

**Elsie Hornbacher talks about her overseas service
as a teacher in Japan, Italy and Austria after WWII**

5Elsie Hornbacher: This is Elsie Hornbacher recording for the Lansing unit of the Women's
6 Overseas Service League, April 27th, 1983. I was born in 1918, March
7 27th. On March 29th, Mother got out of bed, went down to see her oldest
8 son, sent first to Battle Creek and then later on to France. So as a baby, my
9 oldest brother was fighting a war with Germany. I graduated from college
10 in 1941 with a Bachelor of Science degree. I had seen the cyclotron in Ann
11 Arbor, Michigan. I was aware of the power of the atom. The war started
12 December 7th; this was a shock to me as for some reason or other I had a – I
13 just could not believe another war would occur. During this war, young
14 people of our age were probably more patriotic than they were at any other
15 time in our nation's history. I wanted to join the WACs or the WAVES or
16 the Air Force but having an older mother who had already had a heart
17 attack, I considered it inadvisable to do so. We did have a brother who was
18 in the Army Transportation Corps, and he was in Tokyo. He phoned home
19 frequently prior to mother's death in 1949. I felt I had an awareness of this
20 area.

21
22 When mother died, I would've had to change my mode of living and
23 consequently decided to make a drastic change. The secretary for the
24 senator from our area, Charles Potter, was visiting a neighbor of ours. I
25 commented that I would like to have an assignment overseas. He suggested
26 I write to Senator Potter, which I did, and I promptly received information
27 concerning the dependent schools. I had been teaching in Rogers City,
28 Michigan, and this was the area where I was competent to serve my country.
29 By March 27th of 1949, I had an interview in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with
30 Mr. [Hoffman 3:06], the principal of the Tokyo American School. By June
31 1st, I had an assignment to the – uh, teach in the dependent schools of the
32 Far East. At present, I didn't know where I would go. I could've gone to
33 the Philippines or to Japan. As it turned out, I went to Tokyo, my first
34 choice. My brother was no longer there when I arrived; he was in Guam,
35 but many of his friends contacted me and during the Korean War, many of
36 the students I had in Rogers City would phone when they came to Tokyo
37 and consequently, I had numerous, uh, contacts from people I had known
38 years before.

39
40 We were processed in Detroit, Michigan, and in Detroit, Michigan, we were
41 given a list of the various people to go overs-, uh, to the Far East. We took a
42 train from Detroit to Seattle, a 4-day train trip across the United States,
43 which I had not seen before, and on this train trip we had our – we traveled
44 first class. We had our own compartment, and with the list of the names of

1 people going in that general area, I was able to make contacts with them,
2 round them up, and we were able to get acquainted with one another, so
3 bonds of friendship were established quickly on this faraway trip from
4 home.

5
6 In Seattle, we left on the [sighing] steamer Ainsworth. The steamer
7 Ainsworth was 489 feet long. It's speed 16-1/2 now-, hour, uh, knots, and
8 922 passengers were accustomed to sailing on to Japan on it. Our trip was
9 made in August during the typhoon season, and I was a good sailor. Two
10 days before we were to arrive in Yokohama, we were having the captain's
11 dinner, a luxurious affair with all of the fine foods anyone would want to
12 eat. At this time, the captain made a statement that there were ugly rumors
13 around that we were heading into the eye of a typhoon. He said for us not to
14 believe them, but before the dinner ended, the chairs, the lounges, and all of
15 us were shifted from one part of the dining – uh, the, uh, dining room – or
16 the – yes, the dining room to the other part of the ship. We definitely tilted a
17 great deal. I have always enjoyed an electrical storm, and a typhoon at sea
18 was just an interesting experience to me. Some people did have difficulties
19 walking back to their stateroom. One person was injured with bags falling
20 from the top bunk down upon her during the night. I heard someone had
21 lost a couple of teeth. During the two days we were in the eye of the
22 typhoon, we were unheard from at sea and the little boards along the table
23 were fastened up. We were given soup to drink out of cups and co-, and
24 sandwiches. No regular meals were served during that time. This delayed
25 our arrival by two days.

