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Back to Dudelsheim

Conquering the Fatherland

February 19, 2014

1 hour, 9 minutes, 29 seconds

Interviewee: Larry Greenbaum

Interviewer: Anne-Clara Schenderlein

Transcribed by: Jenny Donovan

[Holocaust Living History Workshop](#)

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Back to Dudelsheim: Conquering the Fatherland with Larry Greenbaum (2014)
Holocaust Living History Workshop

- Time Transcription
- 00:01 [The Library UC San Diego]
- 00:03 [Presents]
- 00:05 [A Holocaust Living History Workshop event]
- 00:09 [Back to Dudelsheim: Conquering the Fatherland with Larry Greenbaum]
- 00:12 [February 19, 2014, Geisel Library Seuss Room]
- 00:18 Susanne Hillman: Good evening, I would like to welcome you all to this special Holocaust Living History Workshop, featuring Mr. Larry Greenbaum. When we started this workshop, the reason that it was launched in the first place was really to advertise, to increase the visibility of the Visual History Archive. Many of you know about this, but I want to mention it again for those of you who are new to our workshop.
- 00:48 Susanne Hillman: What I did today is I thought, let me find out how many survivors, or witnesses, come from the town of Dūdelsheim, where Mr. Greenbaum is from. So, I went to the archive, and I entered the search term, Dūdelsheim and sure enough, I found a cousin of Mr. Greenbaum. And the size of the archive is such that, you're likely to - whenever you look for somebody, you'll probably find the person that you are looking for, or a relative, or a friend. It has such, it is so extensive really. So, if you're interested to know more about the archive, which is located here on campus, you can contact me. I will be happy to sit down with you and to help you make the best use of this wonderful resource.
Now, I would like to introduce one of our most talented graduate students, the Doctoral candidate, Anne-Clara Schenderlein, who has graciously agreed to interview Mr. Greenbaum. The reason why I asked Anne-Clara to do this, is that she is an expert on Jewish immigration, emigration, and return, actually. She is working on a dissertation on this topic, and so she will be the perfect person to give a bit of a background on this topic. Please help me welcome Anne-Clara Schenderlein and Larry Greenbaum.
- 02:11 [Applause]
- 02:15 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Well, thank you very much. Can you all hear me alright? Yeah? Okay, yeah. I will just give a very brief introduction, very general, about the conditions of Jews before the Nazi rise of power, and then emigration and return. It's very brief, but I welcome questions after we do our little interview here. So, in 1933 about 530,000 Jews lived in Germany. This is about less than one percent of the total population. The great majority of Jews in Germany viewed themselves as integral of and to the German nation and culture. They viewed themselves primarily as German citizens, with commitments of different degrees to the Jewish faith, cultural tradition, and their Jewish heritage. The early years of the Weimar Republic in particular were a time and place in which many Jews felt that they could live both as Germans and Jews. The takeover of the Nazis destroyed this atmosphere. Beginning in April of 1933, the Nazis passed legislations which step by step limited Jewish participation in virtually all areas of public life. By 1935 almost all Jews were either prohibited to work in their professions, or they were extremely restricted in

pursuing them. Many Jewish students left public high schools and universities, even before laws excluded them officially because the anti-Jewish atmosphere made attendance unbearable. The Nuremberg race laws of September 1935 intruded further into private life, prohibiting marriages and sexual relations between Aryans and Jews.

- 03:52 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Despite all this discrimination, Jewish emigration initially happened rather hesitantly. Between 1933 and 1938, 140,000 Jews left Germany, many of them heading to neighboring countries. The decision to leave Germany was in itself very difficult. There were lots of factors involved, that I can't really go into here, and even once a decision was made it was not an easy undertaking. Immigration to most countries was greatly restricted. The Évian Conference of July 1938, supposed to find a solution to the growing number of people wanting to leave Germany, failed as the 32 participating countries showed themselves unable to reach agreements that would help the refugees. The November Pogrom of 1938 did however cause a dramatic increase in Jewish emigration, even though it had become ever more difficult to find a place to emigrate to. In addition, by 1938-39 the Nazi regime had built up a whole bureaucracy of rules and restrictions to harass and humiliate the Jews who wanted to leave. They had to file various documents, appear at different offices, receive clearances, and pay increasingly higher taxes before they could emigrate. By September 1939, the month that the War broke out, approximately 282,000 Jews had left Germany, and 117,000 from annexed Austria. Of these, some 95,000 emigrated to the United States, 60,000 to Palestine, 40,000 to Great Britain, and about 75,000 to Central and South America. And of course, we know Larry was one of them who came to the United States, and we will hear a little bit more about this in a minute.
- 05:41 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: But since the focus of the talk today is really also the return of Larry as a soldier in the U.S. Army, I just want to give a few numbers about refugee soldiers. It is actually very difficult to determine the exact number of refugees who were in the U.S. Army. People say, or some scholars have estimated, between 9,500 and 30,000, my own estimate is really about 15,000. There are several historians who are working on the topic of refugee soldiers in the U.S. Army at the moment, and so we expect that there will be more accurate numbers within the next year or so. Initially, German-Jewish refugees could not serve in the U.S. Army on equal terms as other Americans because they were classified as enemy aliens. The U.S. government did not take into consideration that these people were actually refugees from the Nazis, but that they were really classified as de facto Nazis, which was not a good experience for many. But the restrictions were lifted for refugees in the Army in 1943, and then the military began to regularly recruit German émigrés and particularly also Jewish refugees. Some of them were assigned to do intelligence work, especially also translation work, and Larry will also tell us a little bit more about this. And in this capacity, many refugee soldiers ended up taking part in the conquest of their former homeland, sometimes less than ten years after they had left it.
- 07:15 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And, yes, we will now hear from Larry, how he experienced that conquest. But we will go first before we talk about return, we have to talk about the beginning. And I will just say a few words about Larry in general. He was born on January 29th, 1924 in the small town of Dūdelsheim, which is

northeast of Frankfurt, in the German state of Hesse. Larry was born as Luther Greenbaum. His father was a cattle dealer, which was a very common occupation for German Jews in rural areas of Germany and was often a profession that people had for several generations. And his mother was a housewife.

