

**Frieda Lefeber**

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### **Abstract**

Frieda Graumann Lefeber was born March 21, 1915 in Visick (?), in the Eastern part of Germany which was annexed to Poland. When the Germans and Poles were fighting for the territory in 1919, her mother was warned that she was about to be arrested and the family fled, finally settling in Kostrzyn where the mother's siblings lived which was about 16 kilometers from Berlin. Kostrzyn had about 20,000 to 30,000 people including a Jewish community and they mostly were in horse and cattle trading. Frieda was closer to her Aunt Katy than to her mother who was in poor health. Her father was President of the Horse and Cow Association in Berlin until Hitler came into power. Frieda did not experience any anti-Semitism in elementary school or Lycee until there were rules against fraternizing with Jews. Her friends no longer spoke to her and her parents' friends no longer visited them. In 1934 Frieda's father was imprisoned for having Nazis over for dinner and her brother was stabbed by a fellow student and beaten by Nazis so Frieda was called home. She brought her father kosher food while he was in prison. Her brother was helped by the Zionists to get to Palestine and her father was able to transfer some money in '34 and '36 to Palestine but the parents did not immigrate there until '38. Meanwhile Frieda was unhappy in Kostrzyn where she had no one to speak to so obtained a number of au pair positions. None worked out so when she met her future husband, Harris Lefeber, she followed his suggestion to become a nurse at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin. She found it disgusting work but with her mother's encouragement, she succeeded in completing the course in '37 and her father got her a visa to go to the US. Her relatives there were too poor to give her an affidavit but she obtained one by helping an elderly lady on the return ship to Bremen. She sailed for the US in March '39. Her boyfriend lost his Judgeship in Berlin and immigrated to the US in December '39 where he became a successful accountant and after 14 years courtship, they married. Frieda visited Kostrzyn after World War II as it became Polish but it was totally destroyed and not recognizable to her. Frieda does not blame young Germans for the Holocaust but wonders if older ones were Nazis. Frieda lost some relatives in the Holocaust, some were imprisoned with German prisoners and sent to Canada and Australia where they remained, some went to Cuba and others were sent back to Germany and made it to China while others remained in the Black Forest or immigrated to the US.

### **Summary**

00:00 Frieda Lefeber was born Frieda Graumann March 21, 1915 in Visick (?), the Eastern part of Germany. After the Versailles Treaty, it was annexed to Poland so her parents had to either become part of Poznan Province or become Polish. Many Polish did not agree to leave so they formed a militia and fought. Her parents lived in a small village of 500 or

600 families. Her father had a big courtyard where the Poles and Germans fought every night. She still remembers how the household help got them into pajamas and bedded down in the basement. The fighting was upstairs and you could hear the bullets between the Poles and the Germans whizzing by in the backyard. They sat in the cellar. Her father was a veteran of World War I fighting for Germany. He had big wounds in his legs and head. They had a Russian POW on their farm. One night there was a knock on the door and the children awoke from hearing the bullets. A Polish officer wanted to speak to the man of the house. The Russian prisoner who spoke Polish said the man of the house is an invalid on crutches and he should leave them alone. The next day, the washer woman argued with her mother and went to the Polish authorities in charge and said he saw a man kill a Polish officer. Her father had a friend at the magistrate officer who called that his wife would be arrested today.

- 05:00 So they packed everything of value and put it in a carriage and fled in the snow in the late afternoon. They had a sled and two horses. The children sat in the back and left for the German part of the territory which was one hour away. They stopped at a barn and her mother placed them in straw and covered them with bedding and they slept there. They reached German territory early in the morning. Her father had a house near the border where he placed the mother and children. Her mother got ill with the flu of 1919. Her father told them to pray for her. They were not allowed to go into her room. Her mother was anxious as they were so close to the border that the police would pick her up. After nine months they went to the town of Kostrzyn about four hours away, 16 kilometers from Berlin, where the mother's sister and brother lived. Frieda's mother's name was Clara Solomon and she was born November 15, 1884 and her father, Samuel, was born July 28, 1884. They never got restitution from Poland as they had to flee. Her mother came from a family of 11 children. Three died in puberty and eight lived.
- 10:00 They all immigrated from that part of Germany to Germany proper and lived in Berlin, Kostrzyn and the Black Forest. Her mother was from Poznan. Her grandfather dealt in wholesale housewares. He sold china, pots and pans to stores and was successful and well-to-do. Each girl got \$15 or \$20 as there was no dowry when they got married. Her father was poor. His father had early Alzheimer's in his 40s and got out of school at 14 and had to help his mother get to the marketplace. There he sold pots and pans which he got from the grandpa on the mother's side and he came weekly or monthly to buy it. When the grandma on the mother's side wanted her Frieda's mother to get married, she found Samuel who was a good man so arranged the wedding. They married in 1912 and her brother, Gerhart, was born in 1913. They moved to Kostrzyn in 1919 when her brother was about six and she about four. Her father had an older brother and an older sister and two younger sisters.
- 15:00 They felt themselves German Jews as her father fought for Germany in Russia and her grandfather was an officer of the Emperor's Army guarding Potsdam which was in