26
27 As I remember, it took about 10 or 12 days to cross the Pacific Ocean.
28 Seeing land was a wonderful sight. Here we er-, were in Yokohama, just
29 about 10 miles from Tokyo, and we were put aboard a bus and sent into the
30 city of Tokyo. My first impression was that Japan would be one of the most
31 beautiful countries in the world had it not accumulated the layer of dirt by a
32 dense population during the past 2000 years. Japan had mountains, it had
33 rivers, it had lakes, it had inlets, its vegetation was beautiful. Although most
34 of the trees were smaller than those I had known in northern Michigan, it
35 was green. Uh, there was greenery on up in the mountains. The trees turned
36 colors during the winter. There was little snow in Tokyo during the winter,
37 if any. One year, we had two inches of snow and this completely, uh,
38 frustrated anyone, uh, traveling and I believe our school was dismissed. Uh,
39 two inches of sco-, of snow w-, had been a minor occurrence to me,
40 [laughter] uh, in northern Michigan. However, I considered the winters
41 somewhat bleak. More like a November in our state. Um, the sun seldom
42 sh-, uh, shone and spring did not come quite as early as I had expected it to
43 come. Uh. There was quite a bit of rain, damp weather, gloomy weather

1 during the winter. I understand the summers were extremely hot there. I
2 did not spend a summer in Tokyo.

3
4 Back in those days, air conditioning was not common and the shoes would
5 mold during the summer. Uh, we – if we left anything of that nature, we
6 had it wrapped very carefully so this would not occur. Tokyo had been
7 bombed quite heavily. The sewer mains had been damaged, and one of the
8 first things we noticed was the smell of the country. With the sewer mains
9 damaged, uh, the – um, there was a mild – uh, the air smelled like a mild
10 saturation of urine. At a later time when my whole luggage came home
11 from Japan, my brother came home saying it was there and I asked if he had
12 seen it. He said no, he hadn't seen it but he was two blocks away and could
13 smell it. This odor impregnated all of our clothes. [throat clearing] Going
14 into, uh, Seattle, it was – um, we were immediately recognized as having
15 come, come from the orient. At first, we thought others considered us
16 sophisticated or recognized some of the things we were carrying but
17 [laughing] I am quite sure they could smell the odor of us when we, uh,
18 came to America.

19
20 Traffic in the Tokyo area was a menagerie of ox carts, old cars. I remember
21 the charcoal burners, the, um, bicycles, and to drive appeared hectic;
22 however, my third year in Japan, I did have a car and was able to drive on
23 the streets there without a great deal of difficulty. In the early d-, in 1949,
24 most of the Japanese did not have a pair of shoes. They wore getas, which
25 is a sandal-type - we wear them to the beaches frequently now. Uh, up to
26 that time, I had not seen the geta. Uh, their pants were ragged and so were
27 their shirts. The second year that I returned to Japan, most everyone had a
28 pair of shoes to wear. My third year, they all had a pair of dark pants and
29 white shirts and were neatly dressed on the street. But in the early days of
30 Japan, I'm sure there was hunger and their clothing was anything to be
31 desired. At night, the homeless Japanese would pick up anything they could
32 to cover their body, such as a burlap bag, and they were allowed access to
33 the public buildings, especially the railroad station, and one could see
34 hundreds in there sleeping at night. The Japanese to me were honest people.
35 I remember in my early days there, I dropped something and they ran at
36 least a block to return it to me. At no time did I have anything stolen by the
37 Japanese.

38
39 Our school was an unusual school; it was first run by the Presbyterian
40 mission, and Japanese students could go there so they could get an
41 American education and then go to an American university later. During the
42 war, however, the Japanese occupied the school. The American supplies
43 were put in the basement, and the school was used as a school – as a nas-,
44 navy training base. A Mr. Hashimoto guarded the American supplies. He

1 told us that he was often followed in Japan to see that he was loyal to Japan
2 rather than America. When the war ended in 1945, the school was turned
3 over to the occupation forces, which meant the Army. At this time,
4 dependents begun – began coming to Japan with their families and were
5 housed in two different sections of Japan. In our particular section, we had
6 children of the high brass. There were also children there of the diplomatic
7 corps and foreign traders who were allowed to pay tuition and get an
8 American education. At first, the Army attempted to run this school with
9 sergeants and lieutenants, anyone in the Army who had a teaching
10 certificate. This was an unsuccessful attempt because the children of the
11 generals and colonels would flaunt their rank at, at the teachers, and
12 consequently the Army decided to bring in civilian teachers, uh, from the
13 United States and Army personnel no longer taught the children. Even then,
14 the problem of opening a school was definitely evident for a year or two, but
15 by the time I arrived, the school was well-established and operating as
16 efficiently as any American school would operate.

17
18 In 1952, with Japan getting its independence, it was no longer an op-, an
19 occupied country. The school was turned back to the Presbyterian Michigan
20 – mission to [laughter] operate as they saw fit. The school grounds were
21 lovely. The area for the school was about 5 acres. The Japanese clipped the
22 lawn by hand. The flower beds were kept spotlessly clean, and the Japanese
23 are some of the best landscapers in the world. Rather than an abundance of
24 flowers like we have in the United States, they will pick two or three of the
25 select flowers and remove all of those that are inferior. I particularly
26 remember the azaleas and the wisteria that grew by the school. The school
27 building itself was an ordinary building, probably not as good as the ones I
28 had taught in in the Unites States, but it was certainly adequate. We had
29 children from the 7th through the 12th grade. As I remember,
30 approximately 350 children attended these six grades, so our curriculum did
31 have a good academic program; however, we did not offer vocational
32 subjects. I believe typing was taught though, as I can remember, uh, the, uh,
33 curriculum for the school.

