

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Marianne Berg
July 15, 2015
RG-50.030*0820

PREFACE

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MARIANNE BERG

July 15, 2015

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Marianne Salomon Berg**, on July 15th, 2015, in **Monroe Township, New Jersey**.

Thank you so much, Mrs. **Berg** for agreeing to meet us today, to sh –

A: It's my pleasure.

Q: Thank you. To share your story, and also maybe to tell us a little bit about your husband's story, because there are parallels, and there are differences to it, and he's no longer here to be able to say it directly. And through you, we'd like to also memorialize his story. But we'll start with yours.

A: Okay.

Q: And as all of the interviews, we'll start at the very beginning. I'd like you to tell me the date you born, the place you were born, and what was your name at birth?

A: All right, I was – I hate to say it, but I was born on August 26th, 1932, in **Frankfurt, Germany**.

Q: Okay.

A: And according to my mother, I was a 10 month pregnancy.

Q: Oh, really?

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A: And she was very unhappy that it took so long, but here I am.

Q: Yes.

A: And – and now –

Q: Your – your name at birth was?

A: My last name was **Salomon, s-a-l-o-m-o-n**.

Q: Okay.

A: My first name is **Marianne**, and I was named after an aunt, my father's favorite sister, who had passed away shortly before I was born.

Q: Okay. And, do you have any brothers and sisters?

A: No.

Q: You're an only child?

A: I'm an only child.

Q: All right. And, tell me a little bit about your mother and your father, starting with their names, and if you remember, at least the date – the year of their births, that would be helpful.

A: Yeah, okay, my father was born in 1887, decem – Christmas day, December 25th, 1887, and my mother was born in 1899. May 31st, 1899. They were 12 years apart in age. And so my father was not a young father. He was 39 when he got married, he was 45 years old when I was born. My mother was 33.

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Q: Which is also unusual for that time.

A: For that time – for that time, yeah. Well, she was married – you know, she was 27 when she was – got married, but she had many miscarriages.

Q: Oh.

A: And –

Q: And – and so you were the successful one.

A: But I was the successful one, and then **Hitler** came into power shortly after I was born, and they didn't want more children.

Q: Is that so?

A: Yeah.

Q: It was because of this?

A: It was because of this, aside from their age, but it was because of this, I think they already started to think about leaving **Europe**, leaving **Germany**.

Q: That's pretty early to –

A: Yeah, well –

Q: – to have those thoughts.

A: – they saw the handwriting on the wall, I think.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

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Q: So many people didn't. They thought they'd be able to wait it out.

A: Yeah, well –

Q: And – yeah.

A: – well, my father always said, and I – I mean, I heard this later on, that he said, nobody will believe this maniac, he'll go away, you know, but –

Q: Yeah. Tell me a little bit about his background, in the sense of what was his – what kind of family did he come from, how – were you – were you an old

Frankfurt family?

A: No.

Q: Were they from another part of **Germany**? Let's talk about that a little.

A: Okay. My father was born in **Wiesbaden** –

Q: Oh yeah, pretty.

A: – which is near **Frankfurt**, and he came from a family of nine children.

Q: Wow.

A: And – yeah, nine children, and he was – the early years of his life, he was raised – he was the second to the youngest – and the early years of his life, he remembers being raised by his grandmother, his father's mother, who lived with the family, and helped with the children. **[phone ringing]**

Q: Okay, we can cut. **[break]** So, you were talking about your father –

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A: My fa – my father, and so he had all these siblings, they were five boys and four girls, and I understand all my – all of my grandmother's children survived, she never lost a baby.

Q: Wow.

A: And this goes – you know, he – my father born in 1887, was the second to the youngest, so –

Q: And though – and you know, that – that **Jahrhundert** is how you say it in German, that century –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know, it was unusual.

A: Right, that's why I –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I'm saying it.

Q: Yeah.

A: And yes – and as – but, of all of these children, we were very few cousins. So, for various reasons, I guess they didn't –

Q: They didn't have children of –

A: – proliferate.

Q: – yeah.

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A: Yeah. I have two surviving first cousins, who were born in the **United States**.

My father's younger brother came here as a very young man, and practiced medicine in **Mount Sinai** hospital in **New York**.

