

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Margaret Schoenfeld

February 4, 2011

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PREFACE

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Transcribed by Monna J. Nickeson, CCR, CLR, RPR, CRR, National Court Reporters Association.

MARAGRET SCHOENFELD

February 4, 2011

Q: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Margaret Schoenfeld on February 4th, 2011 in Fairfax, Virginia. And I want to start by thanking you, Mrs. Schoenfeld, for agreeing to meet with me today, to talk with me today about your life, about growing up in Germany. And as we always do, we start at the beginning. I'd like to ask you, could you tell me the date you were born?

A: When I was born, January of -- December -- December.

Q: Okay. December?

A: 21st, 1914.

Q: 1914, December 21st, 1914. Where?

A: In Lindau.

Q: Is that a town?

A: Lindau is a small town near Kaiserslautern.

Q: I see.

A: Kaiserslautern is American --

Q: Army bases, I believe, were there. After the war.

A: Yes, of course.

Q: So it was what became the American zone in west Germany after the war was over.

A: We associated with -- only with Jewish people, not the Gentile people.

Q: Tell me about your parents and if you had brothers and sisters.

A: I had one brother.

Q: What was his name?

A: What?

Q: What was his name?

A: Hans Weiss. And he studied -- he had -- my grandmother was in Alsace-Lorraine. And each year was one day where the French people could come to Germany. And on that day, they came and visited my grandmother because she was in Alsace-Lorraine.

Q: So she was from Alsace-Lorraine in France?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was her name, your grandmother?

A: What?

Q: What was your grandmother's name?

A: It was near Strasbourg. Colmar.

Q: That's the town, Colmar?

A: Colmar.

Q: I see.

A: That's where my relatives lived. They lived in Strasbourg and by Colmar.

Q: Strasbourg is a very pretty city.

A: Yeah. And all the little towns. I had later -- I forgot where they all lived.

Q: Is it -- was this your mother's mother or father's mother?

A: Father's mother.

Q: Okay. And your maiden name was, can you tell me?

A: My maiden name was Weiss, W-E-I-S-S.

Q: Weiss, that also was your grandmother's name?

A: Yeah.

Q: Your brother, was he older than you or younger?

A: Yes, he was five years older than me.

Q: I see.

A: And we had -- there was one year, one day of the year since the French people could come to Germany and they came one day to visit my grandmother because it was her end and they came and when they came we gave them money.

Q: You gave the French people money?

A: Gave the French people money. And the money, my brother studied to be a doctor and we sent money -- he sent to Switzerland and studied because the American, what was

it, the Americans wouldn't acknowledge, so he went to studied. And in Switzerland we had relatives also.

Q: All of this sounds interesting, but I'm still confused by it. So let me ask a whole number of questions so that it can become a little clearer. I want go back and just repeat, your brother was five years older than you were?

A: Yeah.

Q: Which means that he was born in 1909 or 1910.

A: Yeah, something like that. August 31, 1909.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: August 31st, 1909.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: August 31, 1909.

A: And he was always -- then when he wasn't eating right -- what do you call it? What is it where he went?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To medical school?

A: Medical school.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: When he wasn't eating right, as a child did he go hospital?

A: As a child. I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't know.

BY INTERVIEWER:

A: _____ +. Not a sanatorium. It was a town.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: There was a lady had a little girl and they went. And after 33 years, it just hadn't since they meet again. They didn't meet again. And then you had to go to Stuttgart to get your Visa. You had to be born -- you know, you couldn't -- Jewish people had to be born _____ + and all of sudden somebody said, oh, gosh, I know somebody from Lindau. And he said, oh, yeah, he's going to the United States, but he doesn't have anybody. And that lady's relatives, they came from Klingsbow (phonetic) and they had money since they pick up my brother.

Q: This is already after he's a young man?

A: Huh?

Q: Is this when he's already a young man?

A: Yes.

Q: I see.

A: There was a girl --

Q: Hang on just a second. Hang on just a second. Hang on a second. Okay. So I'll ask about your brother later. Right now I'd like to find out about your father. What was your father's name?

A: Nathan Weiss.

Q: Was he born in Lindau?

A: No.

Q: Where was he born?