34
35 We had many opportunities to travel in Japan. We could travel on the trains
36 for one cent a mile, [laughing] and by Christmastime, I had already covered
37 5000 miles in Japan. We would take a sleeper, which would cost \$1 back in
38 those days, and go to Kyoto, to Gifu, to Atami, to Nikko or anyplace in the
39 near vicinity for the weekend. We had the energy then and were, uh,
40 traveling most of the time. At the school, I did have a Japanese lab
41 assistant, and I gather that he did not particularly like working for a woman.
42 He would correct papers for me, set up the laboratory experiments for
43 biology or general science, and did make our work w-, load less than it
44 would have been in the United States. As I remember my classes ran

roughly around 20 to 25 students. My wages overseas were \$3900 a year. This was considerably more than I received in my hometown before I went to Tokyo. We had access to the PX and were able to buy many of our supplies at a lesser price; however, clothing in the United States was much more fashionable than what we had there. However, we could have dresses made. A seamstress, uh, charged a minimum amount for sewing for us.

We ate in the dining room of our hotel, uh, which was an ordinary hotel, one like we might have had in the United States, which housed about 500 people, girls; all ladies lived there. In the hotel, we had a large dining room and as I remember, our meals were 45 cents per meal back in those days. I believe it did rise, uh, 10 or 15 cents during the three years I was there. In our hotel, we had a gift shop downstairs, a flower shop, a courtesy desk. In the basement was a beauty parlor, and other facilities were available, uh, to us, so we were sort of self-contained within that hotel. We lived near the Imperial Palace, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. We often went over there to eat and shopped in the gift shop, enjoyed watching the – looking at the beautiful lily pond out in front, and one of my first observations there was that there very few birds around. I found out later the Japanese had eaten all of them during the war. One [laughing] of the characters in our school system enjoyed counting the dogs en route to school. During the first year, there were very few dogs. Probably we would see one or two. By the time I left, the dogs became too [laughter] numerous. This dog population increased as the food supply for the Japanese increased. Although there were no birds, however, there were constant voices out-, uh, noises that sound like birds, and I found out later they were the singing locusts that were in their trees.

As I've said before, traveling was inexpensive, and one of the first places I wanted to see in Japan was Hiroshima. Since I have letters, I will read you excerpts from some of those letters I wrote back in 1949. Hiroshima – when Hiroshima was bombed, the majority of men were away from the city, so masses of women and children were killed there. The figure given is 100,000 Japanese. I was quite surprised when I went into the city. I thought it would be bleak, that there would be radiation, and nobody would be allowed. However, much to my surprise, the building even from the center of the bomb attack remained. Not, of course, intact. Um. The framework was there, the steel girders. Children were climbing in the bombed ruins; they were climbing all over the place to look around. I had the privilege of visiting a real Japanese home while I was there with the – a man who had gone into Hiroshima immediately after the attack. The devastation, of course, was awful. He commented upon seeing pregnant women disemboweled, the babies still visible. We knew back in those days how to put out incendiary bombs. There were various techniques we had learned

1 even in the Unites States, but here was a fire that they could not extinguish.
2 Neither did they know that radiation could cause their deaths several days
3 after even if they did survive. There was a cemetery adjacent to the Buddha
4 shrine that was nearby.
5

6 I did not see the hospital in Hiroshima where tomum-, atomic bomb casualty
7 patients are housed, but I've heard about it from the – uh, from those who
8 visited it. I was told that a Japanese doctor was performing an abdominal
9 operation and when American visitors came in, he casually stopped in the
10 middle of it to chat. I understand he did not appear very clean and that there
11 were bandages around that had been washed. They were drying on the
12 register, presumably to be used on another patient. Sanitary conditions were
13 at a minimum. I also wanted to see Nagasaki, which is about 800 miles
14 from Tokyo. There are no ruins where the atom bomb explosion was
15 centered there. Now, a totem pole memorial stands at the spot and a
16 signboard with English and Japanese information as to what happened there.
17 We visited Nagasaki December 26th as they had a tour out of Unzen to the
18 city. Bus travel was rugged over the poor, mountainous, Japanese roads,
19 and the trip, trip took about eight hours, which included time to stop to – and
20 to take pictures, uh, at the home of Madame Butterfly. We had packed a
21 lunch along and Japanese were sent along to serve us en route. They also
22 took group pictures of us. A Catholic church did stand some distance from
23 the center of the attack. I do not have the figures here as to how far, but my
24 estimation now is probably around, uh, two or three blocks away. It was an
25 isolated stand of buildings in that attack.
26

