Hans Loeser Video Tape Index

Tape 1

1:00 Birth; Social climate in Germany at time of birth; family lineage;

2:30 Childhood aspirations;

3:00 Mother’s work; Family store description;

4:30 Mother’s motivation to work;

6:15 Extended family and the family store (mother’s brother Karl and his move to Argentina);

8:30 Mother’s other brother and Zionism;

9:45 Living conditions growing up (residence description and servants) in context of society;

12:00 Relationship with sister;

12:50 Differences between Mr. Loeser and sister in character; Brief overview of sister’s life;

14:15 Zionism and views of religion of a child; Religion in schools and Jewish education;

16:10 Private school attendance; Later transfer to public school;

18:00 Description of public school system;

18:30 Interest in skiing as child and throughout life; Avoidance of skiing in U.S. army; Telemark skiing;

21:30 Childhood exposure to music and theater, and it’s ongoing role in life; Violin training;

23:45 Interest in American westerns, Karl May books;

26:00 Childhood perception of the Nazis, Hitler youth, first experiences with anti-
Semitism; Pre-Hitler anti-Semitism; Early days of Hitler and ostracism;

33:00 Forced to remove kayak from wharf; Kicked out of swimming club; Greater association with other Jews;

34:00 Orthodox Jewish population in Kassel; Importance of Judaism to the Loesers;

35:10 Social discrimination against Jews from Eastern Europe;

37:00 Behavior of non-Jews toward Jews in Hitler's Germany; Exceptional behavior of Ida (Mr. Loeser's nanny); Behavior of non-Jewish employees in the Loeser store; Less difficult for the children than the adults;

39:30 Point at which hopes of Jews in Germany became unrealistic under Hitler; Forced to sell the family business in the fall of 1935;

42:05 Greater sense of Jewish identity as an adult resulting from the Hitler years; Jews were forced to associate more with each other due to exclusion by all others; Centralization of cultural life around Jews for the German Jews;

45:30 Description of being sent to school in England in 1936; Foreign exchange rate penalties; Sister's schooling in Italy; Discomfort with leaving Germany and accustomed surroundings;

51:15 Adaptation by Jewish children of certain Hitler youth attributes; Difficulty in leaving the known for schooling in England;

52:20 Difficulty for Loeser family in making decision to leave Germany even after being forced to sell the family store; Loeser parents move to Berlin to avoid trumped-up trouble; Difficult for family to leave everything and start over;

55:40 Concern for parents while attending school in England between 1937 and 1940; Kristallnacht changes concern for future to fear for lives and property as Mr. Loeser's
father is arrested and sent to Dachau; Further difficulty in finding a country to accept refugee Jews;

59:35 Certain happy memories of schooling in England; Maintenance of some German culture; Learning a sense of obligation to society; Publication of a book of careers of graduates of Stoatley Rough;

1:03:40 Reuniting with parents in New York in 1939; Freeing father from Dachau and escape of parents to Palestine; Transit visa to Holland; Discomfort of parents in Palestine while awaiting American visa;

1:09:20 Moving with parents into apartment in Long Island City; Reversal of roles between parents and children as children are better able to communicate in New York; Financial conditions of family upon arrival in New York;

1:12:30 Employment of family members in New York, difficult for father particularly after Dachau; Death of father three years after arrival in New York; Thriving of mother in New York who lived to age 94;

1:18:55 Success in department store employment here; Concurrent success of Hitler in Europe and fear of rising anti-Semitism in U.S.; Desire to join army and fight Hitler (and gain citizenship), enlisting in 1942;

1:24:30 Discussion of initial duty as an MP protecting General Hugh Drum; Time at specialty schools in army, including University of Pennsylvania; Intelligence school at Camp Richie; Commissioned as Second Lieutenant;

1:27:55 Volunteering for paratroopers to get into war, and to see former girlfriend (and future wife) from England;
Discussion of feelings toward war and Herta (future wife) upon assignment to England; Army technicalities delay marriage with cooling-off period;

Thoughts on being unexpectedly assigned to paratroopers while in England (after intelligence training); Assigned to 82nd Airborne, sent to glider infantry division;