Q: Oh wow.

A: And therefore was able to bring – got married here, stayed here, and was able to bring his siblings and cousins and nieces, and nephews, and everyone, sponsor us all.

Q: What a wonderful –

A: Yeah.

Q: What a wonderful thing to have.

A: Yes.

Q: That became so necessary at that time.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What was your father's name again?

A: **Josef**.

Q: **Josef**.

A: **Josef Salomon**.

Q: A-And was there – was the family then from **Wiesbaden** for generations, had –

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A: I think yes, I think so. I don't know how far back. Someone did a family tree of his mother's family, I th – I even have a book, an original book, it's a man who happens to live in this area. And so I have a little of that information, I don't know anything about my grandfather's family.

Q: Okay.

A: And – but they're from that area for – I think my – both of my parents were in **Germany** for generations.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: How did – how did your father's family support themselves?

A: I think they had a butcher business.

Q: Okay.

A: And had – I know they had chickens, because my father had an aversion to chicken, to poultry.

Q: Did he really?

A: He did, because he used to see the chickens run around without their heads, and never – my mother was never allowed to cook poultry. He didn't want to smell it, he didn't want to see it, and it would stem from – from that.

Q: From the early childhood.

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A: From the early childhood, yeah.

Q: And when your father then came into his own, and – and married rather late –

A: Yes.

Q: – and then had you rather late, how was he earning a living?

A: All right, he was in business.

Q: Okay.

A: He was a World War I soldier in – German soldier. I have an Iron Cross, I have all this stuff.

Q: Do you really?

A: I really do. And at that time, they were Germans. They – you know, it was a different world, and different expectations. Although, he came from an observant family, a kosher, Orthodox Jewish family. And he and his older brother were in the German army, and the younger – some of the other brothers were already in the **United States**, came here early, and didn't serve at all. And also, his brother **Gustav**, the one who brought us over, was also in the German army, at that time. And the parents had already passed away. I think both of them were gone by World War I.

Q: Okay.

A: So I never –

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Q: So you never knew them.

A: I never knew them at all.

Q: Okay.

A: And – but they – they were butchers, actually, I guess. Made sausages, and things like that.

Q: Well, what about your father, when he finished his service?

A: He had an uncle, my grandmother's – his mother's brother, who was very successful in the soap manufacturing business in **Frankfurt**, and had – his sons were younger than my father and my uncle, and he took them into the business.

Q: Okay.

A: My father and my uncle became sale – outside salesmen, and my – his – the other, the sons beca – they were more educated at that point, and manufa – made the soap, manufactured the soap.

Q: Do you know the –

A: Commercial soap.

Q: Yeah.

A: They sold to institutions.

Q: Do you know the name of what that company was?

A: Yes.

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Q: What was it?

A: **Edelmuth and Oppenheim.**

Q: **Edelmuth** –

A: **Edelmuth** was ma – **Edelmuth** was my father – my mother's – my grandmother's maiden name.

Q: **Edelmuth.**

A: **E-d-e-l-m-u-t-h.**

Q: Okay.

A: Okay. And that was the business that the unc – the uncle, and that's how they referred to him, as the uncle, had. And took in, as I said, his two nephews, and later his two sons.

Q: And what kind of – did you know this uncle? Did you – did you know the sons at all?

A: I knew the sons, they were my father's first cousins.

Q: Okay.

A: And they came to **America**, and I knew them, absolutely. But, in fact, one of them married my mother's first cousin, my parents introduced them. But I didn't know the unc – I – I'm – maybe I knew him, but I have no – I don't even think so, I think he passed away before I was born.

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Q: Let's turn now to your mother's family.

A: Okay.

Q: What was her first name?

A: **Hildegard**.

Q: **Hildegard**.

A: And she called herself **Hilda**, but her name was **Hildegard**.

Q: **Hildegard**. And what was her maiden name?

A: **Gruenwald**.

Q: **Gruenwald**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Like the section of **Berlin**, which is a lovely section of the city.

A: Oh, really? Yeah.

Q: A lot of – a lot of well-to-do Jewish families live there.

A: Okay.

Q: So, **Gruenwald**. And, was she from **Frankfurt**?