08:00 Larry Greenbaum: Housewife.

08:03 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And just to give you an idea about this little town of Dūdelsheim, in 1924, Dūdelsheim had about - oh no, not about - it had 74 Jewish citizens, 5.2 percent of the population of 1,435. And a Jewish community had existed in this town for a long time, we think since the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

08:28 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.

08:29 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, so Larry, I think we will start by - I will ask you first to tell us a little about this life in the little town of Dūdelsheim, and a little bit about how it was before the Nazis came to power, and then also how this changed.

08:46 Larry Greenbaum: Well, it was a very good time, mostly, for Jews in this little town before the Nazis came. Everyone got along. Of course, there were some antisemites, even then, like there are all over the world. But, generally, Jews were accepted, they were part of the community. There was not too much social inter-how should I say it?

09:20 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Interaction

09:21 Larry Greenbaum: Interaction with Christian families, but everyone got along. For instance, we had two public bake ovens, where people would knead their dough at home, and then they would bring them to these public bake ovens. And each family in town had a certain day where they could bake, like every two weeks or something like that, but generally, everyone was accepted. And -

09:56 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, how did that change?

09:59 Larry Greenbaum: Well, then in 1932 of course there was a general election, and Hitler was a freely elected Chancellor of Germany, but of course, the Jews knew what would happen if he were, you know, if he was elected. And it was at that time very bad for the Jews because you could immediately tell that there was a separation. Christians would no longer talk to Jews unless it was on the sly because they themselves were a little bit afraid because they were afraid of their own government. And to the extent that our neighbor, by the name of Koch, who later became the Mayor of that town after the War, he was a very good friend to my father, we had adjoining property, and he met my father once on the street and he whispered to him, meet me at the fence. So, they met at the fence at night and he said, I can no longer talk to you anymore. When I see you, make-believe I said hello to you, and you said hello to me because they threatened to burn my house down if they hear me talk to you. So that was about it, and then of course we Jewish children went to the same school, but of course, we were not - um, they wouldn't talk to us.

- 11:49 Larry Greenbaum: And then slowly but surely we got beaten up; it was an almost daily occurrence. At first, you would defend yourself, then after a while, there was no use defending yourself, you would just lie down, and you covered your head and you took a good beating. To the extent that one time - I even forgot to tell you that - at the school, there was a coal cellar and it had a chute going down, where they came with sacks of coal, and I was beaten so severely, in order for me to get away, I went down that coal chute into the coal cellar and I stayed there all day until the custodian of the school heard me screaming and he finally let me out of that thing and where I could walk home. And that was the extent of everything that went on, and it got worse, day to day it got a little worse, till finally, you know, my father could do nothing. We were little more than just flotsam and that was it. You couldn't go to court, you had no rights. You could not go to court to complain, and they could basically, they could do with you what they wanted.
- 13:26 Larry Greenbaum: And there was a time later on when two Gestapo agents came to our house, unannounced of course. A young man and an older Gestapo agent, and they started searching through the house. They basically wanted to annoy you and demean you, and they were looking for gold and for silver. Everybody was told that the Jews have all the money, of course, that was nonsense. And they started in the basement, looking for this, and for that, they finally worked themselves up to the first floor and the second floor. And they open up a closet, and there was my uncle's uniform from the first war. He was an officer, and the young officer said, what is this doing in this closet? So, my grandmother said, that's my son's uniform. He was an officer in the First World War. And the older man, who must have been a World War I veteran also, he said to the younger one, come on, let's get out of this house. I've seen enough. And they left, never to return. No one ever came back to return. And I wanted to bring up my father was a four-year veteran in the German army. He first served on the Russian front when the Russians were defeated in 1917. He was transferred to France and he was in the trenches in France for four years, including the Battle of Verdun, which was carnage. Unbelievable. He never got a scratch. He won the Iron Cross and he won a medal, and this is ironic, from Hitler. Yeah, Anne saw the medal, for heroism in action.
- 15:47 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: In February 1935, he received it.
- 15:51 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, he received it in [19]35, so that was the story of my life.
- 15:59 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, so, your parents then decided to send you to a different school?
- 16:05 Larry Greenbaum: Oh yeah. I couldn't go to school there anymore, it was impossible. They told us not to come to school there anymore. So, we went to a Jewish school, like a high school, and - in Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main. And that's where we were, and I was there till we left for the United States in 1938.
- 16:35 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Can you tell us a little bit - I don't know if you know enough about how your parents made the decision to leave Germany.
- 16:43 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, well, my father was the eternal optimist. He always thought it's gonna get better. And my uncle, who was a doctor, he left for Palestine in 1934. He was a religious Zionist. And he told my father, leave because this is not

going to end well for the Jews. He was a prophet in his own time. And my father said, eh, don't worry about it. It'll be better. Well, finally it got worse and worse and worse, and we finally - my father had a friend here in the United States, who gave us a visa. So we had to go to Stuttgart, where the American consulate was, but of course, you had to be careful what you said to the consul. If you told the consul that you had a job in America, he refused you entry to the United - we'd never get a green card. The reason that being, there was huge unemployment in the United States. There were sixteen million people unemployed, and if you already had a job before you got to the United States, the government just - that was unthinkable. And, so, many Jews made the mistake of saying that they had a job already because they had relatives here that came before and so on. So, finally, that was settled. We left in May 1938 - we arrived in May 1938 in the United States. At that time, my father - each family was allowed ten [Deutsche] Marks to leave the country.