Feelings about certainty of victory of Allies at time Mr. Loeser entered combat; Uncertain, but encouraged by great Allied progress on all fronts; Over-confidence results in the Battle of the Bulge;

Thoughts on facing Germans and former peers in combat, feelings of hatred toward the Germans and their atrocities; Progress across Europe reveals unknown horrors of concentration camps; No hesitation toward fighting the people with whom he grew up;

Story of marriage to wife during this time;

Details of work in U.S. army researching histories of German citizens and their affiliations with the Nazis in order to de-Nazify the government and universities, first in Berlin and then with wife in Munich; Work cleaning out Nazis undermined later by Cold War; Skeptical of Germans at that time who lied about anti-Nazi and pro-Jewish activity;

Feelings on being a hero liberating Europe from Germany; Spoils of victory and life as a conqueror;

Feelings on educational opportunities afforded by life in the U.S.; Experience at City College in New York; Becoming an American through City College and army experience;

Usefulness of formal army education in later career (or lack thereof);

Service in military government (both in military and as uniformed civilian) results in exposure to American lawyers, who encourage consideration of a legal career;
Passage of GI bill makes this a possibility; Lack of sufficient higher education to attend law school, but persuaded to apply anyway; Strong encouragement from Warren Seavey to apply to Harvard Law School, later admitted;

1:58:25 Original LSAT tested on Mr. Loeser and poor grade results in Harvard initially rejecting use of the LSAT due to the "Loeser syndrome" (after he had done very well in his Harvard Law School class);

Tape 2

0:30 Comments on desire to return to New York upon coming home after war; All factors favored Boston and Harvard;

1:30 Comments on the Red Scare during law school in light of Mr. Loeser's past with the Nazis in Germany; Very involved in liberal politics during law school; Discussion of mistake of voting for 3rd party candidate in the 1948 presidential election; Application to Nader in current election;

4:48 Discussion of feelings on Israel becoming a country during law school after his and Herta's work with displaced persons; Law school friend had helped run underground railroad for Jews to Palestine prior to this;

9:25 Discussion of success achieved in law school and things that led to this; Incentive to do best, as well as excited about the legal system; Surprised that law students today consider school a necessary evil;

12:00 Interests other than academics during law school (politics; newborn daughter);

13:35 Discussion of whether ambitions during law school have been realized during career; Determination of where to work geographically and by firm size; Chose Foley
Hoag for its size and unusual ethnic diversity; Became partner quickly and got involved in management; Achieved fellowship at U. Penn. for his pro bono work; Ambitions were corporate work, but maintaining firm involvement in politics; 

18:10 Represented airlines before Civil Aeronautics Board, as well as other administrative law functions; Small firm work gave opportunities to learn all areas of law; Good training at a small firm; 

19:40 Discussion of pro bono work and particularly gratifying experiences: Fight against war in Viet Nam with Lawyer’s Alliance Against the War resulting in listing on Nixon’s “Enemy List,” but not alienating client in front of SEC hearing; Work for nuclear disarmament with Lawyer’s Alliance Against Nuclear Arms (now Lawyer’s Alliance for World Security); 

21:45 Opposed to revival of Star Wars Defense Initiative; Discussion of Bush administration’s stance on this matter and its likely effectiveness; 

29:50 Discussion of work as the Honorary Consul General of Senegal; Mention of children and grandchildren; 

31:55 Comments on the limited free speech protections of the post-War German Constitution; 

34:00 Discussion of atmosphere of Foley Hoag in the 1950’s when Mr. Loeser joined the firm as the tenth lawyer; Very progressive and liberal stance toward hiring in those days; 

37:05 Involvement in Alternative Dispute Resolution; Discussion of how Mr. Loeser became involved in this, and what roles he played; Theoretical training in this at Harvard; Speculation as to future of mediation;
42:15 Discussion of current feelings toward the country and people of Germany;

Returned to Germany last year to Kassel for the dedication of a new synagogue, and was encouraged by the attitudes of the young people;

46:00 Ideally, Mr. Loeser would leave his big firm and open a law firm with a cap on profits to emphasize a return to reasonable lifestyles so the profession would be more enjoyable for its practitioners;