A: She was from **Westphalia**, from **Bielefeld**.

Q: Oh, **Bielefeld**, mm-hm.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And what do you know about her side of the family?

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A: Well, I know more – I knew her mother. That was the one grandmother I knew –

Q: Okay.

A: – who did not survive the war, sadly.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Really. Yeah.

Q: Ge – tell me a little about the circumstances of her family, and then a little bit about your grandmother, then.

A: Okay, ma – I really don't know much about my – her father, who passed aw – had passed away, but my grandmother's family is – I'm in contact with some of the second cousins. Their last name was **Pless**, **p-l-e-s-s**, and I just found out that there's actually a city called **Pless**, that's on the **Berlin Poland** border.

Q: No kidding?

A: And we had a maintenance man here, who used to go to **Poland** on vacation every year, and I once asked him, have you ever heard of a city called **Pless**?

Sometimes it was **Germany**, and sometimes it was –

Q: **Poland**.

A: – **Poland**. And he said, my uncle lives there, I vacation there every year.

Q: Isn't that interesting?

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A: So, I thought that was interesting, yeah. But – but that's – they lived in wes – as I said, my –

Q: **Westphalia.**

A: – grandparents lived in **Westphalia**, and br – and **Bielefeld**. My mother has two brothers – had two brothers, one younger, one older, and the older one changed his name from **Gruenwald** to **Greenwood** –

Q: Of course.

A: – here in the **United States**.

Q: It's a translation.

A: The younger has the – had a very interesting story, well he ended up in **Palestine**, the underground, sort of, until it became **Israel**, and he –

Q: Oh, interesting.

A: – went there for all – you know, all of his life, the rest of his life.

Q: When did he – when did he emigrate to **Palestine**?

A: He – in the 1930s, from **Italy**, he lived in **Italy**, and had to leave **Italy** when the fascists came. And he and his then girlfriend got a Greek ship captain for, you know, whatever they paid him, to take them to **Palestine**, because the – all this was underground at the time.

Q: Of course.

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A: And he told her, if we get there alive, I'll marry you. And this was my mother's younger brother. And they did, and they were married, and they lived there, and – and he was a Zionist. I know that's not such a great word now, but at the time it was very important.

Q: Well –

A: And that saved his life –

Q: Yeah, it saved his life.

A: – actually. Yeah, yeah.

Q: It did.

A: He was a very interesting man, yeah.

Q: And you knew him as well?

A: I knew him because I – we were there once, and he was here a few times, you know, later. Many years later, mm-hm.

Q: How did your mother's family – **[phone ringing]** Let's start there – let's cut there.

A: Okay. **[break]**

Q: Okay. So how did your mother's family support themselves?

A: My hur – my grandparents – yeah, I'm a – I think I mentioned, I'm really not sure –

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Q: Okay.

A: – of what my grandfather did. I think it also had to do with cattle and meat –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, something like that. A lot of the Jews in **Germany** at that time were cattle dealers, and were in that field, I guess. Yeah.

Q: How did your parents meet?

A: Okay, my father's sisters, the two older sisters, were what we would say, spinsters, and had a corset business in **Bielefeld**. I don't know exactly what brought them there, but that's where – the oldest sister was 20 years older than the youngest brother, so they were older. And they had a business, and my grandmother, my mother's mother was close in age to my father's oldest sister. And they became friendly because my grandmother bought her –

Q: Corsets.

A: – undergarments there, corsets, and whatever. And – cause everything was custom made in those days. And my mother – I don't know, my grandmother wanted to find someone for my mother, or my – my aunt wanted to introduce her brother **Josef** to somebody. Somehow, they got them together.

Q: It came through family connections, then.

A: Yes, yeah.

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Q: Okay.

A: I think they said they used to see my mother ride her bicycle, she was very pretty, my mother was a very pretty girl, yeah. And that's how they met, actually.

Q: And that's how they met –

A: Yeah.

Q: – through the corset business that his sisters had –

A: Correct.

Q: – in **Bielefeld**.

A: And my grandmother, who –

Q: Yeah.

A: – who shopped there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: What are your earliest memories from **Frankfurt**? Do you have any?