27 From Unzen, we went on to Mount Aso, and there is an active volcano
28 crater and we were there to see the hot, black, brown, and white smoke curl
29 from the pit two days after it had erupted. The mountain had a light layer of
30 snow covering it and the cinder similar to clinkers you take from a furnace
31 were spread out over the incline. We could see the hot, molten lava as we
32 looked into the crater. Three of us hiked all the way back to the hotel. Each
33 of us had a Japane-, Japanese guide who lead us successfully around the
34 path and offered us assistance any time the climbing became difficult. From
35 Aso, we went on to Beppu; this is the garden city of Japan and they have a
36 number of hot springs there. The one that most impressed me was the one
37 called the red hell. Water at the boiling temperature, a red color was in the
38 spring. The red color is due to the solution of iron sulfide. Hot vapor fills
39 the air over the pond of the water. In another hot spring, they raise alligators
40 to be used for shoe leather. The alligators are brought in from the United
41 States. In Beppu, we stayed at a, at a semi Western-style hotel, which has
42 been taken over by the occupation forces. The rooms were poorly heated in
43 small electric heaters and there was no hot water, so one day there was
44 enough.

We also visited Fukuoka. In Fukuoka, we visited a doll factory. There they mold the clay and paint the finished products. We each bought a doll there. Japanese squat on the rice straw mats and work in that position. We attended a Christmas service in a chapel hospital for American patients in this city. Then we went on to Shimabara. We visited a silk factory. This seemed to me, be the most industrialized labor I had seen in Japan. Here they sorted the silkworm cocoons and put them in hot water, and they threaded the continuous strand in the next room. Then the strands were combined to make a raw silk product which would be sent on to weave into cloth. At Kyoto, we saw another silk mill. Kyoto is about 300 miles from Tokyo, and a group of us were there in November. Japanese worked at hand looms. If you have heard of fingernail brocade, you may be familiar with the fact that they file their fingernails like the teeth in a saw to pull the threads into place. This is done only on the more expensive pieces of brocade. The laborers must spend hours – long hours at wages sufficient to purchase food and at that, little variety. We visited a damascene factory in Kyoto. Here they chisel and set small strands of gold and silver into black base and make jewelry from pieces set with these intricate designs. Days of labor are put into a piece of jewelry that you can buy for \$3 or \$4.

En route, we saw hillsides, uh, terraced for farming. In most places, it is neatly done with rocks fitted together. The rice paddies are bog-like fields where Japanese use implements of primitive civilization. Yet these same fields are extremely productive and with the many people there are here, there would be nothing to do if they had labor-saving devices. Much of Japan is mountainous and volcanic or – and of volcanic origin and hence, even in this small country with its 80 million people, there is wasteland.

I believe one of the most interesting experience I had was, uh, to see the cormorant fishing in Gifu. Gifu is about 200 miles from Tokyo. They have a demonstration which seemed like an ancient, a, an act from a medieval period. A shallow river winds alongside a mountain, and there are fishermen who raise birds called cormorants, which they, um, use to fish with. The, um, the fish are small, comparable to smelt. The lead fisherman on a boat dresses in a grass skirt and handles 12 birds by strings tied to the necks. When a bird gets a fish, the man pulls it in, tips the bird upside down, and takes the fish from it. Sometimes he allows the bird to eat the small fish. The birds are well-cared for and are the pride of the owner. Other, less-experienced fishermen handle fewer birds. The fish are attracted by flares made by burning any wood or scraps in a wire basket in front of the boat. We were sold sparklers like we use on the 4th of July and other fireworks used for the same purpose. The men who pushed these boats out are said to be stooped – so stooped that they can't stand straight. The

1 night we were there, there was a full moon over the river and the whole
2 setting was one to remember a lifetime. Japanese waded out into the water,
3 playing enchanting Japanese music. In another boat, a Japanese orchestra
4 played, and a little Geisha girl came onto our boat to do a dance. The
5 Geisha girl is a trained entertainer. Her entire life has been devoted to
6 learning to sing, dance, converse intelligently with an air of ease on any
7 subject. They are usually highly educated.

8
9 As you can see, our first year was one travel experience after the other.
10 When school closed in June, we were allowed to go back to the States on
11 Space-Available. This was a delightful change, and my family felt more
12 secure in seeing me back. It was in 1950, however, that the Korean War
13 broke out. I will admit I was extremely apprehensive about going back. I
14 did, however, because I felt the children over there needed me. I had a job, I
15 had said I would return, and I did in spite of my fears. When we arrived in
16 Tokyo, life seemed probably even more gay than before. It was during this
17 time that many of the ex-students I had would call me to see somebody from
18 back home. They may have been in Tokyo for an R&R, rest and
19 recuperation, or maybe even stationed there. As I remember, there were two
20 or three people from my hometown, a small town in Northern Michigan,
21 who lived in Tokyo. Children who had attended school in Korea had been
22 evacuated from Korea and it was evident that they were subdued when they
23 came into Tokyo. They were more quiet than the rest of the children.
24 Although they were adapted to Army life, it – uh, their – the normal child
25 exuberance was somewhat stifled.