A: Good question. I don't know.

Q: And can you tell me, what did your father do, what was his job, what was his profession?

A: He had tobacco.

Q: Does that means he owned a tobacco company?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did he own a store?

A: No. It was a wholesale place.

Q: And was it large?

A: (No verbal response.)

Q: How many workers were employed there, do you know?

A: I don't know.

Q: Okay. The reason I ask is I want to kind of find out what kind of situation your family was in. Were they well to do?

A: Yes.

Q: You were well to do?

A: Very well to do.

Q: Can you tell me about your house where you grew up? Did you have maids? Did you have servants? Did you have lessons in different things like music? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

A: Well, my parents loved music.

Q: Did you live in a big house?

A: No. Our house was -- we had apartments there.

Q: I see. So did you live in an apartment house?

A: Yeah.

Q: An apartment building?

A: Yeah.

Q: Your mother, what was her name?

A: Hayden Weiss, she was -- you saw the letter from my -- from my grandfather.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hedwick.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Hedwick?

A: Hedwick Weiss. And you know my grandfather how smart he was and all.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Answer the question now. Go ahead.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: So your mother, what was her background? Was her family also well to do?

A: They were well to do and she and my grandfather had, I guess, four daughters and two sons and all four daughters had to go to Switzerland.

Q: To school?

A: To school for two years.

Q: What was your grandfather's business, do you remember?

A: What do you call -- what do you call that? From the animals.

Q: Hides, you mean the skin, the fur?

A: I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was it clothing, did they make clothing?

A: No, no.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From the animals.

A: From the animals.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was it?

A: I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What did they make from the animals?

A: He was -- it's the letter from the Army from my grandfather.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That won't answer the question about what his business was, though.

A: I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But you don't remember what he used the animals for?

A: The animals -- no.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You keep going like this on your leg, so I'm trying to figure out what that is. Okay. We'll go back to that.

A: You can read the letter.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

A: He was very smart.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll find that.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: He was a very smart man?

A: He was drafted in the Army.

Q: He was in the German Army?

A: Yes. And then in the Army, they saw how smart he was and said he could not be dis -- he has to be a lieutenant or something because he was very smart.

Q: This must have been the first World War?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Did you know him?

A: Sure. I know most my parents -- most my mother's parents and my father's parents, I knew them both.

Q: How did your parents meet?

A: Holy cow. How my parents meet. I don't know.

Q: They never told you?

A: No. Absolutely not. Like I said, I'm lucky that I know how I met my husband.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How old are you?

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Did they tell you stories of their own childhood?

A: What?

Q: Did your parents tell you stories of their own childhood?

A: No. I had -- I had -- what do you call it -- a maid.

Q: A maid, a nanny?

A: A nanny.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was her name?

A: Good grief.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: That's all right.

A: Gochia (phonetic), but she was helpful when Hitler came and said all the German men get arrested and she said I help, he won't get arrested. She was our nanny for my brother and for me.

Q: So she was like a family member?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you love her?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: And so you were close to her, she was as good nanny?

A: Yes. And she was very helpful. She helped keep them from being arrested and she was very helpful. Her fiance, more or less.

Q: Her what?

A: Her fiance. She was with us since my brother was born.

Q: So that's a long time.

A: Yeah.

Q: And was she a Gentile?

A: Yes, but she was nice.

Q: Were there -- when you were growing up, did you have a large circle of friends?

A: No. We did not associate with Gentile people. We had -- we stayed -- there was a -- what do you call it, a community.

Q: A Jewish community?

A: Community, did not associate with Gentile people.

Q: Why not?

A: We associated with Jewish people.

Q: Okay. So there weren't like --

A: Gentiles didn't want you.

Q: I see. Did you feel that pretty early on?

A: Oh, early. And I remember my dad -- my husband, he was a valedictorian of his class. But he refused it.

Q: Really.

A: And said it was a long time ago because my husband was -- I don't know how old he was, but he -- and said it was a long, long time ago. He did not associate with Gentile people.

Q: But did you have a large circle of friends from the Jewish community --

A: It was a small community.

Q: There weren't many Jews then in Lindau?