- 18:38 Larry Greenbaum: They confiscated everything, but they also allowed us to take our furniture that we had, that we owned, and dishes and whatever. So we had, like a lift, you know, like a railroad car full of household belongings. And that's how we came. My father had forty dollars, or forty Marks in his pocket when he came. Lived with relatives that got here, that came before. We stayed with them for a week. They rented an apartment, six-room apartment. They rented out three rooms to people. My father went to work. My mother, who was a hausfrau in Germany, leisurely, and things she hired herself out as a maid, cleaning houses. My Grandmother took in sewing. People didn't throw socks away, people didn't throw shirts away. If the collar was frayed, my grandmother got the shirt, she turned the collars and I don't know, twenty-five cents a shirt, thirty-five cents, whatever. And, we rented out a room, like twenty dollars a week, or something like that, and we made it. And, no Jew ever went on welfare in the United States. First of all, they couldn't.
- 20:17 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: You even worked, right? As a student?
- 20:20 Larry Greenbaum: Oh yeah. I worked before I went to school. I worked for a grocery there. In a grocery store, delivering groceries to people. And we used to get - we didn't have refrigeration in those days, even in the stores. We had ice boxes. So, they used to come, the milk delivery truck used to come with forty, fifty cases each, six bottles to a case. I would empty those out, into the iceboxes. Then an ice truck came with fifty-pound blocks of ice, and I would chop that up and throw the ice all over the milk. And then I was off to school. So, it was tough, but it was good. We made it.
- 21:12 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Did your parents miss Germany at that time?
- 21:17 Larry Greenbaum: I think my mother more, at least she verbalized it more. She always used to say, es war doch so schön in Deutschland - you know, it was so beautiful in Germany. But, you know that's how people felt. And people felt, why should we have had to leave. We were Germans?
- 21:42 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: When you moved to New York, you moved to Washington Heights?
- 21:45 Larry Greenbaum: Washington Heights, yes.

- 21:46 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Which was an area that some people called the Fourth Reich because there were so many German-Jewish refugees.
- 21:54 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, they always called us Yekkes. Yekke is a - when the Jews moved to Israel, German Jews always were dressed in tie, jackets, and a yekke in Yiddish is jacket. And, the Israelis all wore no jackets, or anything, that if somebody wore a jacket, they knew they were a German-Jew. They called them Yekkes.
- 22:25 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: So, your parents mostly socialized then with people in Washington Heights. [Cross talk] Other refugees?
- 22:29 Larry Greenbaum: Yes, I mean, of course. You know, we had friends that came from the same town in Germany. And, the German-Jews they were like cliquish. They stuck to themselves. And there were, oh I don't know, it was German Town.
- 22:53 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: But you did not really - you did not keep, continue speaking German?
- 22:58 Larry Greenbaum: Oh, I was Americanized three days after I came to the United States. [laughs] I really was. When I came here, I did not speak one word of English, and in three months I was fluent. You swim or you sink. And if you really wanted to accomplish something in a new country, you had to speak the language. That was number one. Education was the number one thing. Anything else?
- 23:32 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Well now I think. So you went to high school, you made friends with all kinds of American boys? [cross talk]
- 23:38 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, Americans, sure.
- 23:38 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: You played baseball.
- 23:39 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, we played baseball, stickball, got in trouble with the police because we broke a few windows, here and there. And then the police cars would - one police car at one end of the block, and another police car at the other end, and they would grab us. And then if I told my dad I got caught by the police - well don't ask.
- 24:09 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Okay, and so, in 1941 when the War broke out, you were seventeen.
- 24:14 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.
- 24:14 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: How did you feel about this? Were you interested in then in taking part in the fighting? [cross talk]
- 24:20 Larry Greenbaum: Oh yeah.
- 24:20 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Against the Nazis?
- 24:21 Larry Greenbaum: Of course. At eighteen I was inducted into the Army. I was sent to Camp Grant, Illinois as a medical - basically a bedpan commando. You know what that is?

- 24:35 [Laughter]
- 24:40 Larry Greenbaum: And we got our basic training there. After thirteen weeks of basic training, we went to Fort Knox, Kentucky, where I was assigned to the 140th general hospital. Because the invasion of Europe was to begin shortly before that, and they needed a lot of medical training because they knew the casualties would be horrendous. Which they were. So we went to England, and we were there for a while. Then, of course, there were time lapses. They assigned me to a frontline. A frontline medic means I would be amongst the infantry as a medic to tend to wounded, and so on and so forth. So I went to France, Belgium, and finally, I went across - I never caught up with my unit that I was assigned to. They moved so fast, I think that was [George S.] Patton's doing. He moved so fast, nobody could keep up with him. And, so, finally, by that time, I went across at the Rhine River, near Cologne. And -
- 26:14 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Do you know when this was then? Was it in early 1945?
- 26:19 Larry Greenbaum: [19]45, yes. The War was like almost over. And finally, the War was over. And a lot of GIs [members of the armed forces] were sent to a camp where they said, well, we have to assemble you here. We will ship you back to the United States for three or four weeks furlough. From then we can ship you back into the Pacific to fight Japan. And that turned out not to be necessary because President Truman dropped the bomb on them, or two. And that was the end of that. And then they assigned me as an interpreter with the military government in Germany, where I finally and coincidentally, I was stationed in the town, in Dūdelsheim, where I was born. This was total coincidence. I mean, I was sitting in the back of a truck, and all of a sudden, I said, my God, this area looks familiar to me. And you know, I was fourteen when I came here, and I was nineteen or twenty, yeah twenty when I was back. Six, seven years, eight years. And, that was that, I was stationed in Dūdelsheim for six months, then I was discharged.
- 27:56 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: This was very unusual. Usually, the Army made sure that people who were from Germany originally would not get posted in the towns.
- 28:04 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.
- 28:05 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: So sometimes it happened. And sometimes when they were coincidentally in those places, and they needed someone who speaks German, you know, they would use these refugees as interpreters, for example. Can you tell us a little bit more about how it felt to then enter your hometown after these six years?
- 28:23 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, I - Well, I stopped. I asked the truck to stop. And I said I'm going to walk through this town - main street. And I wanted to see if anybody would recognize me. So, I walked through main street, which wasn't all that large, maybe a half a mile, even less. And I walked past Mr. Koch, the one that I mentioned before. I passed his house, I passed my parents' house, and I went to the other neighbor's house. And I walked into their yard and there was a girl who was doing something, she was the owner of the house, and she heard somebody coming. She turns around and she did a double-take. She looked at me and went [hand gesture], oh my God, Luther, what are you doing here? She was surprised. This is a girl I went to