Germany before they got married. He guarded the Emperor. He was 6 foot 3 inches and stately looking (mother's father). They can trace their lineage back to 1605 and moved from the western part of Germany to this area. Her parents took her there. Her father was proud of his family. He was a storyteller. He was religious and only ate kosher food but when he was a soldier in Russia, he found a pig's head on the land and ate it as he was so hungry. War was going on in 1915 when Frieda was born. Her father was away at war as she was born a day when her mother was notified that her father was injured and at an Army hospital. He was 17 months in Germany and recovered and came home. Frieda played with her cousin and brother on the street and the man with the red beard who had a stubble picked her up and took her into her mother's store. Her grandpa opened the store during the war to sell pots and pans. An aunt lived by the Baltic Sea marketplace, Aunt Olga Solomon, who had one child and lost her husband during the war. She was her mother's youngest sister and later married someone else. Now lives in Baden Baden in the Black Forest where they spent many vacations. Her mother had a sister Kate who moved to Kostrzyn and the grandpa moved there after he lost his business and was supported by eight children.

- 20:00 He had to leave Poland like everyone else. He lived right past the border at Schneidermuhl near Potsdam and Berlin. They could not take anything so lost everything. They could have stayed. Her mother's sister remained in Bamberg, Poland and made a nice living. Many perished because of the Holocaust. They might have hidden their valuables. The Poles were very anxious and moved to Kostrzyn which had 15 or 20,000 people. It was a nice little town. They did not deal in grain but in cattle and horse trading and made a substantial living. The economy in Germany was very terrible so they tried to invest in real estate. Money kept losing value. They had a writing board which got too expensive to buy in a week.
- 25:00 After the war, the economy was so bad so anti-Semitism started. The National Socialist Party was formed. Hitler was the founder. He hated the Jews and started a riot in 1922 and there were shots during the night. She got scared so she slept between her parents. There were branches of the party all over Germany including Kostrzyn. There was a lot of unemployment so people joined the Nazi party as Hitler promised to improve their lot. When her mother, sister and Katy talked about the man who was a threat to the Jews, she got so scared that she slept with her parents. After the riot, Hitler was put in prison and wrote, "Mein Kampf." Hitler stated that he would do away with the Jews in Germany. Frieda spent her childhood in Kostrzyn and attended Lycee where she had lots of friends. The Lycee is high school which you attend until age 16 after elementary school. There were no private schools. You had to pay a small fee for the Lycee. Her father was not close to her. He loved to play the piano and was very talented. He did not want her around as she was a nuisance. She had lots of cousins. Aunt Katy was more caring. Her

mother was not well as had severe asthma. Sometimes she went to a summer resort in the Alps. They had household help and a wonderful governess, Miss Gerdon (?).

30:00 When Hitler came to power, her father sold his business and could not keep the governess. Things turned from bad to worse. Frieda was closest to Aunt Katy (shows her photo) who tried to console her when she cried. Her mother had no patience with her and preferred her brother. She was sarcastic and said that Frieda was a stepchild which was not true. Her mother tried to be funny but Frieda did not think she succeeded. Her mother was unhappy at leaving the area as she had friends there. She suffered from asthma and emphysema and coughed at night. Her father worked hard and was busy with business. He was President of the Horse and Cow Association in Berlin but lost this position when Hitler came to power. He could not go to East Prussia to get fine livestock which he sold each year at auction where Earls and Counts attended. Frieda was not keen on horses. Her brother had an accident with a pony when it sank into manure and had to be pulled out. Since then, Frieda refused to get on a horse.

35:00 She was not a lonely child as had a lot of Christian classmates. There was no anti-Semitism in her school. The Lycee was in her garden. She just had to walk up a few steps to the vine arbor. Dorothea Muller (words do not match her visa) was a special friend. She was an only child whose father had a heating and coal business. He was forced to join the Nazi party in order to do business when Hitler came to power. Dorothea was daring to be friendly with Frieda as she was Aryan. Around '34 Aryans were not allowed to be friendly with Jews. The Nazi party started in '33 and laws against the Jews were in effect in '34. Dorothea also studied in Berlin to be a nurse in a hospital, like Frieda. Frieda's mother lived in a house that belonged to her brother in Berlin. Upon arrival in Kostrzyn, they all lived in Aunt Katy's luxury apartment of ten rooms. Her parents were in one room, Frieda slept with a cousin about five or six years older and with Katy's daughter. Her brother slept with Cousin Bert. Her father built a house in the courtyard. It took several months until they moved in.