A: There weren't that many Jews, but, you know, Max was a valedictorian of his class and he refused it. And said it was a long time ago.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know that he refused it. And it's a community for dancing, you did not go, you did not associate with Gentile people.

Q: Did you have girlfriends as you were growing up, Jewish girlfriends?

A: Jewish, yes. Lindau was a small town, was only 20,000 people.

Q: Yeah, that's small. That's small.

A: But --

Q: Did you feel lonely growing up?

A: With Jewish people, yes, but not with -- since we have Jewish, like, a community center, you know, and you did your --

Q: Socializing?

A: Socializing.

Q: Now, was there a synagogue in Lindau?

A: Oh, yeah. Very nice one.

Q: Okay.

A: Lindau had, actually, a lot of Jewish people.

Q: It did?

A: Yes. See in the folder. What's the name?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The name of the synagogue?

A: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I haven't seen that yet, but maybe.

A: The Jewish people mostly were well to do.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: I see. What were most of the businesses?

A: What happened --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Try that question again.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: What were most of the --

A: Once some poor people came from Poland and we gave them food and we helped them.

Q: Would these have been poor Jewish people?

A: What?

Q: Poor Jewish people?

A: Jewish people.

Q: What were the businesses that the Jews of Lindau had? How did they make their living? How did they build up their wealth?

A: Well, some of them doctors and some had business, you know.

Q: Did you have a best friend growing up?

A: What?

Q: Did you have a best friend growing up?

A: Jews, we did not associate with Gentile people.

Q: I understand. But I'm trying to get a sense of what was your childhood and young years like, whether you had a lot of friends and if so who they were.

A: We had Jewish friends.

Q: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who were they, Margaret? Who was your best friends?

A: Oh, my God.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you have a best girlfriend?

A: Jewish.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I understand that, but what was her name?

A: Holy cow. I don't know. Sorry.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: That's okay. It's okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I did find out her grandmother's name. Your grandmother's name was Sarah.

A: Lindau had so many Jewish people and they associated.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who did you go to the community center with?

A: We did not associate with Gentile people. I had no Gentile friends.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who did you go to the Jewish community center with?
What were your friends' names that you went to the community center with?

A: Oh, for heaven's sake, don't ask me anything like that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You don't remember. Okay.

A: I don't know anymore.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: That's okay. That's okay. Did you go to school, public school or a private?

A: Public school.

Q: Were there German Gentiles in that school?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember what your school years were like? Did you enjoy going to school?

A: I had two Gentile friends and associated with Jewish people, you know, Lindau had, I remember, about five Jewish kids in one class, six, you know.

Q: Do you remember the names of those two Gentile friends?

A: Oh, God.

Q: Do you remember what they were like? Were they nice? Were they -- did they stay your friends?

A: What?

Q: Were these two Gentile friends, did they stay your friends later or not?

A: No, no. _____ + before my parents.

Q: I see. Tell me --

A: We had pretty good friends, but since Hitler came, it was -- I had -- I had a boyfriend and he was not Jewish. And when Hitler came, he said, I'm sorry, I cannot see you anymore.

Q: That must have been hard.

A: Yes. And I left any way. Hitler came January and I left January 5th. I said I'm not going to stay here, I'm leaving. And I left and went to France to my relatives.

Q: It's very unusual that in -- so Hitler came to power in 1933. It's very unusual that a young woman, because, I take it, in 1933 you were almost 20 years old, would have --

A: 18.

Q: 18, 19, yeah.

A: Well, I had my French relatives. Nobody had French relatives. My grandmother was French, was in Alsace-Lorraine.

Q: But what I want to say is what is so unusual in what you are telling me is that somebody who was your age at that time would have said, I'm leaving. Most people didn't -- they didn't like him, but they didn't think he was that dangerous.

A: I said I'm not going to stay. I'm leaving.

Q: And why? Why did you do that at that moment?

A: Because I didn't -- I didn't like what happen with Hitler. Our maid protected us, but - - and I had my French relatives, so --

Q: You had somewhere to go?

A: Sure. I had -- I didn't -- there are parts of Kindertransport --

Q: That happened much later.

A: It happened later.

Q: Later. In 1933, that wasn't happening yet.