school with. And of course, then, you know, talk went through the town very quickly. I was surrounded by a lot of people. And of course, you couldn't find a Nazi. Nobody was a Nazi. They were all very good people. Of course, there were some that were good. These two neighbors that I talk about, they were especially good. When Hitler first came to power, Mr. Koch told us they are probably going to beat up all the Jews. You live in my house overnight. And he had us come live in their house because my father was very good friends. But then, of course, you know it got worse for him also, and he just couldn't. After a while, they could do nothing. And -

30:35 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: How did you feel about all these people who said, Oh, we didn't do anything? Or we didn't know what was going on?

30:41 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. Well, what could you say? I said, are you sure? You know, I mean, nobody was a Nazi? I saw the flags coming, stones being thrown through our house every night, breaking windows, so finally, my parents got, you know, wooden shades for the house. But the bombings with rocks against that was just as bad as breaking the windows. And that's how we lived till we left in [19]38.

31:22 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: What was your duty while you were stationed in Dūdelsheim?

31:26 Larry Greenbaum: I was an interpreter for the Military Government. My commanding officer was a Major. He was an attorney in civilian life, and he acted as judge and jury. And if there were, usually disputes between German against German, with property or theft, whatever, he had to adjudicate them. You know, they would sue and they would come to us. Of course, he couldn't speak German, which I did, and I could interpret back and forth, what went on. Not really easy for me, because technical things I couldn't understand, and I was too young when I left. You know, when you're a kid the language is different than when you're an adult. But basically, I had a good time. I had a good friend of mine, he was an Italian, also in our regiment, and his name was Angelo Palazzo. He was my best friend. And, so we had a good time there, for six months. And also, you know, right after the War, even though peace was declared, some Germans, what they would do with our Jeeps - we usually had Jeeps - they would string piano wire on roads, piano wire from one side of the street to the other, tight. You couldn't see the wire. And if a Jeep went by without anything, you were decapitated. So finally what our engineers did, they welded steel tubing with a hook above our heads, so that if anything would happen, it would cut the wire, split the wire in half. But then that lessened also.

33:50 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Did you ever get into, did you have much interaction with the people in your town while you were there?

33:54 Larry Greenbaum: Not too much. I tried to stay away. I really didn't want anything to do with them. Because it didn't seem right to become friends with them. Who wanted to be friends with them, basically? And, so, of course, I couldn't do anything about - let's say I could have taken revenge on some of them. That would not have been right either. The War was over, and no matter how much anger I had, I was under military rule. I could not dishonor myself, nor the flag. So that's, I don't think - I don't think - Jewish people were not out for revenge. Can you attest to that?

34:49 Speaker 1: Yes.

- 34:50 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.
- 34:51 Speaker 1: No revenge.
- 34:52 Larry Greenbaum: No revenge.
- 34:53 Speaker 1: I didn't.
- 34:55 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, no revenge.
- 34:56 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, there's not really any cases known.
- 35:00 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.
- 35:02 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Well, I was curious, how much did you know about the Holocaust when you were in the Army?
- 35:07 Larry Greenbaum: I did not know anything about the Holocaust. I didn't hear anything.
- 35:13 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: When was the first time that you became conscious of the Holocaust? [Cross talk]
- 35:16 Larry Greenbaum: When I saw some people. When I saw some people - a family came back and they settled in Büdingen. But I didn't know who they were. I had no, I had absolutely no idea. And later on, I found it was a Jewish family but I have no idea where they came from, or why they settled, why they settled there in Büdingen.
- 35:56 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And they were from Eastern Europe or -
- 35:48 Larry Greenbaum: I have no idea. I had no contact with them either, unfortunately, I'm sorry to say. I was a, I was a dumb kid.
- 36:01 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: [Laughs] No. Okay, so you stayed in Germany for six months.
- 36:06 Larry Greenbaum: Six months. Yeah. I was finally sent home. I had enough points to go back home, and in 1946 - January [19]46 I was sent home.
- 36:20 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: How did you feel about that?
- 36:22 Larry Greenbaum: Great. Great. I was home to see the statue in New York harbor. As a matter of fact, I remember when I left New York - I lived in New York - and I was like thirty, forty blocks from my house in New York, and I went to my commanding officer and I said, please, let me go home. I live right here. And he said, you sure you're going to come back? He wouldn't let me go. It was a secret, where we were going. And I finally, we went overseas. It was a two-week trip. In a convoy that had maybe 200 ships in that convoy. It zigzagged back and forth. Destroyers all going around. And of course, the troopships were in the center, and then ammunition, artillery, and supplies were around that, and finally, the warships were all around. And we finally landed in - Oh. Senior moment, forgive me. It'd be - what's the port in England?