26
27 I remember that Christmas, rest and recuperation had been established for
28 the American soldier and Christmas Eve, the first shipment was flown over
29 for some days of relaxation. My heart went out to these boys. They had not
30 been deloused, I'm sure they hadn't had a bath for weeks, they wore
31 shoepacs, and as a whole, were a rowdy bunch. However, I can understand
32 why they would be. In America, the people had all the niceties of life and,
33 uh, these soldiers of ours, uh, did not have them. I felt guilty living under
34 the fine conditions we enjoyed and seeing our servicemen having to give up
35 so much, uh, for their country.

36
37 We traveled as usual and this year, we went on to Hokkaido, the
38 northernmost island of Japan. The, uh, climate of Hokkaido is similar to
39 Michigan. It doesn't get as cold there. They have much more snow due to
40 the, um, due to the moist water over the Pacific. The city was laid out in a
41 grid pash-, uh fashion which differed from Tokyo. Tokyo was laid out
42 around the moat and many of the, uh, streets would go in circles. It was
43 almost impossible to find one's way around that city and when we were
44 there, the, um, numbering of the houses, the first one built on a block would

1 be #1, the second one built would be #2, and between #1 and #2, one might
2 find #14. Uh. The Japanese were good, though, helping us, uh, find any
3 particular location that we wished to find, so if we had a Jeep or we went by
4 streetcar, we needed advice, we were always helped. The – um, in, uh,
5 Hokkaido, it, uh, was a newer area and, uh, the city was built in a grid
6 fashion. It was easier to find one's way around. The buildings were similar
7 to those one would have found in the United States. However, here again
8 the, um, dogs were often, uh, um, tethered to a cart and a Japanese would be
9 riding a bicycle in front. Uh. I felt that we were very fortunate not to have
10 horses on our streets anymore because with the melting snow, [laughter] the,
11 uh, uh, uh, odor was not pleasant and i-, one had to watch where they
12 walked. However [laughter], they did tie tails – uh, pails under the tails of
13 the horses, which was some help.

14
15 We went to Hokkaido particularly to see the Ainus. The Ainus are the
16 Aborigines of Japan, the oldest living race of people in the world, and I
17 doubt today whether there are many pure Ainus left. They are often referred
18 to as the hairy Ainu, but I think this is a misnomer because the Japanese has
19 very little facial hair. I don't believe they have to shave like an American,
20 uh, a caucus-, a Caucasian has to. Uh, consequently, the Ainu having as
21 much, uh, of a beard as an American and maybe a little bit more, was often
22 called hairy, but really he is not a great deal more hairy than many of our
23 American men. The Ainu drinks the blood of the bear. They worship the
24 bear, and when we went to see their small houses, um, with only one
25 window in a given, uh, section of the house, we were able to see carcasses
26 of bears all along the fence around their area. The women had their lips
27 tattooed as a sign of marriage. They are bigger than the Japanese. Sapporo
28 in Hokkaido is just a few miles by boat to Russian territory. Fishermen
29 wandering any distance from shore are often interned by the Russians and
30 may be kept as prisoners or returned without their boat when the
31 communists choose to discharge them. From Sapporo, we went on to
32 Noboribetsu up in the mountains where the [inaudible 39:40], clean, white
33 snow glistened in the sunlight. While there, we hiked along a mountain trail
34 and at the end, found a hot sulfur lake in the crater of an extinct volcano.
35 This made me feel like a real explorer.

36
37 Earlier, I should have told you about the, the Japanese officers taking the
38 crops from the farmers during the war and they did not pay from them, and
39 how the people here believe that half the United States had been invaded by
40 their people. Of course, like many Japanese, many want to come – uh, the –
41 our host wanted to come to America. In 1951, we had a – an earthquake in
42 Tokyo. I personally have always loved an electrical storm, a blizzard, and
43 rivaled in my ability to take a typhoon at sea, but the earthquake area may
44 have its earthquakes. One never knows when they will end or what to do for