A: No, no. But I did say I'm not going to stay. I go to my relatives in France.

Q: What did your parents say when you said that?

A: They didn't like it, but they said go, they said have a life.

Q: Was your brother there?

A: And I got French citizenship because my grandmother was in Alsace-Lorraine and I got my French citizenship, so I went back and forth.

Q: Oh, so from 1933, back and forth?

A: I was a French citizen.

Q: So it wasn't the last time you were in Lindau?

A: No, no.

Q: Oh, I see. So when you left in '33, you went to Alsace-Lorraine, back and forth?

A: Back and forth. And I immigrated, I got my Visa in Stuttgart as a German citizen.

Q: And you immigrated to where, to Alsace-Lorraine?

A: To -- where did I go? Gosh.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Homburg?

A: Homburg, from Homburg to --

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: France?

A: New York.

Q: I see. To the United States?

A: And to the United States. My brother was a doctor and he say -- I say don't go to the United States because you have to work housework and I'm not doing anybody's housework. And he told me I don't have to. He was working in hospital and he said he would find some work at the hospital.

Q: And did he?

A: No, I didn't. And Hilda came.

Q: Who is Hilda?

A: A girl my brother met when he was five years old.

Q: Oh, the one where he --

A: And she was married to a very, very rich man from Klingsbow (phonetic) and her mother came and she said if I would take care of her mother. And I said, what do you have to do? I don't do any housework. She said I don't have any housework. I have a maid.

Q: Okay.

A: And we went for three months, I don't know if you know, to the Grove Park Inn in Asheville.

Q: In Carolina?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that North or South Carolina?

A: It's a very fancy hotel. My daughter could stay last year one day. And I stayed for three months.

Q: Okay. And you were taking care of this lady?

A: And I went back and forth to Greensboro.

Q: To Greensboro?

A: Yes.

Q: I see. So when was it that you actually left Germany for the United States? What year was that?

A: 1933, 5th January, 1933.

Q: But you had left for France then to Alsace-Lorraine?

A: I went to France.

Q: And then after that you went back and forth to Germany?

A: Always I went to France. And there was one day you could go to Germany without any passport. And I went. I went as a French citizen, but I immigrated as a German from Homburg, you know.

Q: And did you leave Homburg in 1933, as well?

A: No, no.

Q: When was it that you left Homburg?

A: 1938.

Q: So it was five years between going to France and going back and forth?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then immigrating. So you saw a lot during those five years?

A: But I was --

Q: In France?

A: -- in France in Strasbourg for three years and then I went to Paris.

Q: I see.

A: And in Paris, I had a very rich cousin. I had cousins all over in France.

Q: Did you study there? Did you work? Did you go to school?

A: No. I went to school. And one cousin said, he says, some people came from Shanghai and he said there's a committee and some people came from Shanghai, what do you want do? Do you want to stay here, do you want to go there? What can you do and stuff like that?

Q: So these must have been refugees from Shanghai?

A: Yeah. I did not work.

Q: Were you fluent in French?

A: Yes.

Q: How many languages do you speak?

A: Now I forgot.

Q: But at one time, how many languages did you speak?

A: French and German.

Q: And then later you learned English?

A: And of course, English. But my cousin -- I had a lot of cousins in France and in Paris. My cousin said I'm not supposed to work and I worked at the committee. And when some people came from Shanghai, I asked them, well, what do you want to do?

Q: Tell me, when did your brother go to the United States?

A: He came five years before me.

Q: So he came in 1933?

A: Yeah, we had money, our relatives always had, when they came and visited, they took money along.

Q: I see.

A: And so he studied partly in Germany and finished his studies Switzerland because in Germany it was acknowledged.

Q: By whom?

A: By the United States.

Q: I see. By studies, you know, the degrees?

A: So he studied in --

Q: In Switzerland?

A: In Switzerland and used that money.

Q: What was going on with your parents? Did your father still have the tobacco company?

A: No. He had to stop it.

Q: When did that happen?

A: Pretty much after Hitler came.

Q: So soon after?

A: 1933, 1934.

Q: What did he do after that time when he no longer had his company?

A: We had money. And since it was last the last boat --

Q: Your parents?

A: -- to the United States.