40:00 Her mother was hospitalized in a local hospital as she could not breathe. They stayed nine months until the uncle from Berlin had a vacancy and they moved in. They left the house that her father built. Kostrzyn had 20 to 30,000 people. There was a Jewish community. Relatives were their in-laws and Katy's in-laws. There were lots of Jewish families. It was a story town as Frederick the Great had a castle there. Frieda started school at age 5 or 6 in the early 20s. She recalls school in Flatto (?) as there was a fire and her mother found her. The chocolate factory had a fire and her mother found her and pulled her home. Her father spanked her but it did not hurt. Her mother was very strict and had no patience with her. Aunt Katy would feed her nicely. Frieda attended Lycee in the late 20s. She was the only Jewish girl in Kostrzyn. Her cousins were older so were not in her classes. She did not feel different in school before Hitler.

- 45:00 Frieda did not experience any anti-Semitism from the teacher or the students before Hitler. She completed school at age 16 or 17 and went to Frankfurt in the East for higher learning. Her school still exists as she visited it once. She received her Baccalaureate upon graduation. She planned to become a dentist as it was just three more years of study so shorter than other professions. Her parents suggested it. She did not want to study medicine as it takes longer. Frieda attended the Heimrich Schule in Frankfurt. When she visited her school about 25 years after reunification, she was introduced to the students. That was the Eastern part of Germany. She went to Berlin. The Greater Berlin Mayor invited her husband to visit but he died so she went in 1976 or 77. There were 280 others from Berlin and they were celebrated with tickets for the opera and hosted them in fine hotels. She was in the same hotel where she met her husband for 5 PM tea. She saw the same dance floor; it was bittersweet memories. Those in charge tried to make them feel good and gave them money each day. They were at the Excelsior Hotel on Harder Bell Strasse in West Berlin near the center. Frieda returned to Germany several times.
- 50:00 She met young people and also saw people her age. She wondered if the latter were Nazis. She can't blame the young people as they are not responsible for what their parents or grandparents did. She returned to Kostrzyn as it became Polish. It is four hours from the Polish border before it became Poland. Kostrzyn is one hour from Berlin and is totally Polish. She traveled there by car with a friend and could not recognize anything. It had been totally destroyed during the War and she only recognized a hotel across the park. She could see chestnut trees that had been in front of her parent's home. She hoped to go into her house and see the old furniture but everything was destroyed by the Russians, even the churches. Only the train station was intact. Everything was destroyed so she could not recognize it which made her depressed so she left. She stopped at an Inn and had herring and cream sauce which she used to like so much with mushroom pepperlings. She ate it and felt a little better. Her world was totally gone. She did not finish studying in the 30s in Frankfurt as her mother called her in 1934.
- 55:00 Hitler's party took over overwhelmingly as immediately a parade passed by when school was out. There was singing. Many friends had Nazi uniform with a swastika rather than a finch on their hat. They said, "Hello." They joined as it was fashionable. The girls liked the uniform. They sang a Nazi song, "A horse vessel feet," they killed the Jews until their lives stopped from their knives (Says it in German). People probably still know the song. They wanted her to join the parade but she refused as she did not want to join the party. They were in her class and were friends when Hitler came to power and soon they were forbidden to talk to her. It was demoralizing. She felt ashamed.
- 60:00 Her father would not carry a handkerchief but had it sewed in his pocket and would not answer the phone on Shabbat (Saturday). Frieda really did not want to be Jewish so thought G-d punished her but later found out that he does not do that. Her experience gave her an inferiority complex and she wished she was not in such a dilemma. The

inferior feeling went away when she came to America as everyone was pleasant and happy and made it feel good to be here. First she felt inferior as she could not speak the language so had a handicap. After the new regulations, no Aryan was allowed to fraternize with the Jews. Her parents had lots of Christian families that came to their religious dinners although they were not Jewish. In return they invited her family to dinner but soon it stopped and Frieda could not stand living in that town. The minute friends saw her, they turned in another direction or passed by her.

