

**Museum of History and Holocaust Education**

**Marc Huppert interview**

**Conducted by Adina Langer**

**January 18, 2023**

**Transcribed by Liam Durant**

Born in New York City in 1955, Marc Huppert is the son of a Polish Jewish Holocaust survivor and an American Jewish woman. Marc's father, Josef, was born in Zigeunerwald on May 31, 1915. When Germany invaded Poland, he fled to Lvov, which was under Soviet control. Once the Nazis took over Lvov, he survived the war by becoming involved with partisan groups and working for a Soviet general. After the war, he immigrated to the United States with help from his brother, Arthur, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). Marc Huppert recorded his oral history interview at Kennesaw State University in August 2022.

**Full Transcript**

Interviewer: Welcome. Today is Monday August 22, 2022. My name is Adina Langer, I'm the curator of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education at Kennesaw State University, and I'm here with Marc Huppert who will be recording a legacy series interview with us in memory of his father, Josef Huppert. So, can you start by stating your full name?

Huppert: My full name is Marc Alan Huppert. My grandfather, my mother's father, name was Morris, so the M—.

Interviewer: The M. So, you were named after your—.

Huppert: Abraham. So, yeah. Yep.

Interviewer: And do you agree to this interview?

Huppert: Of course I do. Yes. I'm very honored.

Interviewer: Excellent. Thank you so much. So, can you start by just letting us know where and when you were born?

Huppert: I was born at the Bronx Hospital [laughs] in Bronx, New York. Um, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1955. And, we apparently didn't realize all of this until talking to my sister recently. We lived in the Bronx for a short time, and then back moved down to New Jersey. And then my father fell asleep on the way home one day, and we ended up moving to Queens. So, I grew up in Queens, New York.

Interviewer: So that's actually— My mother grew up in Queens in the 1950s as well, so I know. Who knows, could've been in the same neighborhood.

Huppert: Could've been neighbors, yeah!

Interviewer: So, before we talk about your childhood and eventually your life here in Georgia a little bit, we're gonna go back in time and focus on your father's story. So can you please state your father's full name?

Huppert: My father's full name was Josef Huppert. His nickname in Poland was Juzu. He was born in Zigeunerwald, which was actually in Austria at the time. For years, we looked for his town in Austria, until somebody told me it's in Poland. So, in 1915, when he was born, May 31<sup>st</sup>, his town was in Austria. In 1918, it became part of Poland.

Interviewer: And, can you spell Zigeunerwald?

Huppert: [laughs] Z-i-g-e-u-n-e-r-w-a-l-d.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you please tell me a little bit about your father's family? What was his family like?

Huppert: His family was a little bit unusual. My grandmother's name was Anna Bloch, and her husband was Jakov Bloch, and together they had 3 children. My grandfather lived in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia<sup>1</sup>, which was a short distance between where he lived and Zigeunerwald. It was a driving distance basically. He was married, he had 10 children, and he met my grandmother and fell in love with her. This was obviously after her husband had passed away. He left his wife and married my grandmother, and my father was the only child from that marriage. So, all together, there was 14 brothers and sisters. I believe that there were 11 children from my grandfather's side of the family, and counting my father, there would have been 4- um- 3 prior to the marriage, and my father was the fourth. So there was 14 brothers and sisters in the family all together.

Interviewer: And then, how many grandchildren were there?

Huppert: There were, I believe 11 on my grandfather's side of the family that were still in Ostrava, and Anna had 5 grandchildren all together.

Interviewer: So your father then was the youngest of these 14 children?

Huppert: He was the youngest, yes.

Interviewer: And he was the only one born specifically then to your grandmother and grandfather?

Huppert: Yeah. And at that time it was somewhat scandalous because my grandfather left his first wife and he met my grandmother and fell in love with her. And it took some time—. One of my father's cousins actually wrote a book and there are passages about this in it. It took some time for the families to kind of figure out that this is okay and, we like each other. They were relatively close. My father's 2 sisters were—. Okay let me go back a little bit. My father's half-brother, Arthur, left Poland at the age of 17 or so, before he had to join the military and he moved to the United States. So, he was here, and my father's other 2 sisters Fella and Klara were in Zigeunerwald.

Interviewer: And what were your father's parents' occupations? What did they do?

Huppert: My grandfather owned delicatessens and butcher shops in Ostrava, in Czechoslovakia, and it was doing very very well actually. Quite well. And his children, his sons, took over the businesses when he left. So, his children were grown at that time. My grandmother and my grandfather and her husband before owned The Restaurant Bloch, which was a restaurant, tavern, and a small inn. We used to joke that the inn was in case you had too much to drink, you could stay at the inn overnight. It was very very very well liked, and very famous. There was the closest large town was Bielsko-Biała<sup>ii</sup>, and Bielsko-Biała was a somewhat industrial town. There was a trolley that ran from Bielsko down to Zigeunerwald and then continued on. So, people would come down to vacation, sort of like going to Kutsher's<sup>iii</sup> from New York for the weekend. And there were postcards, stories about them. It was quite a place.

Interviewer: And what was the neighborhood like where the restaurant was, and where they lived?

Huppert: Very rural. It was a small town. We've never been there. We've tried a couple of times. But it wasn't a big city. It was a little town. My father was close to pretty much everybody that lived there. There's a story about the police used to come in pretty much on a daily basis and they would sit down at the bar and ask for the top shelf scotch, for a glass of scotch. And my father would give them scotch, and then they'd have another and another and then they would go. My father never ever charged them anything, but he did tell me that he would keep a bottle from the same scotch underneath the bar with the lower level scotch in that bottle and that would be their second and third drinks would be the less expensive scotch [laughs].

Interviewer: So, in this neighborhood, in this town, really, were there people of different religions? Different ethnic backgrounds living together?

Huppert: Yes, I think so. There was no synagogue, I know that. Because my father talked about my grandfather having a room in the house where he kept a Torah, and nobody was really allowed in there. But I don't know very much about the town at all, because my father literally never spoke about Europe. He never spoke about- every once and a while we would talk about skiing, he and I and my sister also all loved skiing, and my father was an amazing skier. So, he would talk about how they would get up and hike up the mountain and have lunch and they would ski down. I don't know any of his friends' names, I've never heard him talk about friends, I don't know what he did when he was a little boy, he just shut that off after the war and just wouldn't talk about it. Just never mentioned it.

Interviewer: So you mentioned that he told you about his father having a special room in the house with a Torah, do you know what role Judaism played in their lives?