Q: When was that last boat? Was it after '39?

A: '38.

Q: Yeah. You don't -- you're not sure, though huh? Was your father or mother, when they were left in Lindau, and you were gone and your brother was gone --

A: They didn't stay in Lindau. They couldn't stay there.

Q: What did they do?

A: They went somewhere else, to a cousin of my mother. And when my dad -- my dad was in the concentration camp.

Q: Which concentration camp was he in?

A: In Dachau.

Q: He was in Dachau?

A: He was in Dachau but not for too long.

Q: How did that happen? Did he tell you how he ended up there?

A: Somehow, somehow. And when he came out of the concentration camp, he didn't know where my mom was because she could not stay in Lindau anymore.

Q: So he had been arrested from Lindau?

A: He was, yes, but then when he got out of the concentration camp, he didn't know where my mother was, you know.

Q: How did he find her?

A: Well, he saw a few cousins and he knew where one was and he thought maybe she was there. And she was there. And then I don't know how long it took until they came to the United States.

Q: Was he -- did he ever talk about what happened to him in the Dachau?

A: No, we never talked about it. I didn't.

Q: I have the impression, correct me if I'm wrong, that as you were growing up, you didn't see much of your parents; you mostly had interaction with your nanny?

A: That's right. And that's why when I came to the United States, I said I was so little with my parents, I go one year. My brother was a doctor in Queensborough, near Albany. So I say I go there. For one year, I stayed with my parents.

Q: Was that the first time you were really close with them in the same area?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was that like because you were already a grownup lady?

A: I was glad to be with my parents. I was with my parents -- I was 18 when I left. And, you know, I just have to go because I was in Queensborough and I said I have to go one year, I have to go to my parents.

Q: But this must have been when your father had left Dachau. Did he seem a different person because of that? Had he been -- did he seem like he was older or sicker?

A: I hadn't seen him for so many years, I wouldn't know.

Q: You wouldn't know.

A: No. My parents had a very, very, very good life. The minute they came to the United States, they never had to work and my mother had her maid and they lived with my brother.

Q: In Albany, or near; in Troy?

A: Well, it's between Troy and Albany. He had his office there.

Q: Did he still have something with tobacco businesses, your father?

A: No, no. He was a doctor.

Q: Your brother, I know, but your parents, did your father--

A: He didn't have to work.

Q: He didn't have to work?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: No. My parents did not have to work. Only thing was he had a dog, he brushed him and they had a good life. They never had to work. And my brother did it so he made a checking account and another account and put money into it, so they never had to ask.

Q: That's very thoughtful. That's very thoughtful.

A: Because they came out of -- they came to Seattle when my daughter was born and they came and they never had to ask for money. They never had to ask for anything. So they were very fortunate because there were very few people who were independent with enough money.

Q: That's true.

A: And my brother always put money in the checking account and when the account got less, he put more in.

Q: That's a good son.

A: There was never any question.

Q: It's more than money. It is also a sign of love and respect.

A: That's right. And I was, how shall I say it? My sister-in-law, her mother came from Shanghai and she asked, I went to dental school and I was dental assistant. She asked me if I would take care of her mother because she doesn't speak English, she doesn't -- and so forth. I say, what do I have to do? I don't do housework. She said I don't have to do housework. So we went to our Palm -- our house was in Palm Springs, but it was too early to go to Palm Springs. It was too hot. So we went to Asheville, North Carolina at the Grove Park Inn and stayed there for three months at the Grove Park Inn.

Q: So this lady that you were taking care of, was this your future mother-in-law?

A: No.

Q: This was somebody else?

A: It was my brother's --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Future sister-in-law.

A: Nobody's mother-in-law.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

A: But I --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your daughter.

A: She couldn't speak English. I could speak English. We were in Asheville.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: How did you meet your husband?

A: Huh?

Q: How did you meet your husband?

A: Oh, God.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let me just interject one thing. The daughter of the -- Margaret, listen to me for one minute.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Hang on a second. I just wanted to establish that relationship. So now I have -- I think I've got it clear, that the lady you were taking care of was your brother's future mother-in-law. That's who she was, because Hilda eventually became your brother's wife?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And --

A: And they met when they were five years old.