A: Very, very few. Very, very few. I remember – vaguely remember my grandmother visiting, and I – probably was my sixth birthday, because that was – we came here two months later, or not even two months later. **[doorbell ringing]**

Q: Okay, let's cut. **[break]** So before the break, we were talking about your mother's family.

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A: Yes, correct.

Q: And how your parents met, and – and that they got married –

A: And my uncles.

Q: Yeah.

A: My uncle who went to **Palestine** –

Q: **Palestine**, and things about her side.

A: Right.

Q: So, when you were born, can you tell me about the home that you were born into, in **Frankfurt**? Do you have memories of what it looked like?

A: I do have, strangely enough, I do have memories of my room, of – even of the layout, a little, of some of the apartment, because it was an apartment, we had a terrace. And when you walked in, it was maybe like an octagon or a hexagon hallway, and the rooms were off of this hallway. It wasn't narrow, it was –

Q: Central, yeah.

A: – shaped in some way. And my bedroom – I had my own room, and it was – my wallpaper was baby blue with white polka dots, and I had a dollhouse that had that wallpaper.

Q: Oh, pretty.

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A: And we actually were in **Munich** once, in our travels, my husband and I, and there was a – a toy museum, or a doll museum. And I said, maybe I'll find my dollhouse. It was confiscated. All of my parents' belongings [indecipherable] was confiscated, they got nothing –

Q: Really?

A: – here. And – which is a whole other story, but I sort of looked for my dollhouse. It was a very strange thing, and stupid, but I did.

Q: No, but you know, you wanted to see –

A: And – yeah. And so I just vaguely remember that. That's what I remember of the room.

Q: Okay. What about the apartment itself? Was it a large place?

A: I – probably. I mean, my parents had a bedroom, with a bathroom off of the bedroom.

Q: Okay.

A: And there was also a bathroom off of this ent – ha –

Q: Entry hallway, mm-hm.

A: – entranceway. And I remember the toilets flush with a chain. That's what I remember, the ch – pulling the chain to flush.

Q: Did your mother have any help at home?

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A: She had – all my – they always had help. And my father said, as poor as they were when he was growing up, they had help, and the help lived way upstairs someplace. The help probably wasn't even paid, but – except for room and board. But my mother, what happened when I was small, is that Jews were not allowed to have any help over – un-under a certain age, I think. Any woman who worked for a Jewish family had to be over the age of 50 possibly –

Q: Okay.

A: – 45, something like that. And the woman who was sort of our housekeeper, and took care of me, my nanny, was actually the woman who – my father had a rented room before he was married, my father and my uncle –

Q: Okay.

A: – and the couple's name they rented from was a mis – or a Mr. and Mrs. **Martin**.

Q: Okay.

A: And I called her **Tante Martin**. I didn't know her first name until many years later, that my mother referred to her as **Else**(ph). But they – she came and lived – and worked – I don't know if she lived with us, probably, I'm not sure. But she was my nanny, and she took –

Q: Do you have memories of what kind of person she was?

A: Yeah, I loved her.

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Q: Yeah?

A: I can't – you know, I don't really have too many memories, but I know once she took me to play with her nephews. And we were playing with these toy tin trains, and I fell, and I cut my –

Q: Lip?

A: – self, and I have a scar currently, from that. And she was very upset, and rushed me to a doctor, and I had a bandage, and I had to drink through a sippy cup, and there's a whole big – and this must all have been that last –

Q: That last year, yeah.

A: – season in – in **Germany**, but – yeah.

Q: Now, I take it at home, the language was German.

A: Only German at home.

Q: Only German.

A: And even in the **United States**, only at home, it was German. As soon as my parents left the house, it was English.

Q: Interesting. Interesting. Now, did your parents speak German to one another until they died?

A: Well, my father, my mother lived many years –

Q: Yeah.

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A: – longer. Yeah, til my –

Q: When did he die?

A: 1963.

Q: Okay, so he – he went very early.

A: He was 70 – almost 76. He was 75 years old. My mother lived until she was 87, and she was, when my father died, I think she was 63. You know, she lived for many –

Q: Yeah. Many years after.

A: – many years, yeah.

Q: And when they spoke with you in the **United States**, at home, what language did you speak?