65:00 Her cousins were older than her so she was lonely. It hurt her to see her friends turn away. She decided that she must leave. In Frankfurt she went to school for over a year. After two years, she tried to get a baccalaureate. She had  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour left and her mother called. It was 1934 and her father was imprisoned and her brother away so she went home. She started school in 1933. Her brother was stabbed in the back when he was in college by a colleague. He was stabbed from behind and it pierced his lung so was hospitalized and recovered. He left school and went to a farm to prepare to go to Palestine as he became a fierce Zionist. The farm prepared young men and women in agriculture. Her brother was not political prior being wounded by a fanatic student. On Shabbat he came home and on his way was attacked by three Nazis in the forest. He fought them off and drove home on his bike and told his father. Although it was Shabbat, his father called the Zionist organization in Berlin and told him to take the next train there. Frieda was an au pair there and her mother told her to go to the train station for the brother who got false papers and was assigned to Holland. There he was to get on a boat with livestock and travel six weeks to Palestine. Their mother did not hear from him until he arrived in Palestine four months later.

70:00 Her father was arrested for protective custody. He did not do anything wrong. He had lots of land and some livestock. The father's foreman was the head of the Nazi party came and said he could do business on the farm but there was a question about keeping the land. Her father was happy and invited the Nazi for supper. The foreman and two body guards had dinner. The mother's seamstress was leaving and saw them and went to the dance hall and said she saw two Nazis eating with a Jew so they sent over a group of Nazis to her father's home. Kurt, the foreman, came on the terrace and told them to get lost and the next day her father was placed in protective custody by the police. He would not eat the food in prison. Frieda was in Frankfurt and was told to come home. Her mother made casseroles to bring kosher food daily to the prison for three weeks. Frieda decided to help her father get out. A judge lived in an apartment building who knew her since she was little so she knocked on his door and asked for help.

75:00 She asked that her father be released and a few days later he was released. Her father decided that he should leave. He went to Palestine to see the brother and transferred \$7,500 marks through the London Bank in 1934. He had foresight. In 1936 he visited the brother and transferred some money but could only use it to buy land due to the

British laws. It took two years from 1936 to 1938 to get out. Frieda met her husband in 1934. Her father was haggard when he arrived home from prison as had no fresh air. From '34 to '36 they lived on the money their cows and horses at low prices and put in the bank but could not take it out in '38. They left stocks and bonds and money in the bank. Jews could take 1,000 marks out of the bank for the entire family. They could not have coffee or eggs. They left in '39 and had no eggs in years. They had no allotment for butter as were on rations. As a nurse at the Jewish Hospital, she did not get real butter. They arrived in Holland and there was butter on the table and scoops of butter balls.

80:00 She ate an entire bowl of butter while the prince of Netherlands marched by and everyone looked out the window. This was in '39 and they were all going on the same boat. They did not wear yellow stars but she had "Frieda Sarah Graumann" on her ID. The name, "Sarah" was added to show she was Jewish. After graduation, her father gave her a ticket to go to America to find relatives to vouch for her so she already had a passport. There were no rules yet for Jews and no one in her family had a profession. Frieda's future husband was a judge in Germany and lost his position in '34. She could have finished her schooling as her father was a veteran and had the Iron Cross. Her husband's brother died in 1918 in Basle as a young man. Her family thought it senseless for her to study as she could not pursue a profession as a teacher, doctor or dentist so would not spend more on education. She agreed and did not fight it but did not know what to do. She thought to be an au pair so answered ads in the Jewish papers. One was five to eight hours away in West Germany. He was a cute little boy to take care of but the man of the house had his eye on her and tried to pursue her.

85:00 He ran around the dining room table after her. He was old and tiny and after three months, she left and went to a hotel in Dusseldorf as heard of a carnival there. She stayed until the end of Shabbat and met a couple in the lobby from Brazil who invited her to walk to the carnival. She was happy as they were foreigners and just visitors so she could go with them without anxiety. She went home and it was boring so tried to get a job in Berlin and found a woman wanted her to take care of her grandchildren. The parents left for England to find work. They seemed nice. In the morning she had blotches due to bed bugs. She was put in the maid's room which was full of bed bugs so she said that she would not remain unless it was fumigated. It was a Saturday in the Eastern part of Berlin near the River Spregg. She was off duty until 8PM and it would be fumigated by then. She remembered that her parents used to dance outside the Hotel Excelsior on Haddonburg Strasse so she took the bus there. She just wore cork shoes, not dance shoes and had brought along a magazine. A young man danced with her who married her years later. He could not dance well nor could she with such shoes. He came from a nearby town and was Jewish.