Q: That's right. And they had met at age five. It's amazing. It's amazing those kinds of coincidences. So tell me now, I had asked you before, how did you meet your husband?

A: Well, I was in Jones Beach with a cousin of my sister-in-law.

Q: So in Jones Beach, Long Island, New York?

A: Yeah. And she said she writes a card to a friend of hers, she's going to marry. So they left, and said why write. So I said to a guy I don't know. So I wrote something.

How did we start corresponding? I don't know anymore. Oh, yeah, the people from the Shanghai came.

Q: To New York? To San Francisco?

A: No. They came to San Francisco to Seattle or to Los Angeles.

Q: And who are the people from Shanghai? Were friends of yours?

A: I do not know.

Q: Oh, you don't know?

A: Oh, God, no.

Q: Okay.

A: And my husband's mother was on that boat and he wrote and send -- says you go to - - you go to Seattle and pick up. I said, I'm not going to Seattle and pick up. I said, I know a guy in Seattle. So I told my husband such and such a lady comes, if he would pick up at the boat and put up at a nice hotel and any expenses she has, I will --

Q: You will cover?

A: Yes, because money was no problem -- was no --

Q: Problem?

A: No. I had a good job and I didn't -- I didn't -- money was no problem.

Q: Okay. What was your job?

A: What?

Q: What was your job? You say you had a good job?

A: I was a dental assistant and I worked at a hospital.

Q: In what place?

A: In New York.

Q: In New York City?

A: Yes.

Q: And were you married by then?

A: No.

Q: Okay. So as far as meeting your husband, what I understood is that you met him --

A: It goes that way. We met at Jones Beach and she wrote a card and so had a little bit left over, said, why don't you write something. I said, why should I write to a guy I don't know. And she said she's going to marry him.

Q: She said that she was going to marry him?

A: Yeah.

Q: I guess she didn't.

A: No. I did.

Q: And so where was he when you wrote that card?

A: He was in Seattle.

Q: Now, I get it.

A: Because in Seattle, Jewish people couldn't easily get jobs, but a family Schoenfeld said now you have no choice, you can say he's a cousin. So Mr. Schoenfeld gave my Max, my husband, a job.

Q: So they weren't related at all?

A: No. My husband sure was no -- he had a Ph.D.

Q: In what?

A: Well, anyway, the Schoenfelds employed him, you know, he was a foreman, he did anything, you know, he said he has no so Mr. Schoenfeld said one day he should meet my husband. When he met him, he was very embarrassed.

Q: Because he had --

A: So he gave him a job. And then he said, he wanted to -- he had a factory and working came out of the shipyard in the morning and they had to go out so my husband was in charge of --

Q: The shipping?

A: Of the shipping. He didn't know how to clean.

Q: So tell me this, your husband, you sent him a card with a little bit written on it and --

A: No. She send him a card.

Q: And you wrote a little bit?

A: I wrote something funny.

Q: And so did he answer you?

A: No. But when the lady came from Shanghai, I wrote him if he would be able to --

Q: Pick her up?

A: Pick her up. And any expenses he has, I will reimburse. And he was employed by Schoenfeld's, Schoenfeld's in Seattle. And he pick up some people on some boats who came from Shanghai.

Q: And so he picked this person up?

A: So he picked the lady up. And I send him -- but he had to pay and so I send him some money, I say money is no object. And I don't know. We started corresponding. And so I say, why don't you go to Albany and meet me, meet my parents. He has no money. He says too expensive. And I said, well, we like our letters and my father say, when you want to go, go, I will give you some money. So I wrote him, I can come. And I could take off. And so I said I go to Seattle. It was expensive to go to Seattle at that time, you know. And then I told him to put me up in a nice hotel. And I went to Seattle.

Q: And you met him for the first time?

A: Met for the first time. And we had a good time together.

Q: Did you like him?

A: I went back home again and I said, I guess I go to Seattle. And my dad said end of the world. I said, I promise I come every year and visit, and I did. I went out to Seattle and we got married. And I went every year -- I went back -- every year and a half, I went back.

Q: So I guess it was a successful trip the first time you went?