Huppert: They weren't orthodox, but I think they were very religious. My father, after the war, was not. And a number of people I've talked to, a number of survivors I've talked to have had the same feelings. Part of it was that he was afraid to tell people that he was Jewish, and part of it was that he had lost faith. After what he had seen and gone through, he had lost faith. When we were growing up, my sister had her bat mitzvah, we went to temple, we were very- again, we weren't orthodox, but then after my bar mitzvah, we stopped. That

was it. So, we never- we really were not- we didn't have a religious household. We did do Passover.

Interviewer: You did do Passover? Did you celebrate any other holidays?

Huppert: Yeah I mean we did do Hannukah. But not in ways that families that are religious will do it.

Interviewer: Did you know, or were you able to figure out how they would have learned what was going on in the world in their little town? Got news or anything?

Huppert: Travelers mostly. Yeah there clearly was no CNN, so it would be people that came to visit and they had regular clientele that would come down and would talk to them. And like I said, Bielsko was a fairly vibrant town so there was a lot of news that would come out of there. But that was, you know, pretty much it as far as I know.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that his brother moved to the United States, did they have other family living elsewhere that they kept in touch with?

Huppert: Other than the Huppert family in Ostrava, I don't know. I don't think so. I'm sure they did actually. I shouldn't say they didn't. But nobody my father ever spoke of. For the past 40-45 years or so we've been researching him, so we find little bits and pieces here and there.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that he was-. Well, your grandfather first, and then your father was a successful delicatessen owner and restaurateur, did you get a sense for how the Great Depression affected the family, if at all?

Huppert: No. No, there was very very very little talk about, really about anything that went on. We would hear stories about parties at the restaurant every now and then. My father became involved when my grandfather passed away. My father was 19 and he took over the restaurant, and so he did everything from the kitchen, up to doing the books and working in the dining room. And his brother-in-law also worked in the restaurant. But there were literally no stories at all about it. His brother in law's name was Gundy, and Gundy was married to Klara who was my father's favorite sister, and they were very very close. I didn't know about Gundy until I think I was probably in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We had taken a trip-. My father loved model trains, so we had a very large basement and he built a train track that literally we had to turn sideways to get from one side to the other. And we'd spend hours and hours working on the trains and playing with them. And he took us on a vacation to the train museum in Pennsylvania, and after we went to the museum we went to this gentleman's house and it was Gundy Frankel. Didn't know who he was. My mother, and my sister, and my grandmother went in the house with his family, and he and my father went out on to the deck and sat down on the deck and I went with them. They spoke to each other for a fair amount of time, but in Polish and a little bit of Yiddish here and there so I don't know what they were talking about. The way I'd describe it was, it was not an angry conversation. They weren't yelling at each other. But it was not a happy-friendly conversation. It was clearly serious. And when that was done, we got back in the car and we drove back to new York. I never heard from Gundy again or about

Gundy again and had no idea who he was until we started researching and we found out about Klara. And one of the things, well not one of them, the thing that separated them other than obviously the war, was that after the war, Gundy did not spend enough time looking for Klara. He remarried almost immediately after the war, and my father was very upset about that. So that was part of it. I'm sure there was more, but that was the gist of that.

Interviewer: So you mentioned that your father started working at the restaurant when he was 19. Did you find out what his education had been like leading up to that?

Huppert: I think mostly home school. There was never any talk of a school at all, and we've never seen photographs or anything pertaining to a school. Actually, in the town as well. In the old photographs that we've pulled up online and things, we've never really found, you know, the Zigeunerwald day school. So I think at that period in time probably homeschooling was more the norm. And working in the family business, working around the house, it wasn't like it was when I was a kid, I'll put it that way [laughs].

Interviewer: You had mentioned to me that he spoke multiple languages. What languages did he speak?

Huppert: He did. Oh my gosh, he spoke Polish obviously. He spoke Yiddish, he spoke Hebrew, he spoke French, he spoke Italian, German, what else? Did I say Spanish? No. Spanish. He learned to speak Spanish so that he could speak to the employees that they had at the store. His feeling was that it wasn't right to have somebody come and be with you and expect them to learn how your language was without doing the same for them. So, he learned to speak Spanish, and he could speak Spanish to them. He had just a gift for picking up languages. We would have Passover meals- my mother's family was huge. We would have literally this 20 foot long table that he built out of plywood, and one of his favorite things to do was, and I don't know if it was everybody else's favorite, but he would tell a joke at some point and time after everything was done. He would start off in English and then we would go from English and he would switch to Polish, and so now a third of the table now knew what he was saying. And then at the end he would switch to some other language that maybe 2 people spoke, and they would laugh. And nobody else had any idea what was happening, and that was one of his favorite things to do.

Interviewer: That's funny. I can just imagine him, I don't know, starting to have some of those skills with groups of people at the restaurant.

Huppert: He was quite the entertainer. We had parties at our house a lot of the time. It wasn't always, you know, it didn't have to be somebody's birthday or any kind of special occasion. It would just be- they would invite guests over, my family would come, they would sit in the living room. Of course back then everybody smoked, so there was a cloud of smoke 3 feet off the ground. And they would just laugh and joke and talk to each other. One of the things was that growing up, and I think my sister probably felt the same way. Is that partly because of the size of the family, and partly because of how they took him in. I mean, they really loved him. We always thought that this was my mother's cousin, this was my father's, so we always thought it was both families. When I was

older and I found out that these were all my mother's family, and none of this was my father's except for my uncle Arthur and his sister Fella, who changed her name to Phyllis, also came to the United States. She came during the war, but we rarely saw her.

Interviewer: So, in Poland, did the family have a sense that war was on the horizon?

Huppert: I think everybody had a feeling. They knew that things were going on. I don't know that anybody could imagine what Hitler would do, and what Germany would do. So they had to know that there were battles going on, there were conflicts. We're relatively sure that it was the police that came to the restaurant and told my father to get the family together and they literally took whatever they could carry. They put jewelry into mason jars with jelly, so if they got stopped and searched. They went to Bielsko and got on the train from there to Lvov.<sup>iv</sup> And the Germans and the Soviets had formed an agreement that the Soviets would take half of Poland, and Germany would take the other half. So, my father's home was in the Nazi side of Poland. So, they went to Lvov and started a life there. They felt that was going to be where they were going to be.

Interviewer: And I guess at that time, did they have sort of a sense of the relative merits of the Soviets vs the Germans? Or was it sort of taking a chance?