90:00 Her parents used to live in that town. He danced with her once and then others tried to dance with her but could not. The dance was from five to seven. After it ended, he came to her table and introduced himself, "My name is Dr. Harris Lefeber." When she heard his name, she felt he could not be bad and she said that she did not know when she would return. Her parents would not like him calling or writing so suggested he send a letter to the Post Office where she would pick it up. He would tell her where to write for a job. She returned to the fumigated room but it smelled too much. She returned to Kostrzyn. It was horrible to stay there as she met people she knew and they did not talk to her. Her friend, Dorothea, a student in Frankfurt corresponded but did not talk to her as it was too dangerous in that small town. She found an au pair job where the lady was elegant and it was on the ground floor in a nice section in Berlin. They had a little boy for her to take care of and had soirees in the evening. She saw a couple come out of a room and told her future husband, "Something is going on." He said that she should get rid of the job or she will get into trouble. She got another job caring for two boys whose parents went to Palestine to find their future. One boy got sick but the aunt and uncle stayed with them. On her day off, she took off and when the father returned, he fired her for leaving the sick boy.

95:00 Her boyfriend suggested that the nursing profession can be useful in any country in the world. She went for an interview with the Director of Nurses who looked at her fingers and said that she never did a day's work in her life. She should think it over if she wants to be a nurse and talk it over with her parents. If she still wants to do it, she should return and then they will talk. In 1934 and '35 the Jewish newspapers had ads. They were still being published up to the time she left. Only Jewish families were advertising. People made a living privately. She made little so her mother sent her money. She just got room and board. It was too hard to live in her family's small town without friends. It was hard to get a job as Jewish businesses did not hire and non-Jewish businesses were forbidden to hire Jews. She felt that her boyfriend was right as she could be a nurse anywhere. His advice saved her life. It never occurred to her that a Jewish hospital existed with a Jewish nursing school. She would have perished without that education. She was over 18 so could not follow her parents. The British would not let you in if you did not have agricultural experience or a profession. The British would not permit a child over 18 to enter with their parents. I

100:00 Dr. Harris inherited a great deal of money when he lost his judgeship. Frieda had lunch with his sister. His father's parents had a Fuller Brush type company. His father was ill with prostate cancer and died. He had immigrated to America and bought a candy machine but the current was different. It cost a fortune to change it. An aunt who owned department stores in Germany was married to a wealthy man in the US. When he died, the German court appointed Frieda's boyfriend as Executor of the Estate in '36. He took care of the department stores and had to confer with the aunt once a year in America from



'36 to '38. The uncle wanted him to stay in Germany but did not have the foresight like her father who advised her to leave as soon as possible. Frieda was in America in '37 and her boyfriend still would not leave Germany as he wanted to get his judgeship back in Berlin's highest court. He was the youngest to get such an appointment as he graduated with highest marks. It was not a political appointment but via credentials. He had been a judge less than a year. There was a Jewish hospital in Berlin, the Eranastine (?) in Northern Berlin in the Vedding (?) area.

105:00 Frieda was to start working. She went home for three months. Her uncle had been in an accident and had a bandage on. She had become woozy when she visited him in the hospital. He told her not to go work in a hospital. She really did not want to become a nurse but wanted to be with her boyfriend so thought that would be best. After 24 hours she was assigned to utility on the men's ward and had to wash bedpans and urinals and place a urinal upon each bedpan. One man asked her to place the urinal on him and she told him to do it himself. He took his hands out from the bedclothes and showed they were bandaged so she had to place the urinal on him. She was shocked as she was innocent and had never saw a man's area before. She went to the utility room and told the nurse that she is finished with nursing. She took her suitcase and took the next train home. Her mother did not pay attention to her when she told her that she was finished with nursing. Then her mother told her that she signed a contract and must return as the Nursing School is her home now. Today she is thankful for that for otherwise she would have been gassed if she had remained home. It seemed detrimental but it was the best advice. Frieda did not know what nurses' duties were. She had never been in a hospital. Her mother had no patience with her but it made her strong.

110:00 Frieda was never resentful and feels that is why she lived a long time. What Hitler did was horrendous but inside her, she cannot hate people even though it hurt her. Frieda never wanted to be near her mother. That was one of the reason she did not consider going to Palestine. She feels that many Germans here in America might have been Nazis but their children are totally innocent and not responsible for what happened. She belongs to an international woman's group where the German women are lovely people. They are very intelligent and educated but often wonders whether their fathers were involved. She likes these people just as much as any American.