1 your personal safety. The eight-story hotel where I lived could be heard
2 groaning and vigorously felt swaying as the tremors increased in intensity
3 and frequency. Fortunately, a minimum of damage was recorded in the area
4 although the index was equal to the devastating quake of 1923 when
5 thousands of people were killed by falling objects, electrical wires torn
6 loose, or the ravaging fire which took over after the tremors stopped. The
7 difference in the nature of the vibrations, that is, the vertical or the
8 horizontal, determine the damage that will occur. Modern buildings in this
9 area are constructed to withstand all this power from the shifting of land
10 areas where the deep oceans and the high mountains are constantly level o-,
11 leveling off. Even in the small buildings, joints are fitted, uh, to the frame
12 s-, s-, so the framework can sway with the movement of the earth.
13

14 Tokyo seemed to be the melting pot for the troops of the united forces –
15 United Nation's forces this year, that is 1950, '51. Uh, as one walks down
16 the street or is shopping or tending to business, he sees Greeks, Turkish,
17 French, Dutch, Danish, English, Australian, Brazilians, and of course, our
18 American soldiers. Again, in June of 1951, we were allowed to go home on
19 Space-Available. I returned to the States to return to Tokyo a third year.
20 We traveled as before and after having seen most of Japan, I was ready for a
21 change. Also, that year, the communists paraded in Tokyo, and although I
22 took pictures of the communist parade in 1949, uh, 1950, in 1951 – uh,
23 1952, rather, I would not have gone near the Japanese communists parading
24 prior to the cessation of the occupation in Tokyo. That year, we were
25 dismissed from school at about 11:00, sent home in buses because buses
26 were being stoned. We had guards and machine guns out in front of our
27 hotel. I had a car in Tokyo that year and just two blocks from our hotel,
28 along general headquarters, 10 American cars were tipped over and burned.
29 We heard that a couple of American soldiers, drunk, went into the
30 communist parade, harassed the communists, and, uh, they were taken to the
31 Imperial grounds and were dead. They were harassed by the communist
32 Japanese. After Japan received its independence, the terrorists ceased their
33 activities. We closed our school that year, and I asked for an assignment to
34 another country.
35

36 From Tokyo, I went to the United States and back to Italy to teach for a
37 dependent school in [inaudible 44:43]. We had closed a school in Tokyo.
38 In Naples, we opened a school. The American children in Naples had been
39 studying on a, uh, correspondence course before we were there. As I
40 remember, there were only about 35 children in the school. Opening a new
41 school in Naples involved the same problems that occurred in Tokyo when
42 the dependent school was opened in 1940-, in the 1940s. We had no books.
43 The children had been on a correspondence course with a man called Al
44 [inaudible 45:31] in charge. We only had about 35 children and w-, for this

1 number of children, we had to plan four years of high school with a
2 curriculum that would admit them into college when they returned to the
3 States. We had no books. There were some books there such as calculus
4 and books on Greek and Latin, and since the Navy had never opened a
5 school before, their attitude was that we could use the books that were there.
6 Frustrated with this experience, I used my own money, ordered books from
7 the United States on chemistry. I was teaching chemistry, biology,
8 geometry, and algebra there. Later, I was relieved, I believe, of the algebra.
9 When the books finally did arrive for chemistry, the Navy opened the
10 package addressed to me, stamped it Navy [laughter] property, and I had to
11 sign in order to get the books for the children to use.
12

13 We first went – several of us – uh, there were just a few teachers that were
14 sent to Naples. We were housed at the Oriente Hotel for a few weeks.
15 From the Oriente Hotel, we could take a Funicolare, which is, uh, a sort of a
16 cable car that goes up and down, uh, the hills of Naples and, uh, go to our
17 school. We would not have dared to get off the Funicolare. One could be
18 knifed on the side streets there. Naples was not a safe city. Lucky Luciani-,
19 Luciano controlled the city while we were there. We had an expression that
20 God created the world and put everything beautiful in Naples and then to
21 make things even, he peopled it with Neapolitans. From the hills, one could
22 look over the beautiful Mediterranean and here again, we did a great deal of
23 traveling. We would go to Capri, to the Blue Grotto by Capri, to Ischia, to
24 Cuma, to Paestum, to Florence, to Rome, and although there were few
25 Americans there for me to associate with, later I was allowed to live at the
26 Officer's Club where there were many transients and consequently, would
27 meet different people and I remember particularly meeting a librarian from
28 some other city and we went to Rome for one weekend. Another time,
29 when I went to St. Moritz in Switzerland for Christmas, I was able to make
30 some contact and immediately found associates there who spoke English
31 and we enjoyed the 4 days in St. Moritz.
32