- 37:37 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Bournemouth?
- 37:38 Larry Greenbaum: No, not Bournemouth. I was stationed in Bournemouth.
- 37:39 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah.
- 37:42 Larry Greenbaum: Great duty in France. The Queen and King of England used to vacation there. And, oh I don't know. It makes no difference. Anyway, we got there.
- 37:56 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: So, when you left Germany, did you have any interest what would become of that country?
- 38:03 Larry Greenbaum: I didn't care. Absolutely didn't care. You know, I went through most of southern Germany. I was in Frankfurt. I was in Cologne. Everything was bombed out. I was happy. Literally, I was happy. And I thought it would take Germany a 100 years to rebuild. But they did it in - once things got going with American help, financial help, the Marshall Plan - in ten years everything was rebuilt. And so -
- 38:50 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: How much did Germany and your past matter in your life, after you returned to the United States?
- 38:58 Larry Greenbaum: It didn't matter. It didn't matter. I went back on a visit, and of course, we stayed in Germany for a while. My wife had a cousin that lived in Dortmund. She was half Jewish. Her husband happened to be a Nazi officer. And she had a daughter and a son, but she stayed, she stayed, she stayed, in Germany. Her daughter is, still lives in Dortmund. And her husband is a veterinarian. But other than that, I went back. We went to Nuremberg, where my friend was born, [unclear]. And from there we went to Vienna, where Mary was born. And then we went to Budapest.
- 40:18 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And this was sometime in the [19]80s?
- 40:21 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. That was in the [19]80s, yeah.
- 40:24 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And, so, your wife was from Vienna. Did you -
- 40:26 Larry Greenbaum: From Vienna?
- 40:27 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Vienna.
- 40:28 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah.
- 40:28 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Did you speak German at home?
- 40:29 Larry Greenbaum: No. Only I spoke. Well, I'm sorry, I spoke only German to my parents and to my grandmother. Other than that, I had no reason to speak German. Because all my friends speak English. And that was it.
- 40:50 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: You told me that your father, after the War, sent food packages to his friend.

- 40:58 Larry Greenbaum: Yes. My father then wrote to this Mr. Koch, who later became the mayor of this town. He wrote to him. He wrote back. And then my father periodically sent him food packages. Stuff that they could not get. Because, basically, he was a decent guy. And if he hadn't - if he had not stopped talking to my father, they would have burned his house down. It was always a lesson for somebody else. You open your mouth, we'll get you. And after a while, there was a pastor, right? Pastor [Martin] Niemöller, in Germany. He used to say, first they came for the Communist, and we said nothing. Then they came for the Jews, and we said nothing. Finally, they came for us, and there was nobody to speak for us. So, let's not give up our freedoms here so fast. That's all I can say.
- 42:14 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Just one more question about how representative maybe that story of your father sending packages to people who were decent in Germany was. Do you know other people from your community who -
- 42:23 Larry Greenbaum: No I don't. I really don't.
- 42:26 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Okay. Well, I have, I think I've worked through all the questions I have. So maybe we can open up [Cross talk]
- 42:39 Larry Greenbaum: Maybe someone can - or you know, we can open up for questioning.
- 42:39 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah.
- 42:40 Speaker 2: So you were part of the Third Army?
- 42:43 Larry Greenbaum: No, I was part of the Seventh Army.
- 42:44 Speaker 2: The Seventh Army.
- 42:45 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. General [Courtney] Hodges.
- 42:47. Speaker 2: Hodges.
- 42:48 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. Yes sir.
- 42:50 Speaker 3: When your family left to come to America.
- 42:53 Larry Greenbaum: Yes.
- 42:53 Speaker 3: What happened to your home? They lost the home?
- 42:57 Larry Greenbaum: My home, well my father sold it. But, way, way, way undervalued. Yeah, afterwards he got money back. Because that was I think the deal the United States made with Chancellor [Konrad] Adenauer. They met Adenauer. He was - anybody remember Adenauer? He was the first Chancellor after. After, yeah.
- 43:26 Speaker 4: Papa, tell people when you came back to Dūdelsheim. Tell them where you were stationed in Dūdelsheim.
- 43:33 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, in the house where I, where I lived.
- 43:39 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Oh! That's interesting.

- 43:41 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, well that's where they had their headquarters. Yes.
- 43:46 Speaker 5: Yeah, when you left Germany, was it hard to get out of Germany at that time? And my second question is, do you feel that the German people at that time were just as much to blame as the Nazis?
- 43:58 Larry Greenbaum: I would say that you know, I can't read the German mind, but the way they adored Hitler, I would say most of the Germans were with Hitler. For whatever reason, I don't know. It's - what was the?
- 44:23 Speaker 5: My second question was, did you have a hard time getting out of Germany at that time.
- 44:26 Larry Greenbaum: No. At that time, it was okay. They were glad you left.
- 44:29 Speaker 5: They would let you get out?
- 44:31 Larry Greenbaum: Oh yeah. They let us out. As I said before, with our furniture, everything.
- 44:35 Speaker 5: And there was no impediment? Wow.
- 44:42 Speaker 6: When you left, did you come by boat then?
- 44:44 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. I came on an American boat. We were American before we got here. On the U.S.S Washington.
- 44:53 [Laughter]
- 44:54 Speaker 7: What kind of ship was that?
- 44:57 Larry Greenbaum: Actually, it was a passenger liner.
- 45:03 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: It was not exclusively for refugees. This was just a normal passenger ship.
- 45:07 Larry Greenbaum: Yep. Yeah. But they, you know they - Yeah. Yes.
- 45:18 Susanne Hillman: Looking back on your life, how would you say has this experience affected, or made you the person you are. That you were forced to leave your home country at the young age, then then you had to go back.
- 45:32 Larry Greenbaum: Well, I would say, I was young. I adjusted better than older people, like my parents. And, you know, it's tough to be thrown out of a country that you had attachments to like Jews are attached to the United States. We love this country. And all of a sudden somebody comes and says, you're not wanted here anymore, unthinkable. So, that's how I feel.
- 46:08 Susanne Hillman: Could you talk a little bit about how, in your experience, this affected your parents? Because as you say, it was harder for parents.
- 46:14 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, well, it was hard for my parents. My father worked, you know, he did menial labor because he didn't speak the language. He came here, he was 52 years old. Didn't know, didn't have a profession. Usually, Jews that came

here had a profession, like attorneys. Even though they couldn't practice law here, they became accountants. Or if you were a scientist, it was easy for them to get a job here. [Albert] Einstein got here, and he got a job.