115:00 Whatever injury she suffered in the long run might have been good for her as it made her strong. Her mother sent her back and she was sent to the female ward instead of the male ward. She did not want to be a nurse but wanted to remain in Berlin as Harris was attractive to her. She had disgusting work to do and changed beds which she was not dedicated in doing but improved as the years passed. She still has translations of documents that the Jewish Hospital gave her indicating she was a good nurse and passionate. Frieda got used to it. She completed two years and three months of training and finished in '37. There was no presence of the German government in the hospital

until Kristallnacht in '38. It was a very large hospital with 370 to 400 beds. The building was in a beautiful park environment. There was an obstetrics building and an internal medicine building. The top floor was for private patients. The second floor was for surgery. Jews could be admitted into other hospitals and Christians from all over Germany and Poland came here. Jewish doctors practiced in the hospital. It was about 200 years old. The laboratory was in another building and administration also in another building. The hospital has been restored.

120:00 She has a book in German that tells the history of the hospital and has pictures of the hospital, including her picture. It was maintained throughout the war. Many young nurses were transported to Thereisenstadt according to Gilda Haas (?). Eichmann was there. Dr. Lustik (?) was later assassinated in the streets of Berlin as he formerly worked for the police department. He had some connection with the Nazis so was able to keep the hospital open. When the war ended, 800 people were found hiding in the hospital, both Jews and non-Jews. Some nurses survived including Gilda Haas. Some nurses were deported, some died and some came to the US including one she saw in Vineland, NJ. They had an alliance with the head Nazi. She graduated in '37 and her father gave her a ticket to go to America to look for relatives. Her mother's father had a brother who had immigrated. He was poor and his daughter who lived in a Bronx walkup was poor and neither could give her an affidavit. The daughter's son's printing business said that they would give an affidavit but she never received it.

125:00 Her mother told her to visit a cantor in New Rochelle, New York. It was difficult as she did not know the language and it was winter but she called and visited him in early February. She went for a Purim party. He introduced her to a lady with an 80-year-old mother. She wanted Frieda to take care of the mother sailing on her same boat four days later. Instead of pay, Frieda asked for an affidavit. The husband was in the tie business and had two young girls and Frieda offered to care for them. The US accepted a certain amount of people each year from different countries. Frieda had Polish citizenship and her Polish passport indicated she was born in a place which is now Polish so went under the Polish quota. It took her 14 months to get out of Germany after she acquired the affidavit. Frieda did not remain as her father had real estate in her name in Germany and it got lost. It was in her name due to business reasons.

130:00 Frieda met the lady on at the ship to Bremen four days later. Facing cabins were arranged but it turned out that the lady looked after her more than she looked after the lady. Frieda attended the dances on the ship and met a young man but he was too old for her. He was 36 so she left him playing cards with the lady while she went dancing. The man went to Bridgeport to learn hospital administration as his grandfather had a hospital in American and he was learning to take it over. He was bald, wore glasses and short so she was not interested in him as she was tall. Later he was successful. Frieda went home and told her boyfriend that she loved America. He was not ready to marry yet. She spent

the weekend at her parents and returned to Berlin. She learned that her boyfriend's uncle had committed suicide so his plans to go to America fell apart. He took a boat to America and asked for a visa for himself and his sister. Frieda returned to work at the hospital. Dr. Lustik (?) was assassinated after the war was over. He had to select who was going to Auschwitz and some people resented it. They thought he was connected with the Nazi party as he was a big shot in the police department, Jewish and married to a Christian doctor.

135:00 Frieda was fortunate. She developed inflammation of Achilles heels in both legs and was going to a private orthopedist when the director said she could get treatment in their hospital. A famous doctor put casts on her and she stayed with her boyfriend for two hours and returned to the hospital. The Director of Nursing was angry and told her to stay at Nursing and not go on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, her work station. She had to get her bedding and she asked for help but the Director said that if she could go to Berlin, she could walk up two flights. She got it there and threw it down the vestibule on the floor and all the feathers burst out on the floor where the nurses walked. They were angry with her and made her peel potatoes and she said that she did not peel potatoes and that her mother will send help to do so. She was told to study elsewhere and when Dr. Lustick returns, she would be thrown out. The Director told Dr. Lustick that Frieda did not need to work there as she has a picture of a man over her bed and he replied that it is better to have a picture over your bed than have the man in your bed so the two should shake hands. All the other Jewish hospitals in Germany were closed and the nurses were sent to concentration camps. This one was open despite limited food and money.

140:00 Dr. Lustick examined all the nurses in the hospital including the breast exam. Frieda worked on the mental floor. After she finished her studies, she was the oldest nurse. There were several medical floors. She was in charge. She took care of Polish women. One had syphilis and pus and had to send the pus in an ampule to the laboratory. The pus got stuck and the needle got into Frieda's eye and she had to be put in quarantine for two weeks. The hospital was an oasis until Kristallnacht. They had a nice nurse residence. There was a maid to do the laundry. They ate in a big dining room where the food was served to them. Most of the doctors were Jewish and some had serious friendships with the nurses. In June 1938 her father left to visit her brother in Palestine.