33 From Naples, I went to Greece, to Athens. There, my family knew a doctor
34 and his family in Athens and in Athens, I was fortunate to have them, uh,
35 take me to Mars Hill on Easter Sunday and we had a s-, a sunrise service
36 there where the Apostle Paul spoke to the people of Athens. The ac-,
37 Acropolis was definitely impressive to me; the city of Naples was not. I was
38 there several weeks before I realized the, the defecation in the streets was
39 not all done by dogs. Um. We did have to be wary of thieves. I did have a
40 pair of binoculars stolen from my pocket quite, uh, unobtrusively. I, uh,
41 could have had no re-, recollection of how they got out of there. However,
42 the people of Naples were extremely empathetic. Uh. They enjoyed life.
43 One would see them and hear them singing on the streets. They expressed
44 themselves freely, and it was [laughing] not a bit unusual to – uh, if a couple

1 of Italians were involved in a carriage accident between two [inaudible
2 50:42] with their horses to, or – uh, to get out and wave their hands and one
3 would think a big fight would occur and yet, it was all noise and nothing
4 more. Winters in Naples were sunny but our buildings were cold. My
5 bedroom was 65 – about 55 degrees in the wintertime. I found this quite
6 difficult to endure. At the Officer's Club, I just had to walk across the street
7 to go to the school; this was pleasant.
8

9 In establishing our school, I remember when we set up the chemistry lab, the
10 Navy wanted to put little, small, uh, propane gas tanks under the table.
11 Knowing how children can roughhouse on some occasions, I refused to
12 allow them to do so. An explosion could have occurred, which would have
13 been catastrophic to the, uh, children of the school. I had to be adamant in
14 regard to this particular, um, this particular problem in our school. Uh, such
15 occurrences, uh, happened many times. This was probably one of the worst.
16 We did graduate about four or six children that year. They had chemistry –
17 one year they would offer chemistry, another year they would offer physics.
18 However, one year in Naples was as much as I wanted to, um, endure, so at
19 the end of that year, I was able to meet the man inspecting the schools and
20 ours did pass the North Central Association accrediting, uh, credentials and
21 when we were inspected, I was a special request teacher for Austria. This
22 was a wonderful country. Um. I remember my first impression going into
23 Linz, Austria. I was able to go home again that summer because I went on
24 reassignment. My whole luggage, however, was held up from shipment –
25 uh, in shipment from Naples to Austria, and it was December before I had
26 warm clothes in Austria.
27

28 But when I arrived in Austria, one of the things that deeply impressed me
29 was the Hauptpla-, platz, or the plaza in the center of these old cities. Here
30 was a statue, a monument to the people who died during the plagues that –
31 the black plague that struck Europe. One body piled upon another, uh, in,
32 uh, this huge statue in the center of the city. I attempted to learn German
33 there. I am not a linguist, unfortunately. In each country, I did study the
34 language and could speak the language as a 4 or 5-year-old would speak it,
35 consequently making my wants known. I probably learned more German
36 than I did Italian or Japanese. We were one the Donau in a hotel for several
37 weeks, then were moved to another hotel; in all situations, we were able to
38 walk to school, and then, uh, finally we were transferred to apartments.
39 These apartments were built, uh, by, um, the German – uh, the Germans for
40 the working class of Austrian people. Our apartment had a big bedroom, a
41 very small living room, and, uh, a fairly good-sized kitchen. The
42 hausmeister would, uh, put a little fire in our stoves in, uh, the – uh, before
43 we c-, would come home from school, and we did have a – uh, an Austrian
44 maid come in, I believe two days a week. Uh, Hilda would come in, we

1 would come home from school, our apartment would be cleaned that day
2 and we would, um, have our meal cooked. The rest of the time we would
3 cook our own meals. We had access to the, uh, commissary as we had in
4 Tokyo. Uh, of course, we paid Hilda for this service.
5

6 We were able to do quite a bit of traveling again in Austria. I was i-, uh,
7 while in Linz, we would go to Vienna. The operas, um, were, uh, grand. I
8 remember the Merry Widow and several of the other operas. I saw the old
9 [Scott's 56:17] house in Vienna. I would be willing to pay, uh, a high, uh,
10 price, uh, to hear gypsy violinists, uh, uh, any time. We saw Jedermann in
11 Salzburg, uh, the – at the Salzburg music festival. In Salzburg, we visited
12 the, uh, home of Mozart and of course, I wanted to see the home of Franz
13 Lehar; we saw that. Uh. We, uh – I saw where Gregor Mendel lived, uh,
14 for a short period of time. Uh, in the, um, hotel where we were first
15 assigned in Linz, Austria, the – uh, it was on the Donau, the Danube, and
16 across the Danube was Urfahr; that was the Russian zone of Austria. We
17 were not to go into Urfahr. If we would get in there, the Russians would
18 interrogate us, and I don't remember of anyone I knew personally having
19 crossed that river. It would be an easy, uh, crossing because if one were
20 sleeping on the streetcar, they would go right across and be in that particular
21 city. From what we could see, uh, it was much more austere than Linz.
22 Um, tsk, and we would have reports. The Austrians could move freely back
23 and forth within their country. We, as Americans, could only move in the
24 French, the American, or the British sector.
25