A: German.

Q: Really, yeah.

A: But when my mother and I s – my children never learned German.

Q: Okay.

A: So, we spoke English really, and with my mother.

Q: Okay.

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A: You know, they picked up a few German words, and my mother, very late in her life, when she wasn't well, and she was in her late 80s, she sort of reverted back to more German.

Q: German, mm-hm, yeah.

A: And I think that's a very common –

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Do –

A: But they spoke well. I have letters that my mother wrote. My parents wrote a letter to me, when I was in camp, and it was really only a few years after they came to the **United States**, and their English was very good. They took lessons immediately.

Q: Okay, so it was – i-i-it was that they did their – their best to acclimatize, and – and adjust, and – and so on.

A: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Q: Yeah.

A: They went to work, they went to business.

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Q: Yeah. But nevertheless, part of this is, you know, the language that one is born with, that one grows up with, that one has – you know, your father was 45 when you were born.

A: That's right. He was 50 when he came to the **United States**, he was over 50.

Q: So, you know, his life is – is in this language, and I'm wondering how does – how does that change when you've – it's more than just you've moved to a new country, it is that you were no longer wanted in your old country.

A: Right, right.

Q: And how do you – how do you incorporate that in your new life, and can you? And do you?

A: Yeah, yeah. Some of their past stayed with them, because you can't become another person. And on the other hand, I think they were proud to be Americans. They became citizens as soon as possible. I have my own citizenship papers, because my parents wanted to make sure, even though I automatically –

Q: Right.

A: – became a citizen through them, they wanted to make sure I had my papers. And – yeah, and they spoke English, and they went to work, and – and at that time they loved President **Roosevelt**, because they felt that he was our savior. And, I mean, a few things have changed, you know, in opinions –

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Q: Right.

A: – about that, since then, but that was the way it was at that time. And yeah, but – and one of the reasons also, is because we lived in **Iowa**. My father was not able to find a job when we came to the – because he was already older, and ha – the language wasn't good, and he had been a salesman, and – in this particular business. And even though he had relatives here, no one had – it was still depression times, and no one had a job waiting for him. And he went to one of the Jewish organizations, and I don't know which one, and said, I have to work, and I'll go anywhere within the **United States**, because I have a young child, my wife has to stay home with her, and we'll go. And that's where they found a job for him, in **Des Moines, Iowa**.

Q: What was the job?

A: He worked at the department – largest department store there, **Younker Brothers**, and he was, I think, in shipping and receiving, I think he did some bookkeeping for them. And that's what he did. We were there for five years.

Q: How did he feel – yeah, how did he feel about this? Did he have difficulties psychologically with it?

A: I don't really know. I never – because I didn't think about things like that.

Q: Of course.

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A: I was happy. I did not – I had a – I can't say I was happy, but I was content. I had a good childhood there. I followed them, I had my parents. I always had food, I always had love, I guess, and family. And the people were very nice to us. I did not encounter bad behavior or anti-Semitism, or anything.

Q: And did anybody –

A: And people were surprised to hear that.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Wha – pardon?

A: I said, people are surprised to hear that, because it was **Iowa**, it was the Midwest, it was –

Q: Well, you know, here in the **United States**, we all have stereotypes about each other, in different parts of the country.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm, exactly.

Q: And they are – those are what they are, they're stereotypes.

A: That – exactly.

Q: You know?

A: To some extent, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

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A: Yeah.

Q: And – and so we're – again, as we were speaking off camera, every person's story is unique. And so these are the experiences that individual people had, and it's very nice to hear.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You know.

A: That's why I – I did want to mention that.

Q: Yeah.

A: They were very nice to me, and my teachers – I have a letter that a teacher wrote, and th – I have a little autograph book that they signed, and I had friends, and I had – I loved school.

Q: So this is where you started school, was in – in **Iowa**.

A: This is – yeah, I went to school for about three, four months in **New York City**. That really doesn't count. They put me back into kindergarten, we sang little songs and played games. And I was really beyond that, I had started to read. And when we moved to **Des Moines**, I went to a small s – we were 11 children in the class, and I think because of that, I was the best reader in the class, and I was already a step ahead of –

Q: The other kids.