Huppert: No. The letters that we got- or that Arthur got, were mostly written by my grandmother. Some of them from my father. My father could fix anything. We always joked that you could hand him a computer tomorrow and he'd fix it and give it back to you the next day. So, he took a position with an automotive company, it was CWS. I would try and say the actual name, but I can't pronounce it for the life of me. But he started out working as a mechanic, and then they promoted him and he became a test driver. So, he was doing very well in the company. My grandmother would write and say you don't have to send us any money, we're fine, and you know, I'm trying to find some piece of clothing. If you find that you could send that to me, that would be great. They clearly, they started to think this is where they were going to be, this was going to be home. And I think that their thoughts were, if Hitler lost power, if the war ended in Poland, that they could go home, and they would certainly go home at that point. But I think that their feeling was this is where we live now. There's no more Zigeunerwald. And then Hitler violated the treaty and crossed the line. We're almost 100% sure, well we know he would have been at work, and that he would have escaped into the woods. Knowing my father and from talking to some of the relatives that we've found, he more than likely waited until dark to see if he could go back in and get his family. And that wasn't going to happen. So we think he fought with partisan groups and then joined a Soviet brigade.

Interviewer: So, did you hear or piece together any stories about his time with the partisans? You know, what were they doing?

Huppert: He didn't really talk about it. The things that we put together, one is that for the amount of time he spent going through the woods, it just makes sense that he would've met up with partisans. But when he was captured, he put on a Soviet officer's uniform. That officer had been killed, and he was captured as a Soviet officer. We're not sure if he had a-. Because he did have a Soviet uniform, we have photographs of him in it. But we're

not sure if he was actually part of that unit at the time, or if it was his group joining that group and fighting. So we don't know for sure that he fought with partisan groups, but it just makes sense for where he was and what was going on.

Interviewer: So, what happened after they were captured?

Huppert: So, he put on an officer's uniform because- in the Soviet army, to be Jewish and to be an officer was close to impossible. I mean, it could happen, but not likely. So nobody suspected that he was Jewish. They were taken to a POW camp. I don't know where the camp was, and I don't know the name of it. But, and this is a story that he actually told us. After some time in the camp, they were told that they needed to dig a trench around the perimeter of the camp. I mean, they're soldiers, they thought they were building a trench so that if the allies come they can jump down in the trench and defend the camp, and they thought that was what they were doing. They were wrong. The Nazis lined them up along the edge of the trench, and they shot them. Row by row. And my father woke up under a pile of bodies that had been executed after him. He had a scar on his face where the bullet hit him. If it were an inch over, we wouldn't be sitting here. And his legs were frozen, it was wintertime. And he crawled out of this space. I personally believe this way, I think that he was being watched over. I think that his family and just whatever forces there were, were caring for him. He crawled to a farmhouse and the farmhouse, and the odds of this unbelievable, but the farmhouse was owned by a German doctor. And even more unbelievable, the German doctor said "I'll take care of you." He wanted to amputate my father's legs, and my father said no he wouldn't do that. He fixed the wound on his face, and he hung a bed above a wood burning stove, and he put my father on the bed. My father stayed on the bed and he worked on him and kept him warm until my father could walk again. I would love to know who he was. Clearly, that's never going to happen, but he saved not only my father's life-. And there's a saying in the Talmud that if you save one life, you save the world. And he saved one life. And so much has come out of that. So, once my father could move around again, and he was okay, his strength was back, he joined another Soviet unit. He served under the command of a General. I should've brought the picture, but there's a picture of my father sitting on a white horse in uniform. And horses [laughs] liked my father. And my father loved horses. So, if he walked outside, and there was a horse across the pasture, it would come over and say hello. And the General, shortly after he joined, made him- gave him the responsibility of taking care of his horse. He really took my father under his wing. They became close. And he fought with that unit until the end of the war. Through the end of the war. He was, at the end of the war, he was awarded The Red Star. The Soviet Red Star. It was the highest honor that the Soviet Union had at the time. The General said to my father "You'll come back to Moscow with me, and the Soviet Union will take care of you, and if you get married or whatever, have a family, we'll take care of your family. It comes with the honor that you've been awarded." And my dad said "No, I have to go and look for my wife and child. And if I can find them, I will bring them to Moscow and find you. And if not, I'll come back to Moscow and I'll find you." And my father, to our knowledge, was not married and had no children. He went to the U.S. side of Germany, occupied side of Germany, to an area called Fulda<sup>v</sup> and went to a POW camp- Oh, I'm

sorry, a displaced person's camp. You don't want to go to a POW camp. He went to a displaced person's camp called Bad Salzschlirf, which was actually a resort. I have postcards from the resort. It was absolutely beautiful. And the Americans took care of him, and helped him. I think he weighed something like 80 pounds when he came in. We have his papers from when he entered the camp. He told the officers that he was from Berlin. He didn't want to tell them that he was from Poland. And the reason for it, and if you look at photographs of Berlin after the war, there was no way that they were going to request paperwork on my father from Berlin. There was no Berlin left. And he was afraid that if he said that he was from Zigeunerwald or Bielsko-Biała, that they would send for information about him, and he would have to wait and wouldn't be able to leave. So, on his papers coming into the states, we have the log from the ship he came in on, it says Josef Huppert, and then it says German next to it. So, he stayed there-. Actually, my sister and I went to the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. We went on sort of a semi-private tour with a group, and we had the chance to sit down with an archivist, and I mailed him more than I think he expected to get from me. One of the things he found, and we can't find it, and I can't remember the names, but he found two of my father's cousins were in the camp, and that they had arrived the day before. I think that they were part of the Heitlinger<sup>vi</sup> family, which were cousins. But I couldn't find the paperwork that he had sent us. It's been a number of years. So, we don't know how that- you know, was that an accident? Was that, you know, just a twist of fate? No cell phones back then [laughs], and there was no mail, so I don't know how they ended up in the same place. I think it was a twist of fate. And I believe that they went to Australia and he came to the United States.

Interviewer: So, before we get into kind of how he came to the United States, in your research, were you able to determine who the General was that he was with in Russia?

Huppert: No, and we have photographs. With one photograph of several officers and soldiers standing in a row behind the General who is sitting with another officer and the General's wife is sitting next to him. So, we have photographs of the General, and we've tried to find out who he is, or get some sort of inkling, and there's just no information that can be obtained.

Interviewer: Now's probably not the time either to be reaching out to former Soviet Union-.

Huppert: Yeah I think we're probably not [laughs].

Interviewer: But, aside from that, do you have a sense for whether at that point they would have known he was Jewish? Or was he hiding that part of his identity?

Huppert: My guess is that he probably didn't tell people that he was Jewish. He may have told the General that he was Jewish, because they were close. But the Soviets were not known for their love of the Jewish faith. I don't think that my father would've felt comfortable telling people that he was a Jew. My guess is that he didn't.

Interviewer: So, getting now to how he came to the United States. So, what year was he in the DP camp? Was this 1945? 1946?

Huppert: 45, 46. Yeah.

Interviewer: And did he reach out then to his brother?