26 Uh, while there, I, uh went down to, um, Venice one, uh, [throat clearing]
27 Memorial Day vacation and in coming back, I decided, uh, uh, what seemed
28 [laughing] to be a shorter route, um, back to Linz. Looking at the map, I
29 thought the cities, uh, were – the figures by the cities [laughing] were
30 populations. I found out later they were altitude readings. Once up the
31 mountain, uh, we had no place where we could turn around and go back.
32 Consequently, I crossed the Grossglockner at 12, 14,000 feet the day after it
33 was opened. Uh, if I had had anyone riding with me other than the, uh, gal
34 who went with me on this trip, I am sure that I would not be here today. She
35 was cool, calm, and collected and although the chasms were deep below, in
36 places the roads was – were icy, uh, we did get back down to the bottom
37 safely. I was able to have a special sticker on my car, uh, saying that I drove
38 the Grossglockner. It was – most people would find it a very treacherous
39 drive and I certainly did. In fact, I don't believe I wanted to drive – um,
40 have wanted to drive through mountains since that experience.
41

42 When we would go to Vienna back in those days, we would have a, um,
43 gray pass. Uh, the area between Linz and Vienna, uh, was a Russian zone,
44 so as soon as we entered the Russian zone, we would check in with the

Americans. The drive was about two hours. If we did not arrive at the other end in that length of time, the Americans would come for, for us. We were not to get out of our car under – uh, and, uh, go to a gasthaus, uh, or even to a lavatory on this partic-, uh, particular highway. We were even instructed that we were to change a tire ourselves should we have a flat tire en route. I did have a car in Austria. Um. Vienna, though, was a marvelous city. We enjoyed going there. Our school in Austria was a boarding school. It was the only American school in Austria – high school, that is, and the children would come from Vienna or they would come from Salzburg on Monday morning and live in the dormitory until Friday afternoon. Uh, we had a little larger school there, I believe 100 people. Uh, the Austrian children had the floor below and above us in this particular school. I remember when I first went in, a huge s-, uh, German shepherd dog came out wagging his tail to greet me. I, uh, like dogs. I petted him and we were getting along just fine until his master came out and called him back. [Wolfe 1:01:59] and I were never able to be friends again. He minded his master. He was [Nick's 1:02:06] canine dog, a war dog, and had been used to the obedience training that dogs had during the war. He guarded the school, which was fenced, and he would growl at me anytime he saw me afterwards.

In Austria, I made a trip to France, was able to spend several days in Paris. My brother was in Bremerhaven on an Army t-, uh, on a – uh, with the merchant marines, I believe, at that time and they were carrying atomic supplies, um, uh, somewhere in that area. He invited me to see him up there and I did spend a weekend with him. We were able to get on the boat, uh, but were frisked very, very, um, carefully each time we went on and I'm certain if my brother had not been an officer on that particular boat, that, uh, uh, we would not have been able to visit him – uh, to visit, uh, the boat at all. It was more or less of a, a – I mean, their, um, their weapons – uh, the, the cargo may – would have made the visitation of anyone other than a family member impossible. Christmas in Austria was like a Christmas in my hometown. The Christkindlmarkt s-, had the beautiful Christmas ornaments, uh, that I had known as, uh, children. The pine trees were there and the spruce trees, and the customs I had known as a child were all – had all originated probably in Austria or in Germany. We saw the little chapel where *Silent Night* was written.

Out of Linz, we saw the home where Hitler lived for a period of time. We went to Bonn and saw the home of Beethoven. We went to Berchtesgaden frequently and went down into the salt mines where many of the masterpieces of art were hidden, uh, during the World War II. I was able to go to the – uh, Württemberg to the Stuttgart area of Germany and this is where the Hornbacher family originated, somewhere in that area. Now I know of several possible cities. I wish I had gone to them while I was there

1 since I have done work in genealogy. We went to Munich to the
2 Oktoberfest [laughing] and enjoyed the rollicking music and the [Löwenbräu
3 bier 1:05:46] and the, uh, beer trucks pulled by, uh, the horses. In Austria, I
4 visited the Lipizzaner horses, uh, went into the stables and petted them and
5 gave them apples, but after five years of being overseas, I had tired, uh, of
6 traveling. I was definitely homesick for the Unites States and in 1954, I
7 returned to New York by way of the SS Constitution, a grand and glorious
8 finale to my five years' experience working for the armed services. Elsie
9 Hornbacher is located at 2114 Meadowlane Drive, Lansing, Michigan,
10 48906. The area code for her phone number is 517, and the telephone
11 number is 321-2453. This is April 27th, 1983.
12
13
14/ad