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A: – some of the kids, and I think I learned English immediately.

Q: Well, how interesting, because here you are a child from a different language, and usually kids, they adjusted, cause they're kids.

A: Right, right.

Q: But they do struggle in the beginning.

A: Yeah, I don't remember that.

Q: And you didn't have that.

A: I don't remember that, really I don't, not at all.

Q: Yeah, okay, okay.

A: Not at all. I made friends, and I had my girlfriends. There was one Jewish family on our street, only one. And the others were probably white Protestant, you know.

WASPs, I guess, yeah.

Q: You – when we were speaking off camera, you did mention that you still had – you had friends also in **Germany**, before you left.

A: One. One little girl, because our parents brought us together.

Q: Tell me about her, yeah.

A: I mean, this is – her name is **Ursula**. As far as I know, she's alive and well. I haven't been in touch with her in about a year, or a year and a half now. But our parents brought us together, her father worked – actually worked for my father, at

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the business that they were in. And I have a picture of us together as children. And after the war, the men were in touch, because of the business dealings –

Q: And what were they in car –

A: – and reparations.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. And **Ursula** was smaller than I was, and she was learning a little English from the servicemen, the American soldiers. So, she wrote – we wrote in English, and we did – my parents sent her some clothing that I had outgrown –

Q: Cause –

A: – because they were, at that time was right after the war, and **Germany** lost the war, and they were in need. And that's how strongly my father – the relationship was between these two –

Q: Families.

A: – families at the time. Or the men, at any rate.

Q: Well, tell me, why were they in correspondence about the business? Can you explain that for me?

A: Yes, because my father and his family, who owned the business, actually –

Q: Right.

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A: – had to give it up because Jews were not allowed to sell their businesses, and they had to give up the business and come here, and had no gain for it whatsoever, and the business, apparently, was still intact after the war.

Q: **Edelhut**(ph) and **Obenheim**(ph).

A: **Edelmuth, Edelmuth.**

Q: **Edelmuth and Oppenheim.**

A: Correct, correct, that was the name of the business. And I think it changed later.

Q: Okay.

A: I – they may have sold it, whatever happened. And I think they even asked if my f-father and my uncle, and I'm sure the cousins, who were really, you know, the primary owners, because they were the scientists who man – manufactured the soap, I think they even asked if they wanted to come back and run the business again, and of course, they wouldn't go back. I mean, my parents would never have gone back. And I can't speak, you know, for the others, but – but they would never have gone back. But that was basically the contact, after the war, and **Ursula** and I continued as pen pals of – over the years.

Q: I – that's quite amazing, that, you know –

A: Yes.

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Q: – for very few people really maintain relationships with someone they knew when they were six years old, or younger –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – you know, throughout their lives.

A: But it was only because through the f – our fathers, that the relationship continued, and we did meet a few times. And as I told you, **Freddy**, my husband – my late husband and I were in **Vienna**, and well, it doesn't seem that long ago, but it was 15 - 16 year ago, and I did contact **Ursula** that we were going to be in **Vienna**, and she and her friend came –

Q: To see – see you.

A: – and spend a few days there, to meet with us, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And we – yeah.

Q: Did you – when you – when you were growing up –

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Well no, let me go back to the question I had.

A: Okay.

Q: Which is, when you met, 15 - 16 years ago, that would have been late 1990s, early 2000s in **Vienna**.

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A: Correct. That is correct.

Q: And you had maintained a contact with **Ursula** through all those years.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Did you ever discuss the difficult topics with her?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: No. In fact, when she came, in the – well, it was when **Herb Alpert** was popular, I don't remember, and his **Tijuana** band. I don't remember what – it was in the 1960s.

Q: So, she had come to the **States**.

A: And she came alone. I picked her up at that time at – at **JFK** airport. We lived – we lived in **Upper Manhattan** at that time, we lived in the city. My children were born in – in **New York City**, and we still lived there, and she came, and she spent a few days with us. And at that time she – I took her to my mother's apartment, my mother was on vacation, but I took her to the apartment because I checked on it.