A: Yes. He was a nice guy, wasn't he?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He was the best. Max was a wonderful, wonderful man. He was bright and sweet and so caring. He was a wonderful man.

A: Because we had a good marriage and were happy.

Q: This is him?

A: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's my house.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: So, tell me, do you remember your wedding date? October?

A: When was it?

Q: October, maybe?

A: Right after I went to Seattle. And we had two couples that were friends of my husband and we got married in _____ + and now any members in September who came from Poland or Russia, they had to be, more or less, German. And we remember. My husband had a good job and we had a good life.

Q: What was his story? What was Max's story? Because he also wasn't born in the United States?

A: No.

Q: Was he from Germany, too?

A: What?

Q: Was he also from Germany?

A: Yeah, he was from your Munich.

Q: So he was from Munich. So that's not that far from Lindau.

A: Oh, God, yes.

Q: It is?

A: Yeah. And he was -- he had a Ph.D.

Q: Was his family also well to do in Germany?

A: Huh?

Q: In Germany, was his family also well to do?

A: Yes.

Q: What was their business, their family business?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I only know his uncle, he has recipes for the _____ + and when he came over to the United States, he sold the recipes to somebody --

Q: So somebody --

A: In the United States, to the government of the United States.

Q: And was it a profitable sale?

A: Yes. He got good money for it.

Q: When did your husband leave Germany?

A: Well, it was 1938.

Q: Uh-huh (affirmative response).

A: He could have -- he had some German friends. He was a banker. And he could have hidden somewhere, but he knew his father would be arrested. In 1938 --

Q: Was this connected with Kristallnacht?

A: Which what?

Q: Was this connected with Kristallnacht? You know when there was the night --

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So he went home instead of his father.

Q: Where did they take him?

A: To Dachau.

Q: Also to Dachau?

A: To Dachau. But he wasn't in there long because he had a Visa to go to England where he has his relatives so he could get out and he had money. When the English people -- the grandmother, she always gave him money to take.

Q: So --

A: So he lived on that money in England.

Q: So what happened to his father later?

A: He died.

Q: In Germany?

A: Yeah, he died.

Q: Was he killed?

A: And his mother committed suicide.

Q: Oh, my.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have the letter.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: What happened to the father? How did he die?

A: He died natural. He was old. I guess he had a heart attack or something. I don't know. I only know the letter, you know, from my mother-in-law.

Q: Well, why did she commit suicide?

A: She didn't completely, so she died in a hospital still, but, you know, later.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about what's in the letter that you're talking about, why?

A: Why she does it, she says don't feel bad and so forth and so on.

Q: Was she at home? Was she -- what year did she do this?

A: No. All the Jews were in one room.

Q: All the Jews were in one room. Was she already arrested?

A: No, not arrested, but all in one room. I guess I know in that letter. I don't know that much.

Q: Was this in 1940, '42 or something?

A: And she committed suicide. She didn't -- she knew would be transported to --

Q: To a concentration camp?

A: Yes, concentration camp. And she didn't want to.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So she committed suicide. And we have --

Q: Were you married by then?

A: We have the letter and I said I wanted my kids to read it and so I had it translated, you know.

Q: I see. You were already married to Max when you got this letter?

A: What?

Q: Were you already married to Max when you got this letter?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Okay. And had he -- did the letter -- had he already known his letter was dead when the letter arrived?

A: No. We didn't know. This was four years in between, you know, you didn't get any mail.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: It's the war.

Q: I see. So in 1942 is when she did it and wrote it, wrote the letter, and you only got it after the war?

A: After the war, we got the letter. It was the Red Cross.

Q: I see. Your poor husband. He must have been --

A: It was very sad.

Q: Yeah.

A: But, as I say, we had a good life in Seattle. And my brother, when I needed something, he helped me. And my parents had a very good life. The middle picture. All he did was brush his dog. They never had to work. About six years they came, but they never had to work.

Q: That's a very good situation to be in.

A: My father gave the papers and he put money there and some money was -- said he needed more money, then he got more money. So money never was any question.

Q: When did your mother and father pass away?

A: Oh, my gosh. I don't know. I have it written down.

Q: What about Max, how many years were you married?

