what year would that have been? See, he went to Congress in 1937.

R: Yes. It must've been his second term, not as Senator.

A: It would've been later, but that's interesting. I'll have to see if I can find some record of that.

R: I remember--synagogues are somewhat all the same. They had a sort of a basement room there--quite austere. And we gave him a suitcase, and wished him well.

A: Hmm.

R: And Johnson, of course, was a man who had a purpose in anything and everything that needed to be done. He was, really, a very, very interesting personality, and while Texans are pretty smart, he was the smartest of them. And had skill, as far as I know, of organization. If you needed something from Johnson, you got it. Johnson had your name, rank, and serial number. While you were in the army, you got a letter from Johnson. I think when I got my citizenship paper, I think he got something like that.

Rosenthal -- I -- 46

A: I bet, yes.

R: Texas is a very unique state. I was in Austin. I worked for a newspaper, so they knew me. You know any of the governors in Texas?

A: I didn't know them personally; I knew who they were. Yes. "Pappy" Lee O'Daniel.

R: Yes. That was the first assignment I had from the newspaper. And the newspaper said that his catch line was, "Pass the biscuits, Pappy."

A: --Pappy, yes.

R: And so, when I went to the governors' mansion, right across the street from the *Tribune*, I said, "Could you please--" He said, "Oh yes, Al, sure." So he told the cook to pick up biscuits, and I had to wait.

And I knew the children very well, the O'Daniel kids. Molly, she'd run around with a little barrel sort of thing, collecting money for Daddy.

A: (Laughter) That must've been cute.

HS: How old would she have been? How old was the child? Young?

R: Yes, she was young. She was young.

HS: Little girl.

R: She got married while I was working for the paper.

HS: So do you think you've got the connection that you were trying for?

A: Yes, I think so. Yes, I do. I'm particularly interested in learning about Mr. Eichenbaum. I'm going to see what I can find on that score.

Rosenthal -- I -- 47

HS: Can I get your business card, or will you promise me, Girl Scout honor, that you will send us whatever you develop?

A: Oh yes, I will send you a copy--

HS: I've got your name now. I've got your name. You can hide and run, but I will find you. Ancestry.com is my new friend.

DA: Look for her on Facebook.

A: You can find me on the internet. (Laughter)

HS: Actually, I Googled you, because I thought, "This is so crazy. Could this be a scam?"

A,DA: Oh, yes.

HS: But you had too many details that would--I mean, anybody who was going to scam would just not go to that much effort.

A: Yes.

R: Now, these papers that you left here--they're for you, or for me?

A: You can keep those.

HS: He can keep them. He would enjoy that. Thank you.

A: I brought them for you to have.

R: Okay. I just didn't want to take these--

A: I hope I have a card here--

HS: Well, we have the letter that you sent.

A: Yes, and that was one reason I wrote a letter. I thought, well, if I send them a letter on LBJ Library letterhead . . .

Rosenthal -- I -- 48

HS: I can do that, too, at Kinko's.

A: There we go.

HS: Thank you kindly. Thank you.

A: See, it matches my letterhead.

HS: Yes, it does, but you know, I could do this, with a little photo--

DA: Give her two so she can give one to Emily. Emily, was it?

HS: My sister, Emily. That's cool. That's great. Thank you.

R: These are things for me?

A: Yes, you can keep those.

R: Oh my god.

HS: Here, you have this.

A: Yes, but I couldn't fake all the correspondence from LBJ.

HS: No. (Laughter) Prior to your writing, you know, what could you say?

R: Did I help you?

A: Oh yes, yes, I think so.

R: I don't know. I do know what you wanted. I--

HS: Good thing you launched into this. How many survivors could there be?

A: There can't be very many, no.

HS: You have to be really--you know, you have to move on these things.

R: --because that stormtrooper, in Dachau, told me I wasn't worth the bullet--

(interrupted by A, DA, HS)

HS,A: Yes.



Rosenthal -- I -- 49

DA: He was wrong.

HS: He was wrong. He got it wrong. But you know, they weren't known for their wisdom.

DA: So you just came in for a long week for a daughter's wedding you said? Is that off?

A: Let me just turn this off.

HS: Well, because my dad is here, and my sister, my brother, my son. We moved to Oregon, but everybody seemed to have made this beeline back to the East Coast, from my little nuclear family, so they see my dad a lot. And so, my daughter went to school in New York, met her--

R: Now why am I here? It's an interesting side (inaudible). I was in Texas, working on a newspaper, lived in Dennison. I had been on a register--

End of Interview

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

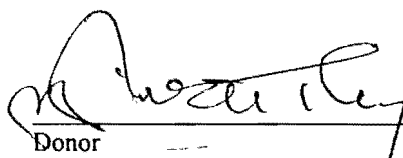
Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

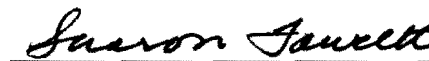
ALFRED ROSENTHAL

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Alfred Rosenthal, of Silver Spring, Maryland, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted with me, at my home, on October 29, 2010, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
- (2) The tape recording may be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.
- (4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.
- (5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

  
Donor

  
Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries

October 29 2010  
Date

12-28-2010  
Date