145:00 Conditions were worse by then as people got arrested and mixed marriages or friendships with Christians were not allowed. You could not take out more than 1,000 marks for the family. Both her parents left. They were going to pass through Berlin for Marseille to take a boat to Palestine. They could take some valuables. Her mother had a wooden trunk filled with china, crystal and silverware which she sent to Palestine. She took elegant bed linen which was hand embroidered which she later sold. She transferred the crystal, religious silverware and fine French china to Palestine in wooden boxes. Her parents thought she would be safe in the hospital. Frieda bought her mother yellow roses

for the train and she and Gilda Haas waved to them goodbye. Her mother wrote that she would keep the roses until Frieda comes or until she dies. Her mother was one of 11 children. Her grandma was small. The 11 children would run around in wooden clogs. Olson was a small town and children were not a priority at that time. Her parents first lived in Benyamin (?), a town near the brother, but her mother felt that she could not breathe there.

150:00 They moved to Netanya near the sea as it was dryer. Later her father bought land there and Frieda tried to send money from America. Her father built a ranch house and Frieda visited them. She was a nurse on a boat going to different Army stations around the Mediterranean after the war. Frieda kept in touch with her parents by mail and sent them a total of \$6,000. Life got bad in Germany and she worried whether she would ever get out. The war with Stalin was getting closer. January '39 Frieda got permission to enter the US and she had no money left. Her father left her several hundred dollars which she spent so had to ask for money. Everyone could only get 1,000 marks. A bachelor gave her \$600 for the trip to America on a 14 ton Holland-America Line leaving March 26<sup>th</sup>. Jews were not allowed to go with a Christian man.

155:00 Frieda and her boyfriend were on Kufstensam (?) Strasse and saw two Jewish women and two Nazis watching her and her boyfriend. She had a big hat as it was summer (or fall) and decided to walk and show her credentials as the Nazi thought she was not Jewish although her boyfriend looked Jewish. The Nazis saw her credentials and said OK. She felt unnerved so after that they no longer went to public places. There was an assassination in Paris by a deranged Jew who shot a German official because his parents were persecuted in Poland. She was afraid that something would happen to Jews. One morning in the hospital, she heard that all over Germany synagogues were burning and that Jewish males aged 14 to 65 were being arrested. Out the window she could see smoke from a nearby burning synagogue. Her uncle was the chief cantor and his wife lived there and she was worried about them. It was 10 or 11 AM and Jewish men came desperate to be admitted to the hospital. She got orders to admit them as patients. All the mattresses from the basement were brought up and placed one next to the other in the corridors. There were no linens or pillows. They were told not to get up as gestapo and the secret police were around. They were to ask for bed pans, as needed. The secret police were washing windows and cleaning floors and in the male lavatory, and not in uniform. Some SS were in the park so if you walked around, you would be caught so no one dared to go out.

160:00 It was scary. It was rumored that the hospital would be burned down and they had to work 12 to 20 hours instead of 8. They were exhausted and went to bed with their uniform on to be on alert. They thought the nurses' residence might be a target. The Catholic nurses' residence was near them and they could see nuns on the street as their residence was burning. Frieda was worried that her boyfriend did not respond to the

phone so she took her ID and went to the morgue at dark through the underground tunnel. She placed her uniform, nurse's cap with a Jewish pin and Star of David under a corpse and went up the stairs and took a bus to her boyfriend. The bus went through the entire Kurfstendam (?), an elegant street where she saw many destroyed Jewish stores and glass on the street. The streets were empty and looked like a skating rink. She reached Zeegenstrasse, not a business section, and walked to her boyfriend's. It was dark and she took the elevator up and rang the bell next door where two sisters lived. They said he was hiding at his aunt's and she was glad that he was not in custody. She called his closest friend and the wife answered, crying, that her husband was taken away during the night.

165:00 It was 6 PM and the streets were totally empty. There were some Christian stores standing but the Jewish stores were totally destroyed so one could not walk. She was glad that she got home safe. A man wearing a Black Nazi uniform stopped her and asked her what she was doing and she replied that she was putting a tag on a deceased. He asked her if she knew Dr. Knopf and if she was his girlfriend. She returned to her ward as she was still on duty and told the nurses what happened. Her cousin called that her mother was ill after an attack in her apartment and an ambulance took her to the hospital but she was not admitted as she was Jewish. She was told to go to a Jewish hospital. Frieda asked if they would admit Aunt Katy, her favorite aunt, and they agreed to do so. In the middle of the night, Frieda tried to sleep and heard her aunt was admitted. She had a broken arm and skull as had been stoned. She was unconscious and remained from November 9<sup>th</sup> to February in the hospital.