46:58 [Laughter]

47:02 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And your mother, she never worked before, so -

47:06 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, my mother was a hausfrau, you know she was a maid. She cleaned houses, four or five houses, five days a week. Not very, I wouldn't say it's demeaning. Any work that you do honestly is not demeaning, but she was not used to that kind of life. So, for the elderly it was tough. No question. Yes.

47:32 Speaker 8: When and where did you meet your wife?

47:35 Larry Greenbaum: I met my wife in New Jersey at a lake. It was summertime and we kids, we, you know. And I saw a nice, beautiful lady with her little poodle walking along, and I said, she's for me.

47:53 [Laughter]

47:57 Larry Greenbaum: And that's how it was. And we got married in 1949. We were married 63 years.

48:04 Speaker 8: How many children? Oh, is this one?

48:07 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: [Laughs]

48:10 Speaker 8: And grandchildren?

48:11 Larry Greenbaum: What? Three, three grandchildren. Two boys, and one beautiful girl.

48:20 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Other questions? Yes. Deborah.

48:25 Deborah Hertz: Thank you very much for this very moving talk. Your sense of humor and your irony were not lost on us. And I want to congratulate my student Anne, who's finishing up her last chapter of her dissertation. [cross talk]

48:34 Larry Greenbaum: I didn't hear -

48:35 Deborah Hertz: - But I do have two questions. The first one is about Palestine, the road not taken. What would your life had been like if your family had gone to Palestine? And the second one, could you tell us a little bit more about the Jewish and German, and English meanings of your original name, Luthar?

48:52 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Okay, so the first question was what would your life have been like if you had emigrated to Palestine?

48:58 Larry Greenbaum: I don't know.

48:59 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: What do you think? So how did it go for your uncle, your uncle went to Palestine?

- 49:03 Larry Greenbaum: My uncle, he had a tough time. He went to Palestine, he didn't speak Hebrew. He didn't speak Hebrew. He was a physician, and it was tough for him, but he managed. Yeah.
- 49:18 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Did he go with his family or by himself?
- 49:20 Larry Greenbaum: He went with his family, yeah. With his wife, two daughters - my cousins, whom I visited in Israel some years ago - and so on. But, I probably would have fought. Who knows, I might have been killed.
- 49:39 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: And the second question was about the meaning of your first name, Luther. If you know more about it?
- 49:44 Larry Greenbaum: I think Luther was a name in German mythology, is that right?
- 49:52 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Some people in the audience think so. I'm not sure.
- 49:57 Larry Greenbaum: What kind of German are you?
- 49:58 Speaker 9: I think you're right but I don't know the meaning.
- 50:00 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. I don't know either.
- 50:02 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: So, it was not - I guess, Deborah, is the question whether lots of [cross talk]
- 50:07 Deborah Hertz: Why didn't you stay Luther when you were in New York?
- 50:09 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Oh.
- 50:10 Larry Greenbaum: Why didn't I stay Luther? I needed an English name. So it was L, Laurence. And now everybody calls me Larry.
- 50:20 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Ah. And when did you change your name?
- 50:25 Larry Greenbaum: When I first signed my first income tax form.
- 50:32 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Ooh. But this was - you were naturalized when you were in the Army, right?
- 50:35 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. I was considered - I was in the Army - I was considered an enemy alien. Of course, they thought I was a spy for Germany. And so finally, they couldn't send me overseas unless I was a citizen. So we took a bunch of Jewish guys, they sent us to Louisville, Kentucky. And there were maybe forty, fifty Jewish kids that were all from Germany, and a federal judge swore us in, and we were officially non-spies.
- 51:13 [Laughter]
- 51:16 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: A lot of people changed their names when they were when they got naturalized because it was obviously easier also to be in the Army with an American-sounding name.
- 51:26 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. So I've been Laurence, or Larry, ever since. Yes.

- 51:33 Speaker 10: After you got out of the service, what did you do for a living? What did you end up doing?
- 51:39 Larry Greenbaum: I became a - actually, before I went into the service I became a camera technician. Yeah. And my boss, who was also a German-Jew, he learned this trade at [Ernst] Leitz [later known as Leica Camera] in Wetzlar. And he trained me. As a matter of fact, he came over on the same boat.
- 52:12 Speaker 11: Could you say more about the interview your family had with the American consulate to immigrate?
- 52:20 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah
- 52:21 Speaker 11: You mentioned some things that you couldn't say.
- 52:24 Larry Greenbaum: You could not you had a job here before you got here.
- 52:28 Speaker 11: So what could you say?
- 52:30 Larry Greenbaum: You could say if they asked you, did you have a job here? You said you didn't have a job.
- 52:38 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: But you could say that you had someone who will pay for your life.
- 52:41 Larry Greenbaum: The sponsor who gave us the visa, he was responsible for us. You know, if we - There was no such thing as coming here and going on welfare right away. That was, it's just not right. And I think, even if you could have, my father would have sooner died than go on welfare. He would have done anything not to go on welfare. It was, that was a thought that never entered his mind.
- 53:15 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, so in order to come here you had to have an affidavit - basically a sponsor from an American citizen.
- 53:20 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. And he was responsible. And if he was wealthy enough to bring in, let's say 20 or 30 Jewish families, he had a big obligation. Because if they couldn't support themselves, he would have had to support all of them.
- 53:44 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: But really, from what I know is that most people, most refugees had the same attitude as your father. They really wanted to start out and work and do whatever they can to be, to stand on their own feet.
- 53:55 Larry Greenbaum: Everything. I don't think that there was anybody that would have gone on welfare. It just, they just, they just didn't think of it. I wanted to say something, and I'm having another senior moment.
- 54:12 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: It'd probably because I interrupted you.
- 54:17 Larry Greenbaum: Eh. I forgot. Yes ma'am?
- 54:19 Speaker 12: What brought you to California?
- 54:20 Larry Greenbaum: Beg your pardon?