Huppert: Yes. He wrote to Arthur, first telling him that he was alive. And then asking Arthur to help bring him to the United States. And Arthur did just a phenomenal job getting him here. My cousin Norman, who I'm still very close to, Arthur's son, apparently the kids would go out and sell fruit to neighbors to try and raise money to bring my father over. But he worked with HIAS<sup>vii</sup>, and worked with other government agencies. My father came over in 1947. I think it was June of 1947, and he came over on the SS Ernie Pyle.<sup>viii</sup>

Interviewer: And what was that boat like?

Huppert: It looked like just a cruise liner. It really didn't look like- it was not a military ship that I could tell. The photographs we have are, you know, it's a section of the lower deck and people are just packed in. We've looked at all the faces, I think I told you this, we've looked at all the faces along the rail, and there's a gentleman standing, there's an opening in the door, and there's a gentleman standing at the edge of the railing where the opening is. And from his posture, and from his look, and from his size, because he was very very skinny, we're almost sure that's our father standing there. But he told me an interesting story. And he thought this was a funny story. And it was, I guess. But he told me that when they were coming across, at the beginning of the journey, almost everybody on the boat became seasick. So my dad didn't want to be on deck, he didn't want to be below deck, certainly. And he collected some blankets and got as much food together as he could find, and he climbed up the smoke stack and he made the trip across from Europe to the United States on the little ramp around the smoke stack.

Interviewer: Guess he got as much air as he possibly could.

Huppert: He probably got more than he wanted, I think. [laughs]. But he wasn't around-. he just didn't want to-. I'm sure he went down at times, but he just didn't want to be in that crowd of everybody being sick.

Interviewer: That makes sense to me.

Huppert: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, what was your father's arrival like?

Huppert: Again, he doesn't-. He never really talked about it very much. I'm sure he went through Ellis Island.<sup>ix</sup> We have some paperwork from him coming through. Someone told me though, that they may have docked on the Hudson River further up. So, I'm not 100% sure, but again, we're picking at straws here because we're finding little bits and pieces here and there. But when he got off of the boat, he met a couple, and they became friends. And they adopted each other. It was Joe and Alice Pure. And they were, for me growing up, they had 3 kids who were pretty much my age. Vivian and Ellen. And we used to go there all the time, we lived close together. If my parents were going out to dinner, that's where I ended up, if they were going on overnight, that's where I ended up. And we were cousins. There was no question in my mind. Uncle Joe was my Uncle Joe. And my cousin told me at some point when we were late teenagers that she really wasn't my

cousin. That my father and her father and mother adopted each other because they had lost their entire family, and he had lost his entire family. And they needed each other. And he was my uncle. There was no question about it at all. I don't care where he came from. He was one of my closest and most loved relatives.

Interviewer: And you had told me they had kind of a remarkable story too. Where did they meet each other?

Huppert: Oh. They met in Auschwitz. And they still wore the tattoos. They still have the numbers on their arms. They fell in love in Auschwitz. I'm not sure how, but they married in the camp, and then when they were liberated, they came to the United States.

Interviewer: So, once your father was in New York, he reconnected with his brother?

Huppert: He did. His brother at the time lived in the Bronx. I used to think that he lived in New Jersey at that point, because that's where he lived when I knew him. But he lived in an apartment in the Bronx. And in the apartment was his son and daughter, and his wife. And now my father. So, he lived with them when he first got here. We're relatively sure that Arthur introduced my father to my mother. My father, with all of his expertise in languages, did not speak English. So, [laughs], it made it a little bit difficult. But Arthur and Julia, his wife, would go out and they would accompany my parents to dinner and wherever, you know, if they went somewhere. And Arthur would translate for my father. And I've always wondered if my father said something that Joe was saying, or did Arthur say the same thing to my mother? But they fell in love and got married in 1948 I believe.

Interviewer: So, what did they do once they got married? Where did they settle, and what kind of business were they in?

Huppert: Well, they started out-. My grandmother- my mother's mother, and my grandfather, owned a floor covering business. And originally, it was on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in the Bronx. And my father also worked with my mother's- with my uncles, Abe and Al. They did appliance repair and appliance sales. So, he did electrical work and plumbing. And then eventually he talked my grandmother into opening another carpet store on Castle Hill Avenue in the Bronx, which was further up. And it's still there. That was called Lotzkar & Huppert Floor Covering.<sup>x</sup> And they actually lived in the Bronx at that point.

Interviewer: And your mother, what was her name?

Huppert: Frances. Actually, interestingly enough, her name is Freida. And my grandmother named her Freida when she was born in the hospital. And my grandfather said "I don't like that name, we're gonna call her Frances." So, nobody ever called her Freida. We found out when we found her birth certificate that that was her name.

Interviewer: So, they are living and working in the Bronx. What kind of a community had they built for themselves? Or who did they spend time with at that point?

Huppert: Again, a lot of my mother's relatives. My grandmother was fairly close to a lot of the Italian families that were in the area. She was friends with Mary D'Amelia. So, there were a lot of people she was close to. Some of them had businesses that were interesting,

but all very very nice people. Those were the people that were part of my family growing up.

Interviewer: So, your sister, was she born first?

Huppert: Well, it depends on who you ask [laughs]. Yes, she was born first.

Interviewer: And when was that?

Huppert: She was born in 1951.

Interviewer: And then you came along in 1955?

Huppert: 55, yeah.

Interviewer: And at that point, they had moved to Queens?

Huppert: No, they actually moved to New Jersey. To Franklin Lakes<sup>xi</sup> in New Jersey. I actually got a call from my aunt last night telling me that their next-door neighbor in Franklin Lakes was Les Paul.<sup>xii</sup> So, they had an interesting next door neighbor. But my father had a long drive home from the Bronx to Franklin Lakes and at that time there was nothing, it was just open area, and apparently he fell asleep on the way home and drove off into a field one night. And my mother said we're moving to Queens, then they moved up to Queens, and that's where I lived.

Interviewer: And at that point did he take the subway? Or?

Huppert: No, he drove. Yeah. Whitestone Bridge.

Interviewer: So, what were some of your first memories of your parents?

Huppert: Happy memories. Yeah. I didn't see them a lot, and I think it was just that period of time. My father worked all day, and he basically worked every day. And my grandmother the same. They would get home at 6:30 – 7:00 o'clock at night, and they would leave almost before everybody was up. My mother was home. My mother was a part of the PTA, and she had friends in the neighborhood. I had friends in the neighborhood as well. So, my memories of being young, being in my youth, were playing stickball in the street and doing things with my friends. But also working around the house with my father, and we had a riding lawnmower. I'd hold onto it, and he'd ride me around and we'd mow the lawn. Whenever he was doing something in the house, whenever he was home, I was with him pretty much. We planted bushes and trees, picked beetles off of my grandmother's rose bushes, and he taught me how to do electrical work, he taught me how to weld, he taught me how to do plumbing. I am a terrible baseball player [laughs] because I never played baseball and I never played football. But if something breaks in your house [laughs] I can come fix it for you!