170:00 Meanwhile, the family immigrated to Cuba. The daughter and son-in-law got an affidavit for Aunt Katy and her husband and went on the SS St. Louis but Cuba and US would not let them in so returned penniless to Hamburg. The aunt gave them money and they took a box train to China. It took them 14 days from Berlin to Vladivostok to get to China where they were put in a ghetto for seven years. The aunt contracted dysentery and got down to 80 pounds and survived and came to America. Frieda's mother's older sister and children came from Cuba to Vineland, NJ and started a chicken farm. The aunt helped them. After nine months, they hardly spoke English but passed Practical Nurse Examination and had patients. She died at 96 in '77. The daughter and Frieda visited her in Vineland on her birthday. The SS in the hospital disappeared a day or two after Kristallnacht and you could go out. They watched people who got up from bed and caught them. The fake patients were safe if they stayed motionless and let the nurses help them.

175:00 When the arrests stopped, the SS left. Around December it was quiet and you could go out in the evenings. She did not see Harris for two weeks when he left his aunt's. The Nazis knew where men lived but did not go where women lived. Harris realized he had to leave Germany when Frieda returned in February '38 from America. She told him she

loved America as people were nice and free and he should consider moving there. He called his uncle and the aunt said he had committed suicide. Harris took the boat to America as he had been appointed Executor and demanded that the aunt take care of the sister and son and she agreed. Harris tried to leave Germany but wanted to get rid of the assets. He could only buy bonds and could not take but four marks.

180:00 Within Germany you could take 1,000 marks. Frieda had taken \$10 out. They thought there would be war between Stalin and Hitler though they made a pact as could not trust them. Harris left May 30<sup>th</sup> for Sweden. The aunt who had connections with UJA gave him an affidavit to Sweden with his family and they stayed there until December. The sister did not get processed until summer '40. War started and it was difficult to get to America by boat. It took Harris three weeks and he arrived in December '39 and his sister arrived in July '40. He gained 30 pounds and his German made-to-order clothes did not fit and she looked at him and thought, "For this, I waited so long!" Harris was depressed as he sold his business for 3 million dollars. He arranged with the new boss to employ him. He was employed as an office boy to carry packages to the post office which depressed him. When his sister arrived, she was even more depressed as she had always had servants and now she had to do her own housework. In the evening he went to City College to learn accounting.

185:00 He had an accent like Henry Kissinger. He could not be a lawyer with such an accent so thought to be an accountant. The bosses promoted him as appreciated his judgement. He was interested in tax and told the bosses that he is interested in changing the taxes. They listened to him and saved millions of dollars in taxes and made him Director of the concern with four others in the Pants Company. They got married 8 years later. He was ready for marriage when he became Executive Vice President and made an enormous salary. It was more than the President and he lived in a beautiful apartment on 79<sup>th</sup> Street East overlooking downtown. It was a 14 years courtship (six years in Germany and eight years here). Frieda felt they had the opportunity to come here due to her husband's advice and her mother's strength to make her tough. She is grateful to both.

190:00 She lost several aunts and uncles and brothers in the Holocaust. Her father lost two sisters who he would not permit to live in his house. Most of her relatives are disbursed all over the world. The relatives from the Black Forest went on the SS St. Louis and returned to Holland and sent to Auschwitz. The daughter and husband had immigrated early to the US. She saw her in California and she had Alzheimer's. The half-brother and twins were sent by Kinder transport to Holland and the war broke out. They were German so were considered enemy aliens and at 17 were placed with the Nazis. One went to Canada and the other to Australia. It took months to get there and he stayed in a prison camp for four years with Nazis in Australia. He remained and married a Christian and had a daughter. He did not say he was Jewish. His brother in Canada married a woman from San Antonio and had two children.

195:00 He wished her, "Happy Birthday" on her 70<sup>th</sup> in New York. He died and a stepson called and asked if she was Jewish as his stepfather never told him that he was Jewish. They still keep in touch on holidays. His mother's oldest brother died in a concentration camp. His grandson is in America. His parents lived in Shanghai where his father was an optician. There were 26,000 Germans there. He did well and came to the US to be an optician with his son in Boca Raton, Florida. They are a close family and would visit each other frequently, like in Europe they would go to the Black Forest or the seashore.

198:00