- 54:22 Speaker 12: What brought you to California?
- 54:24 Larry Greenbaum: What moved me to California? My mother-in-law.
- 54:27 [Laughter]
- 54:32 Speaker 13: To clarify that, she lived here.
- 54:33 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. Well, my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law got remarried. She married a gentleman from San Diego, and we came to visit. That, I would say, was about 50 years ago? Yeah. About 50 years ago. And when I came here and saw this part of the United States, I said to my wife, I am not staying another day in New York.
- 55:04 [Laughter]
- 55:09 Larry Greenbaum: Go west, young man. And so, she said, I'm willing, but I have my sister and brother-in-law. We all lived - my mother-in-law, my sister and brother-in-law, Mary and I - we lived in the same building. It was an apartment building in the Bronx. And we got along great, and my wife would never have moved without her sister. So we induced them to move, and we all moved. And I never regretted the day to be out of New York. Even though I love New York. When I first came here, I used to get a nickel from my father, and I would go to the subway, and go from one - stand in front, next to the motorman - and would go from one part of the city, on one nickel, back and forth all day long. I mean, I used to go downtown to the Empire State Building when I first came and just stood there. God, you're great!
- 56:20 [Laughter]
- 56:24 Susanne Hillman: Do you often think about Germany nowadays, and about the past? Or is that not something that you think of?
- 56:30 Larry Greenbaum: No, I have no bad feelings about present Germany. It's a different generation. I don't like the old generation that I grew up with, but Germans today - doesn't bother me. Does not bother me. You cannot hold the children today responsible for [what] their parents or their grandparents did. Yes?
- 57:05 Speaker 14: Did your belief system change, knowing what you saw what Germany did during World War II? Do you still believe in God?
- 57:11 Larry Greenbaum: Oh yes, oh yes! Yeah, definitely. You know I wouldn't, you know, sometimes you know - I was brought up religious, in a religious family, kept Shabbat and all that. But in the Army, I sort of got away a little bit, but as you get older, you know, it comes back a little more. Now I go to Synagogue every day, and you got to believe. You know, there was one thing - I have a friend who was an atheist. And he told me one day, you know, I am so happy to live in the United States, where I don't have to believe in God, thank God.
- 57:58 [Laughter]
- 58:05 Larry Greenbaum: Yes?

- 58:06 Speaker 15: Did you, I guess. Two questions about discrimination. Did you feel discriminated against in any way as a member, as a Jew in the U.S. Army?
- 58:16 Larry Greenbaum: Yes, I felt some. Oh sure, no doubt. But it was not overt.
- 58:21 Speaker 15: What about your parents back in New York? As Germans, did they feel any discrimination?
- 58:27 Larry Greenbaum: No. Because they had no contact with anybody but German Jews.
- 58:30 Speaker 15: Oh, because they were all together?
- 58:31 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. I mean, we knew of course when we came here, there was a German Nazi Party in New York. What was his name?
- 58:48 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: [Fritz Julius] Kuhn
- 58:49 Larry Greenbaum: Kuhn. Yeah. Kuhn, in Yorkville, New York. You know, it was a section of New York. A lot of Germans lived there. And of course, he railed against the Jews. And another big antisemitic person in the United States was Henry Ford. And, to make him do somersaults, my friend's son is now the treasurer of the Ford Motor Company. And I think Mr. Ford, the old Mr. Ford is doing somersaults.
- 59:38 Speaker 16: Question, what is your reaction to Jewish people buying German products? Like if you met a Jewish person buying Mercedes, or something like that? [Cross talk]
- 59:48 Larry Greenbaum: There were Jews that thought it was unthinkable to buy German products.
- 59:56 Speaker 16: I know, so what's your reaction?
- 59:57 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah. But then again, Israel got a lot of, all the cars, almost, in Israel are Mercedes-Benz.
- 1:00:10 Speaker 16: I didn't know.
- 1:00:12 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah! German - yeah. It was part of Wiedergutmachung.
- 1:00:17 Speaker 17: German reparations.
- 1:00:19 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah, it was - yeah.
- 1:00:23 Larry Greenbaum: Anything else? Yes ma'am?
- 1:00:25 Speaker 18: Yes. In leaving, were there people, Jewish people, that didn't want to go? That stayed behind? And, how was that like? Maybe there was - did everyone want -
- 1:00:35 Larry Greenbaum: Those Jews that stayed were murdered. Yeah. From my town, I don't even remember all their names anymore, they were murdered. There were two - at least ten or twelve that I can remember that never got out. They had nowhere to

go, and they were killed. Because they never showed up anywhere, so they were gone.