Interviewer: Growing up basically in the city, when did you find out that your dad was so good with horses? Did you have a chance to see that?

Huppert: Yeah, there was actually a stable in Flushing, New York, at the time. I believe it was Flushing. But anyways, he wanted me to learn to ride, and took me to the stable. And, literally, we got there, and it was not a huge, but you know, a corral. And the horses weren't tremendous. And we walked over and I remember putting my foot on the bottom rail, and my father leaning over it, and 4 or 5 horses coming right over to my dad. I took riding lessons there, and that's where I learned to ride. And then I went to summer camp, and it was called "Trail's End." And what they would do is when you got there in the beginning of the summer, they would give you a horse- or assign you one. You wouldn't get to keep 'em. They would assign a horse to you. And you took care of that horse through the summer, and rode, and learned how to care for them. And other things as well, but yeah.

Interviewer: Do you still ride now?

Huppert: I haven't in a long time. I would love to.

Interviewer: And what about skiing? Is that something that your dad taught you how to do?

Huppert: My dad had me on-. My first ski I still have. My first ski is this long and looks like a little toboggan. And it's got a little strap where you strap your shoe on it. And I have photographs of my father holding me between his legs. I don't know if you know what a snowplow is. It's a skiing move where you put your skis together like this. So, there are pictures of my father doing the snowplow down the mountain side with me between his legs going down. So, I was literally on skis almost before I could walk. And I skied all the way up until we moved down here. I instructed at Mount Snow<sup>xiii</sup> in Vermont for a while. That was my winter, every winter. If there was snow on the ground, I was sliding down.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned that you really didn't have an inkling what your dad's experience was. Do you remember the first time even learning about the Holocaust in school? Was that something that came up at all?

Huppert: No. Back then there was very very little talk, even of World War 2 for that matter. There was no talk of Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen. There was no real discussion about Hitler, and certainly no discussions about the horrors that went on. We talked about bombing Pearl Harbor and entering the war. Everything we learned was from the United States' point of view. It was really was just the major battles that were talked about. But even that, it wasn't a big part of our education. And there was no talk about it really. During the time that I did go to temple, you'd think that rabbis would talk about it, and people in the temple would talk about it. There was none. At least not in front of us. I really do think that my father, had he lived longer, when I turned 20 or 21, we would have probably sat down and he would have told me more about our family, and more about what happened. I think a lot of it was him not wanting us to carry the weight that he was carrying. But in the neighborhood, there was no discussion of the Holocaust at all. It just was nonexistent.

Interviewer: And you had told me a story about discovering some of your father's things as a child?

Huppert: [Laughs] Yeah, I found his Red Star. He used to keep it in a box by the bed. And my mother had bought me a denim jacket. This is when denim jackets were very very cool. Very few people had them. So I had a denim jacket, and I put the star on my denim jacket, and I went to school. And I didn't think anything of it. At that time, we had little closets. So, you hung your jacket in the closet, went to school, put my jacket on, went home, put my jacket on my door, my father got home around 7:00, and went upstairs and saw my jacket and the star. My dad-. I could count the times my dad yelled at me on my fingertips. And he hit me once in all the time that we were together. I lied to him, and he did not take that well. So, he didn't say anything to me really. He took the star off the jacket and he went away. And you could tell by the way he was moving and by his demeanor that he was less than not happy. He came back up shortly afterwards and sat me down. He didn't tell me about what it was, he just said "this is something you are never ever to touch again. You're never to speak of it to anybody, and you will never take it out of its spot. It will stay there. You don't touch it, you don't talk about it, nothing." And that was it. I didn't know why, and I certainly didn't touch it again. That was clear. And it wasn't until I found out what it was and then put together the relationship the United States had with the Soviet Union at the period of time when I wore that to school was not ideal, and my father was afraid that he would get deported. And my uncle Joe was actually the same way. He was very very nervous. He wouldn't travel to-. He had people going to South America, he wouldn't go to South America because he was afraid he wouldn't be allowed to get back into the country. So, there was a lot of fear back then about that. It was so hard to get in here, I don't want to take a chance of getting out, or getting thrown out.

Interviewer: And at that point, did the United States government still think your father was from Germany? Or had that ever been cleared up?

Huppert: No, it was never cleared up. I don't know if there was ever anything that anybody would look at. But yeah, on a piece of paperwork it said it. His name on his driver's license, and I have his original driver's license. He had a chauffeur's license- was Josef Bloch. And so he used my uncle's name, and then he became Josef Huppert Bloch. I believe it was probably when my sister was born was when he dropped the Bloch portion of the name and became Josef Huppert.

Interviewer: Did he ever seek US citizenship? Was that something he wanted?

Huppert: Oh yeah. He did become a US citizen. This was his country. I mean, this was a big big deal for him. When you look back in time and you read books and see films about what things were like in the regions that he was from, you know, we watch films about Austria, and everybody is eating and having a good time and dancing. But you watch films about rural areas, and it was not- people were not always nice to each other. There was a lot of antisemitism, and to come to the United States was to be in the sunshine. It was a total different-. And I know he loved where he was, and if the war had never happened he would've stayed there. He loved his home. And it was beautiful, there were rivers, beautiful woods and things. But the United States, that was his home. He was not going anywhere.

Interviewer: Did you ever get a sense growing up for what his political beliefs were? Was he a fan of Truman? Was he a fan of-, you know?

Huppert: I'm sure he spoke to my mother, and my grandmother, and when I was little I may have been in the room during that, but I didn't know what they were talking about. I know that my family has always been left of center to a little bit left of center. We've always been Democrats and we've always been liberals. And my father believed that every human being was a human being. It didn't matter what color you were, if you were short or tall or fat or skinny. If you were a person, you were a person. If you did bad things, then that pushed you into a different category for him. But everybody had an equal chance with my dad. When you met him, he would like you. It didn't matter if you had an accent. You're a human being, you're a human being. But yeah, they were very liberal. Very free minded.

Interviewer: So you were I guess only 15 when your father passed?

Huppert: I had turned 15 the week before my father died.

Interviewer: What was that time like for you?

