

Bob Herschowitz

Video transcript:

Video 3; Kristallnacht

It was a risk to take because from the 250,000 Jews who tried to get into Switzerland during the war, only 25,000—so, 10 percent—were allowed in. The other ones were turned over at the border and usually shot the same day or sent to a concentration camp. So during five, I think it happened, from what I gathered, three days and two nights, we traveled only through the night, we slept in the forest. And I thought it was very cool, it was my first camping trip and I really loved it. My brother was less comfortable because they had put tape, what they called *sparadrap*, tape over his mouth so he won't cry and alert the German and French patrol, border patrol. Now, my father was the worst navigator in the world. Plus, he never asked [for directions]. At one moment, the *passeur* told us, "Okay, you go straight ahead, and you will be in Switzerland. When you see a fence made out of barbed wire, that's the border." And we walked, and we walked, and we walked. We never saw the fence, but we saw a little house. And my father said, "Oh, that's the Swiss border guard!" And he knocks on the door, and who opens the door? It's a French *gendarme*. My god, we had turned into a circle and we were back in [France]. And, he looked at us, and saw who we were, and he said to my dad, you know what he said? "I know who you are. I know what you're doing." He said, "I'm not going to do anything about that." And he showed with his finger, he said, "You see those two little hills? Go through those hills and you'll be in Switzerland." So we went there, and we found ourselves in front of barbed wire. And on the other side, there was a group of Swiss soldiers and they were nice enough to lift the wire, we went in, and we were safe into Switzerland.