A: They lived with my brother. My brother had a three-story house and the basement was his office and the first floor was my mother's -- parent's. They only had three rooms and upstairs, the third floor is where they lived, but my mother had her maid and so she had a very good life. And they came out to Seattle when my daughter was born.

Q: How many children do you have?

A: I have one.

Q: One.

A: I wanted more, but my husband says we don't have much money, we will have one.

Q: How long was your husband alive?

A: What?

Q: How long were you married, until when was your husband--

A: I was married almost 50 years.

Q: That's a long time.

A: That was 18 years since he passed away.

Q: So he passed away in the early '90s, 1992 or something?

A: Huh?

Q: Did he pass away in '92 or '93?

A: Something like that.

Q: Something like that. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She was married October 4, 1941?

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: October 4th, 1941 is your wedding date?

A: My parents had a very, very good life. They lived in the same house as my brother did. He gave them a checking account. He gave them -- they never had to ask for money. When they need money, there was always enough.

Q: Did anybody from your family ever go back to Germany?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: All my family actually died long before I came to the United States. So only thing is my parent had a very good life. They had everything they needed and wanted.

Q: It sounds like they were well cared for by their son.

A: My mother didn't like to wash dishes and she has the maid. And when my sister-in-law, if I would go with her mother, I would go three months to Asheville at the Grove Park Inn and take her out to Palm Springs where they have a house. And I say, what do I have to do? She said you have a maid, you don't have to do housework.

Q: Which is nice, very, very nice.

A: And so we spent months in Asheville and we stayed three months in Asheville. And she was very nice when I was there, she said, you know _____ + it was a Jewish community center. One evening they had a dance and they pick me up and I had a good life.

Q: Good. Good. Is there something you'd like to add to the interview, something you'd like to tell me that you haven't mentioned before that I didn't ask about?

A: What did I mention?

Q: No.

A: No. We were in Asheville and in September we went to Palm Springs. There they had the house. And I had a maid. I didn't have to do the housework. I said, I don't do housework.

Q: Hang on just a second. All right. Does your daughter have children, your one child?

A: She has one child, one died.

Q: And do you have any -- so you have grandchildren and you -- do you have great grandchildren?

A: I have grandchildren, sure. Amy is my granddaughter.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Great.

A: My grandchildren.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: You have great grandchildren, too?

A: Yeah.

Q: Pretty cool.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two, Lauren and Max?

A: Lauren and Max. He called me yesterday. He says, ChiChi, I come to your house soon.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: How old are they, your great grandchildren?

A: They call me ChiChi.

Q: That's sweet. How old are they? Are they grown up already?

A: How old? Lauren is five.

Q: They're children still?

A: And Max is --

Q: Three?

A: How old is he?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He'll be three next month.

A: Two.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Two and three.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Lauren is six.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Lauren is six and Max will be three next month?

A: She's getting really --

Q: That's what children do. They go through phases.

A: But Max said, I come pretty soon in ChiChi's house. They call me ChiChi.

Q: What would you like them to know about -- what would you want your grandchildren and great grandchildren to know about your life?

A: Nothing about Hitler, that's for sure. That I had a good life. Had a good grandpa, good grandparents, that's what I want them to know. I don't want them to know anything about Hitler. It's not nice.

Q: Okay.

A: That part I forget.

Q: Okay.

A: Because I'm lucky. I had a good husband and my parents had a good life.

Q: Do you have a Kleenex? Thank you. Thank you very much, Margaret. This concludes our United States Holocaust Museum interview.

A: I want my Poppa. I want my daughter.

Q: I can see why they cherish you so much.

A: I have Poppa, my daughter, in that way I'm lucky.

Q: Thank you. And I'm sorry if we've brought up things that are painful.

A: Is she coming back together.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, I think she's coming home any minute.

A: I worry.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: Mothers do. Mine worries about me, too.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm going to get you a drink of water.

BY INTERVIEWER:

Q: I'm going -- we're going to talk some more, but I'm going to officially finish our interview, the interview part of it and we'll talk about other things now. So I'd like to thank you for speaking with me. I know that it's not easy.

A: Poppa.

Q: Yeah. We can talk about her, I'd like to find out some more. Thank you very much and this concludes our interview.

Conclusion of Interview