Huppert: My father came home on a Monday. I have the date written down but I can't remember it exactly. It was in 1970. Oh, May 31<sup>st</sup>. Or June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1970. Like I said, he would come home late in the evening, and he came home on a Monday, and told my mother he was tired and was going to go lie down. And he went upstairs, I was home, dinner was ready, and mom said "Go get dad and we'll have dinner." I went upstairs, and my father was very- not meticulous maybe, that might be pushing it. His coat was on a hanger, his jacket was on a hanger hanging on the door, his shoes were next to each other on the floor, so it wasn't like he threw his stuff off and laid down. He was laying on his back on the bed, and I can picture him as if it were yesterday. I tried to wake him up, and he was gone. He had a massive heart attack. I ran down the street and we had a doctor, and we had a dentist down the street from us. The doctor wasn't there but the dentist was, so I grabbed him. I don't know how the person sitting in the chair felt, but he came over. There was nothing anybody could have done. He was gone. It was a very very- I don't know if there was even a word for it. Difficult doesn't come close. I played guitar back then, and my room-. My father took our house-. The top floor of our house was supposed to be the master bedroom. So it was the full width of the house, and then downstairs were 2 more bedrooms. So, my mother and father took the downstairs bedrooms, and my bedroom was upstairs. My sister had to come through my bedroom to go into her bedroom, which was lovely. But the windows in my room opened to a section of roof that wasn't terribly steep, and the street was in front of me. And while we were sitting *shiva* I sat with the family most of the time, then I'd go upstairs, take my guitar, and go out on the roof and play guitar. My cousin Freddy- sorry. My cousin Fred, who was considered to be one of the least sane people in our family, but certainly one of the best, would come up and climb out of the window and sit next to me. He never said a word. He never said a word to me, just sat with me until I went back inside. So, I did that, and in the Jewish religion you say *kaddish* for 11 months. There was somebody from the temple that would pick me

up every morning. I would go to temple, say *kaddish*, then I would go to school, and I'd come home. I had a very hard time. I didn't want to be with my friends. I mostly stayed up in my room and played guitar. I was not interested in school anymore, and it was the 70s. I did some things that you're not really supposed to be doing. I became a hippie. I grew my hair down to my belt, and that was pretty much it. I had 3 friends that I was very close to. We hung out together, and we'd talk, and we'd do things and get in trouble. But yeah, everything just changed. It was like the world stopped. When I got out of high school, to give you an idea of how much I loved school, we had a headmaster that would come around and roam the halls and things. He and I did not see eye to eye on all the time. Mostly because I was really into the Marx brothers,<sup>xiv</sup> and I would mouth off to him in a Groucho way. But he handed me my diploma, shook my hand, and pulled me in close and said "You will never amount to anything." So that was the end of my high school career. I told my mother that I didn't want to go to college. I was done. I wanted to find something that I enjoyed doing, and work, and travel around a bit, and that was it. So, a friend of mine and I decided that we were going to hitchhike across the country. This is something, that if my son came to me when he got out of high school and said "Larry and I are going to hitchhike around the country and come back through Canada" I would say "That's nice go watch TV." And she said "Okay, come on. We'll go buy a backpack and sleeping bag." And she outfitted me to go, and we hitchhiked around the country. I came back and she said "Now I want you to apply to 4 schools. You pick the schools. If you get in, you go to college. If you don't get in, you don't go to college." So I said okay, so I picked 4 of the most difficult schools I could find. My grades were actually really pretty good. And I got into all of them. I ended up going to the University of Hartford<sup>xv</sup> in Connecticut, which was actually a very good thing for me. It gave me a different viewpoint and brought me out of a lot of the darkness that I was in. It carried me out of it.

Interviewer: And you met people you liked in college?

Huppert: I met people that I liked, and I met one person that I loved, and we've been together 43 years. I was a biology-psychology major, and then I was pre-med for a while until I met the rest of people in pre-med and went nah, I'm good. So, I was a biology-psych major. It's a long story, but my mother had gotten a dog and she returned it. She got a Siberian Husky, I don't know why, and she couldn't take care of it, so she asked me to take it back to the kennel, and I did. She said, "Just tell them to find a good home, I don't want any money." And the woman at the kennel said "Let me have your phone number" and I gave it to her. And she called me several months, well I can't remember how many months later. It was quite some time later. She said a doctor just bought an Alaskan Malamute and put him in a crate, shipped him out- or flew out to Arizona with him, put him in a crate next day and said "I don't want this dog, find him a home, I don't want any money back." And she called me and said "Do you want him? He's 10 months old." I went and got him. His name was Willy because Willy and the Poor Boys<sup>xvi</sup> was on the radio when I got him. The head of the biology department and I got to be friends during the time that I was there. Willy used to sit in my car during the day. He didn't need a leash or anything, he'd just stay there. And one day she said "Why are you doing that?"

and I said “Because he can’t come in the building” she said “Of course he can come in the building” then she opened her bag, and she had these 2 little dogs in her bag. She said, “If anyone says anything, just send them to me.” So, he would come to class with me, and every once and a while he would get up and walk out the door. When he would walk out the door, the professor would stop talking. And then when Willy got outside, he would say “I guess I was talking a little bit too long about that, lets’ switch on to something else.” One day I walked out, and my wife was in the hallway petting my dog. I looked at her, and if anyone ever ever tells you there is no such thing as love at first sight, you give them my phone number. Because there is.

Interviewer: And what’s her name?

Huppert: Her name is Cindy.

Interviewer: And this was still the 70s when you were in college?

Huppert: Yeah.

Interviewer: And so, were you concerned about Vietnam, and the draft and all that?

Huppert: I protested pretty regularly. I can tell you what teargas feels like. My mother actually worked very hard to make sure that if I did get drafted, I would end up in another country. But I did-. They were doing the draft lottery back then, and my number was 51, which was not a good number to have. It was like Alice’s Restaurant. But I went down, and they put me through a couple of things, then I ended up sitting in an office with an officer. He looked at me and he said, “Tell me a good reason why you shouldn’t go to Vietnam?” and I said, “Because I’ll get killed.” And he said “Well, a lot of people will get killed. Why should you be different?” and I said “Because I can’t shoot anybody. I won’t shoot anybody. If I’m standing there and somebody is pointing a gun at me, and I’m pointing one at him, I’m not going to shoot him.” So, he said “So you’re a pacifist?” and I said “I guess, yeah.” He said “Get a signature from your rabbi or your priest, and we’ll pass you through. Just go home, don’t worry about it.” It was towards the end of the war, and I think he was tired of sending people over, and so, I didn’t have to go.

Interviewer: That’s amazing. That was a very tumultuous time in this country.

Huppert: It was.

Interviewer: Were you following everything that was going on? You were up in Hartford- In the South, and you know, with the civil rights marches and all of that too?

Huppert: Yeah. Actually, Cindy was from here. From Atlanta. And her family was from Alabama. Yeah. We weren’t involved- physically involved with it. But certainly emotionally and verbally we were. I think we both felt like this is a good change coming. That this is not good right now, but it’s going to be good. And we still got a ways to go, but we’re getting there.