And she saw some little **tchotchkes**, I would say –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in – figurines or something, in my – in my mother's living room. And she said, oh, she said, I thought your mother lost all her belongings from **Germany**. And I

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was taken aback that she would even pay attention to that. And I said, my parents lost everything, I said, people, friends and relatives gave them items when we came here.

Q: And that was the extent –

A: And that was the end of it, but it gave me food for thought.

Q: Yeah.

A: That this is what she still – there was something there that –

Q: So she had done her thinking about it, and you've done your thinking about it, but that's something that comes out. But then, there's no – no – no elaboration on it.

A: No ab – no. I didn't want to, you know.

Q: Of course.

A: And she didn't say anything more.

Q: Yeah.

A: But that was the only thing that wa – that there was any even – what I would consider political thought –

Q: Yeah.

A: – or anything like that.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Okay, so let's go back to your childhood there in **Frankfurt**. You're a little child.

A: Correct.

Q: And this – the question I'm going to ask now is in some ways not fair, but I want to ask it anyway. As a little child, it's – some children will feel what's in the atmosphere. Usually they're a little older, but they know that there are things going on outside of the house that are maybe not so great. I wonder whether or not you did, you picked up on any kind of tension –

A: No, no.

Q: – any nervousness?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: No. I – I knew – I was with my parents, and they spoke above me and around me, not to me. I didn't –

Q: Right.

A: – hear anything like that. So I – I really didn't, I was not aware. And I always say this, even in the **United States**, I really wasn't aware, I was very ny – maybe I was naïve, maybe I was just young.

Q: Or protected.

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A: And prote – very protected. And I know that when we moved to **Des Moines**, my – the first apartment they took us to, the – the people from the synagogue, or from the organization, it wasn't really an apartment, it was a house in a Jewish neighborhood, and we had a room, a bedroom. And when – my mother was supposed to share the kitchen with the woman who owned the house. And for one thing, that was not for her, to share a kitchen. And secondly, they had chickens running into the house, out – and then out of the house. And they contacted the organization, and my father – and it was first time I saw my mother cry.

Q: Really?

A: She did. Thi – this really was like she couldn't deal with this, living this way. And my father called, and said we can't stay here. The people are very nice, but this is not – you know, we can't live this way.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it's the first time I remember actually seeing my mother cry.

Q: So up until that point, you hadn't seen any signs that – that she was paying a psychological price for –

A: Correct.

Q: – all of these changes.

A: Correct, correct.

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Q: Yeah. When – you said – you were born just about when **Hitler** came to power.

A: 1932, right.

Q: Okay, just before.

A: Just before. I think –

Q: Just before.

A: – '33 was

Q: Yeah. And – and we talked earlier that your parents saw the writing on the wall very early on. From what they told you later –

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: – can you describe how they were thinking, and the plans they were making, and how it is that you left?

A: Okay. I believe my mother was the first one to say we have to leave.

Q: Okay.

A: From – this is hearsay, because I don't remember it, I know it from what they have said. My father said, no one will believe this man, he's crazy.

Q: Yeah.

A: No one will believe him, he's a maniac. Who would listen to this, and who would – you know.

Q: So he didn't feel any danger?

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A: Not at the beginning, not at first.

Q: Okay.

A: And then gradually, if Jews weren't allowed here, or there, or anywhere, you know, and the Nazi flags ca – I have a picture of myself as a small child, with my mother, and you can see a flag from a balcony in the background, and all these things happened. Excuse me. And then, I – my father's brother, younger brother, was a physician in **Manhattan**.

Q: Right, you mentioned him.

A: I mentioned him. And he had gotten a job in **Mount Sinai** hospital in the late 1920s already, and felt **Germany** was not the pl – the place for him to stay, that he had no future there. Well, I guess they had this inflation, they had problems that actually led to the Nazis' power.

Q: Right, economic problems.

A: Correct, correct. So my Uncle **Gustav** came to **America**, married an American girl, worked as a doctor at **Mount Sinai** hospital.

Q: Okay.

A: And moved to **Upper Manhattan**. He was – started out as a pediatrician and then worked as a general practitioner as well, because of the depression, and the – the need. And so he was instrumental. They contacted him, I guess, and he was

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instrumental in bringing his siblings, the rema – some were already in **America**.