- 1:01:06 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: You had family too that did not leave?
- 1:01:08 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, my aunt. My mother's sister. Her husband was already in the United States because he left before she did. She had two little children. One was like a baby, and the other one was maybe four years old, and she couldn't get out anymore, and she was gone. And he finally committed suicide. Anyone else?
- 1:01:40 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah.
- 1:01:41 Susanne Hillman: There's a young lady in the back there.
- 1:01:42 Speaker 19: Yeah, did you find out, like later on, that you had family that died in the Holocaust? Or was there any time where - [cross talk]
- 1:01:49 Larry Greenbaum: I don't hear.
- 1:01:50 Susanne Hillman: Did you find out later on that - or, when did you find out that you had family that was, that died in the Holocaust?
- 1:01:57 Larry Greenbaum: Yeah, my aunt, sure. We knew that, because you know, the evidence. She couldn't get here, her husband was here.
- 1:02:10 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: So, did you find out after the War? Did you ever get confirmation where she was - where the family?
- 1:02:17 Larry Greenbaum: No. No. Never heard or anything like that. I probably could find out through the archives in Israel. I'm sure they probably have something.
- 1:02:33 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: There's another question here.
- 1:02:37 Speaker 20: Was the last time you were in your hometown when you were in the U.S. Army? Was that the last time you went back?
- 1:02:42 Larry Greenbaum: No, no. I was there on vacation, and we went through there. And I saw my friend Helga Hochstein again.
- 1:02:51 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: The one who he - [cross talk]
- 1:02:52 Larry Greenbaum: The one that I went to school with.
- 1:02:53 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Yeah.
- 1:02:58 Susanne Hillman: I still have an announcement to make, so please bear with me, but before that, I would like to thank Larry for his very insightful information and account. That was very interesting, very enlightening. Thank you Anne-Claire also for doing the interview.
- 1:03:16 Larry Greenbaum: Thank you.
- 1:03:17 Anne-Clara Schenderlein: Thank you, Larry.

- 1:03:18 Susanne Hillman: Thank you
[Applause]
- 1:03:26 Susanne Hillman: I really would like to thank Sarah Gelbart, Larry's granddaughter, because she was the one who introduced Larry to UCSD first. He came to speak in her class, a year ago or so, and that's when I met Larry. Because of that, he's now here, so I'm very grateful Sarah, thank you.
- 1:03:44 [Applause]
- 1:03:49 Larry Greenbaum: I have a question - when can I come again?
- 1:03:50 [Laughter]
- 1:03:51 Susanne Hillman: We'll talk about that. I would like to just briefly introduce you to two people here. Two filmmakers who are currently working on a documentary on one of San Diego's most well-known, or best known, Holocaust survivors, Mr. Lou Dunst. They would like to talk a little about the project which they're doing. So, this is Alberto Lau and this Bob [Robert] Schnieder, and they'll tell you what they're doing with this project.
- 1:04:25 Alberto Lau: Well, thank you. Go ahead.
- 1:04:26 Bob Schnieder: Well, some time ago, about a year ago we had the sort of fortune, a happy surprise to meet Lou Dunst and his lovely wife, Estelle, and become familiar with quite an extraordinary story. And it was interesting in itself, but as time has gone on it has led us to, well, led us here. And it's led us to a number of interesting, informative aspects that hopefully will result in a documentary that at least attempts to convey what Mr. Dunst has gone through. You know, I say coincidences because I was in the 7th Army. I was in the 352nd general hospital. And we, about 20 years later, but because of this experience, we find ourselves - it's almost an endless string of pieces of information and people and it's been a very, very rewarding experience. There's a book that was recently published* on Mr. Dunst's life and it's a very, very well-written and informative book*. We hope to present something a little different.
- 1:06:04 Alberto Lau: What we need for our documentary are historical photos or film from that time. And in the piece of paper that I just passed out, we list specific places that we're looking for historical pictures or film. Places where Mr. Dunst was born - Yasinia, Zakarpattia, now Ukraine. The Ghetto [Mátészalka Ghetto] where he was taken in the former Galicia, the concentration camps - Auschwitz [-Birkenau], Mauthausen [-Gusen,], and pictures of the trains that he was taken on - the boxcars. If you know where we can look - and we already performed internet searches, believe us, so we know what's out there. But, we find that one of the problems with the internet is that the images are sometimes low resolution, and also the provenance is questionable. So we don't know who to get permission to use those images. We want to make sure that whatever we use is legitimate and we have the - if it's copyrighted material, that we have permission to use it. So we plan to go to the Holocaust Museum in LA [Los Angeles] and Washington DC, as well as do research here at UCSD. But if you have any other places that you can point us to where we

could find these images, we would be very grateful. Our contact information is on that piece of paper.

- 1:07:45 Susanne Hillman: And you can also contact me. If you lose the flier, you can contact the Holocaust Living History Workshop. And of course, I hope that in the near future we will be able to show this documentary here at one of our workshops, and have Lou as the guest of honor. So, the more stuff you can bring in, the sooner it will be done, and we would love to do this.
- 1:08:08 Alberto Lau: And believe me, this workshop will probably be one of the first places that this film will be shown. You will probably see it before it's released to the public**.
- 1:08:19 Susanne Hillman: You'll be informed. I'll send out, I'll bug you with emails. I would like to thank everybody for taking the time to come here. Please feel free to approach Larry personally, if you want to say a few words. I also have fliers for our next event, which is on March 12th, and I think it's uniquely relevant to what we've heard as you'll see, the title of the event is *Survival and Death: What Made you Know the Nazis Would Kill You*, and this is going to be a talk with a political scientist, Peter Gourevitch, and he has researched the experience - Oh! There he is! There's Professor Gourevitch, oh that's wonderful! He's going to talk about some of the factors that made some Jews realize the danger and get out in time, like his grandmother. And others, like his uncle, who did not see the danger, and as a result were murdered. So please, take a flier and I wish you a good night. And as I said, please stay on for a bit. Thank you.

* *My bargain with God, The Story of Holocaust Survivor Lou Dunst*, written by Rabbi Ben Kamin was published in 2014.

***I Had to Clean My Heart, A Survivor's Story* - Documentary by Robert Schnieder and Alberto Lau was released in 2015.