Interviewer: So, kind of coming back around to your father and learning about his story, when did you really start the journey in terms of uncovering more about his past?

Huppert:

My mom had decided that she was going to remarry, and that she was going to move out of the house that we grew up in. I had the medal. I had kept that. When I left for college, I took it with me. And I went to the house just to look for things I wanted to keep, and things that were important. There was an envelope about that thick [makes hand gesture]- an envelope of letters. I had found those before, and I took them. I held on to them for a little bit and gave them to my sister, and she held on to them. But none of them were in English, and they were all in different language, it wasn't just one language. My cousin Doris, who was my father's sister's son, was also kind of interested in- what- because- Her family story is very difficult as well. She was with my father and his sister, and Henry. So, I took the letters and I gave them to Andrea, and she held on to them. Then Doris' brother found somebody who could translate them. We sent them out and translated them, I sat- I still have the translations. I sat- I was up until 2 in the morning reading them. There was poetry, there were letters, letters from before the war, letters from during the war, letters after the war, and just, you know, descriptions of things. There was actually a letter from Gundy asking if he could stay at the inn. This was clearly after the war. Asking if he could go back and stay on the property. So, there was a lot of interesting facts that came up, and names that came up that we didn't know about. So, Doris, and my sister and I just started digging. Just started looking for things, trying to find out things. It wasn't a whole lot that we could find out. It was difficult. Most of the people that we could've talked to, had we started 20 years earlier, were gone. There weren't people we could talk to. But then when the internet came around, things got a little bit different. I went online looking for my father's town. This was one of the first things that happened along the way. I was looking all over Austria for Zigeunerwald. I had a woman who worked for me, she was from Germany, and she came upstairs. She asked what I was doing, and I said, "Looking for my father's town" and she said "You're spelling it wrong. Why are you looking in Austria?" I said, "Because that's where he lived." She pushed my rolling chair, pushed me into the wall. She got on my computer and said, "There's your father's town." And we just started- Doris did a family tree- started a family tree, and we started to discover all these people. My sister found a website called Ostrava, and they were a group you could send information to, and they would send anything they could find. For a long time we didn't hear anything, then my sister got an email saying that we had a relative in Australia, and his name was Ray Huppert. We didn't have a Ray Huppert in the family, but we contacted him. It was Otto Heitlinger. He was my father's cousin. He thought that the entire Huppert family had been murdered, so he changed his name to Huppert. There was an Otto Huppert in the family, so he changed his first name to Ray. If he had not done that, then we would not have found him. He answered lots and lots of questions and told us a lot of things. And we found another relative in London. So, little by little we came up with these little bits that we would put together like a puzzle. Then I found- or, I learned about the book that my father's- I guess she would have been cousin- her name was Ruth Huppert<sup>xvii</sup>. And she was taken to Theresienstadt where she married and became pregnant in Theresienstadt and then she was sent to Auschwitz, and then Mengele<sup>xviii</sup> decided that she would be a good patient because she was pregnant, and I won't go into all the things that he did. But she wrote a book, and she wrote it for her grandchildren basically. It starts

with her being a little girl in her house, growing up and everything that happened all the way through until she settled in Israel. So, there was a lot that we learned just from reading through that. She had unfortunately passed before we found out about her, and we weren't able to talk to her.

Interviewer: And she was his cousin?

Huppert: She was- let's see. She would be a cousin. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, once you graduated from college and married, how did you come to Atlanta? How did you come to Georgia?

Huppert: We started out just doing work in Connecticut, in Hartford. I had, since I was a very little boy, wanted to be a truck driver. So, I went to the New England School of Tractor-trailer driving, and a friend of mine had taught me how to drive a tractor-trailer. He was a tractor-trailer driver. So, I drove for Roadway<sup>xix</sup> for a while, and then for a private trucking company. Cindy actually, when we got married, was working as a bartender. When the woman was filling out the form she looked at us and said "Okay, which one of you is the driver and, and which one of you is the bartender?" We just did a couple of different things here and there. Cindy's parents were here in Atlanta, so we came down to be close to them. When we got married we actually spent a year- or 9 months driving around the country. We had traveled around looking for a place we wanted to be, but we came down here. I worked for a company- for an outfitters here in Atlanta. I became- I managed most of their stores, then ended up going back up to New York when my grandmother passed away and went into the carpet business, which I swore I'd never do. I worked in the Bronx for a while, and we had our son, and we decided that we'd move back to Georgia to be close to Cindy's mother and father again.

Interviewer: And when you got married, was it a big wedding, a little wedding?

Huppert: It started out as a little wedding, and we lost control of it. It was medium sized. It was a big wedding, and it was a lot of fun.

Interviewer: Is her family Jewish too?

Huppert: No.

Interviewer: How did that work out for the wedding?

Huppert: Actually, at the wedding there was nothing. And for the most part, Cindy's family is not abrasive. They're not confrontational, and they I never felt out of place for the most part. There were a couple of people that made me uncomfortable, but really, it was never an issue. Like I said, we were not religious at all. Both of us were not religious at that point in time. So, there was never a- One of her uncles once at a party, after we were married for a few years, came over and put his arm around my shoulders and said that he had come to figure out that "I was one of the good Jews." That was about as antisemitic of a statement as I got from the family, and that wasn't so bad. I think he meant it as a compliment. Her family was- her mother was amazing. One of the most wonderful, gentle, soft people you'd ever want to meet. Her father worked for AT&T, he was an

executive. We just kind of met people, built a home here, and then we ended up going back up to New York like I said when my grandmother passed, and we lived in Fresh Meadows in Queens. Cindy worked for the phone company at that point in New York. We decided that we actually liked what we were doing, and I actually did like the carpet business, but we didn't want to live in New York. So, we moved back down here and we opened a business actually right next to Piedmont- the Botanical Gardens. We were there a little over 20 years, and then sold that, and went on from there.

Interviewer: So, how did you come to decide to start sharing your father's story more widely?

Huppert: Charlottesville.<sup>xx</sup> When I was sitting and watching the news and they were showing the- my cousin Doris lives in Charlottesville. She's an attorney. An eldercare attorney there. I sat there and I'm not sure I breathed. I watched people scream "Jews will not replace us." And I watched people carry swastikas, and flags, and torches down the street. I watched fights, and I watched everything that happened. I couldn't get past it. My father- you know, the phrase is "This can never happen again." My father always said "Yes it can, and it probably will. So just be careful." I watched that and I thought "Here it is. It is happening again." And for the next couple of days, I was probably difficult to be around. My wife came home one day from work and she said that she found that the Breman Museum<sup>xxi</sup> was having a docent class. You could be a docent at the Breman museum, and I said "Okay." So, I went down and I met Jennifer who was there. You probably know Jennifer. Jennifer took me on a private little tour of the museum, and we got back out of the museum, and I literally had tears in my eyes. I said "yes," I'm going to take the course. She said "Are you alright?" and I told her about my father. She said "Do you have half an hour more or so?" and I said "Yeah." She sat me down with one of the speakers and he talked to me about speaking as a second generation speaker to school children all the way up to senior citizens. So, I worked as a docent for a period of time then I became a speaker. And that was kind of it. I felt like if there was ever a time that people needed to know about this and know what can happen- what's the end result going to be. The thing that I try and get across to people is; it's not just Jews. Antisemitism is certainly targeted, but it can be anybody. Some powerful speaker decides he doesn't like some group and convinces a number of people that they shouldn't like that group either, and they convince some more people, and before you know it, you have Nazi Germany. I just couldn't for the life of me allow myself to let that go by. So, I just became involved.

Interviewer: So, what do you most hope then that students will take away from learning about your family's story?

Huppert: That people are all people. And I tell them that at the end. I've had kids come up and hug me at the end. I hold up the star so they can come and see it. I had one girl who came and told me that her great grandmother was one of the last people in the slave- that she was a slave. I said "Take your phone- do you have a phone?" and she said "Of course I have a phone." I said "Take your phone against a bottle or something, lean it up. Talk to her, record her story. You'll want to play it for your great grandchildren." One of the things I use as an example is: you're in school, and some new kid shows up. You've never seen him before. At some point during the day, he takes out a rug and he rolls it out on the

floor. He takes off his shoes and kneels down and he prays. You have a split second in your head to decide- "I've been taught these people are dangerous and I should stay away from him and watch out for him." Or "That's really interesting and kind of beautiful." Then just wait until he's finished and go over to him and say "That's just amazing. Can you explain that to me? Tell me more about it?" and maybe he'll ask about you, and before you know it, you may be best friends. It's that split-second that everybody has during their lives all the time to decide if I like you or I don't like you. If I'm scared of you or I'm not scared of you. People need to start understanding that it doesn't matter if you're gay. It's fine. It doesn't matter if you're black, if you're white, if you're Chinese, if you're Japanese, if you're Hindu, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. In fact- it does matter. Because we all have different things that we know. Different experiences, and different life stories that we can share each other. It will make you a better person because you'll know more. So, that's what I try and- is just send them away with the idea that hatred is not acceptable. Learning from somebody is fine. If you don't want to learn from somebody, just stand off to the side. It's your loss. But hating somebody and wanting to hurt somebody is not acceptable.

Interviewer: So, is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to share?

Huppert: Oh goodness [laughs]. I guess one of the things when I do my presentations is, and I bring this up on the screen, I have this screenshot of my family members. In the screenshot, the ones that were still alive or didn't die during the Holocaust are in white. Everybody else was in red. The majority of the screen is in red. What I try and say to people, and what I think is important, is that everybody needs to know that Hitler failed. It's not a question of "He did a really good job." Or "He did the best he could do." He failed. He failed. And then I show pictures of my kids, and my grandchild, and my soon to be elder grandchild. I don't show that picture [laughs]. I just want people to understand that this is, you know, unthinkable. How anybody could have stood by and watched that and not said "no" is something I will never ever comprehend. I will never understand it, but it happened. We all need to understand that, number 1, he didn't succeed. Number 2, it can, and probably will happen again. And number 3, you have a choice. You can be a bystander and you can watch it all go and say "Well, they're not after me. It's cool." Or you can stand up and say "No. that's not allowed. We're not going to allow you to do that." You guys need to be the ones to stand up and say no.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your life with us. We really really appreciate it.

Huppert: Oh, you're welcome. I hope ....

[break in interview]

Huppert: So, we have continued our search literally for over 40 years. We thought we had things pretty well ironed out, and knew where the blanks fit. I was out visiting my grandson and my son and daughter in law, mostly I was visiting my grandson, and a couple of things happened. My sister was contacted by a woman in Saskatchewan, she's a teacher I believe, but her hobby is helping families find and locate information about members that

were lost in the Holocaust, or just members that survived the Holocaust. She sent us a number of papers. A lot of them had nothing to do with us, but one in particular showed that my father was actually drafted into the Soviet army while he was in Lvov. We thought that he had gone through the woods and fought with partisans. And then I found out the name of his- The General. We found out a lot more information about how things had gone. There's one photograph that I have that shows- there were 7 soldiers, and the General and his wife are sitting and my father is standing alongside with the 7. We thought it was just an end of the war photograph. It was actually the award ceremony. It was the award- each one of those soldiers received an award, and that's when my father was awarded The Red Star. Also, within the 2 weeks that we were out visiting, my sister called me and said that she had received a phone call from a woman- well, or an email actually I guess- from a woman who had a DNA test done and discovered that she was our cousin. My sister had been tested and had a DNA test done. I have not. She contacted my sister, and they started talking, and it turns out she's a cousin. So, we're going to pursue that and hopefully get together with her and trade stories. But it was amazing after all of this time, that there's still information coming in.

Interviewer: And this was a cousin from your father's side of the family?

Huppert: From- more than likely from my grandfather's side of the family would be my guess.

Interviewer: Really fascinating.

Huppert: Yeah, isn't it?

[break in interview]

[Huppert enters camera showing his father's Red Star medal]

Huppert: This I actually used to carry in my pocket and hold up. And Jeremy at the Bremen, who was the archivist saw me do it once and said "Bring your things into my office" and then put them all in little boxes and special papers, so I'm not allowed to touch it anymore [laughs].

Interviewer: It's in really good shape.

Huppert: This is the Soviet star.

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrava>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bielsko-Bia%C5%82a>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borscht\\_Belt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borscht_Belt)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lvov>

<sup>v</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulda>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.ancestry.com/name-origin?surname=heitlinger>

- 
- vii <https://hias.org/>
- viii <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1113408>
- ix <https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/>
- x <https://carpet-cleaners.cmac.ws/lotzkar-huppert-floor-covering/9354/>
- xi <https://www.franklinlakes.org/>
- xii [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les\\_Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Paul)
- xiii <https://www.mountsnow.com/>
- xiv [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx\\_Brothers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx_Brothers)
- xv <https://www.hartford.edu/>
- xvi [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy\\_and\\_the\\_Poor\\_Boys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy_and_the_Poor_Boys)
- xvii <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/ruth-huppert-elias>
- xviii [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef\\_Mengele](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Mengele)
- xix <https://yrc.com/>
- xx <https://www.charlottesville.gov/>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unite\\_the\\_Right\\_rally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unite_the_Right_rally)
- xxi <https://www.thebreman.org/>