Some came as my – one uncle came and worked for the **St. Louis** World's Fair in 1904.

Q: Wow.

A: And – but that's how he – he got the –

Q: Well, it is – you know, it is – I – I've had discussions with other people who left **Germany** in the 30s, and not everyone had a relative to sponsor them.

A: That's correct.

Q: And when they didn't have a relative to sponsor them, then they had great difficulties.

A: That's correct. And also, my mother had many cousins, they had family that **[indecipherable]** they went all over the world, **South America, Africa, South Africa**.

Q: So there would have been people, had it not been for your f – for your uncle, your father's brother.

A: Correct.

Q: There would have been other people that they would have approached too, in time.

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A: Either people they would have – now, my grandmother, my mother's mother, was not able to leave **Germany**.

Q: Why not?

A: Because by the – she had a brother who was very well-to-do, who lived in **New York City**, and – but by the time that he realized the importance of trying to help his siblings, they were given numbers – you know, he sponsored them, but they had numbers, and their number had not been reached, and my grandmother and her sister were two of those people. He got his brothers out, but he hadn't been able – you know, they just never made it. And my uncle, my mother's older brother, who he – was in **America**, had even paid someone to try to get his mother to **Cuba**, because a number of refugees were able to go to **Cuba** at that time. And the man absconded with the money. And my uncle, you know, there was – there were – I'm sure a lot of things like that happened. And so my grandmother tried, she waited on lines, I have letters that she wrote, and I had them translated, in fact. And didn't get out, and –

Q: What happened to her?

A: She perished. She was in **Theresienstadt**, and from there they loaded some of the older people onto the death trains, and I think her sister and brother-in-law, they were together, her sister who was a year older than she was. And they – she didn't

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want her – her sister to go without her – I don't think she was one – and went with her, thinking they were going to, I don't know where. And that was the end.

Q: So they took them to **Auschwitz**, as far as you know?

A: They must. As far as I know, and I think this is hearsay, they never even made it to **Auschwitz**, they didn't survive the trains that they packed them, you know.

Q: Yeah, there were many elderly people who –

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, it was a very sad ending for – you know, for these people.

Q: Yeah. And for your mom.

A: And for my mom, and – and I have a letter that I wrote to my grandmother, saying, dear **Omi**(ph), I – I hope I see you soon. Something to that effect. And – because some of her belongings were sent back to us. She – she lived in **Berlin** at the end of her life in **Germany**, she and her sister and brother-in-law, and my aunt, who had converted to Judaism, who had not been Jewish, her mother lived in **Berlin**, her parents. And they – she tried to help my grandmother. She would bring them some potatoes, and some – whatever she could get into her pocketbook, and also took some belongings and hid them. So that some of those things came back to my family.

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Q: So this aunt was who to you, and what relation –

A: My Aunt **Hertha**(ph), who was –

Q: Yeah.

A: – converted to Judaism –

Q: Yeah.

A: – whose mother was there? That was my uncle – my mother's older brother,

Frederick –

Q: His wife?

A: – **Greenwood** – green –

Q: His wife?

A: His wife.

Q: I see.

A: His wife.

Q: And she –

A: They had one daughter, my cousin **Ruth**, who was – I adored. Was about five years older than I was, yeah.

Q: And what happened to him? This – your uncle green – **Greenwood**?

A: **Greenwood** lived in **New York City**, they had come. He was the one who tried to get my mother into **Cuba**, you know, but he couldn't.

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Q: Your mother, or your grandmother?

A: My grandmother.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother's mother. Yeah, it's getting a little bit –

Q: And – and his wife –

A: That was my uncle.

Q: – stayed in **Germany**?

A: No, no, no, her mother.

Q: Oh, his wife's mother stayed in **Germany**.

A: Right, right. And my –

Q: And she tried to –

A: Correct –

Q: [indecipherable]

A: – she helped.

Q: She helped.

A: My – my mother had two brothers.

Q: Okay.

A: And the older one lived in **New York City**.

Q: Okay. With his German wife.

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A: With his German wife.

Q: Who had converted.

A: Who had converted, and came with him.

Q: Okay.

A: And I had – there were several members of the family who had – were intermarried race – not – not racially, but as far as religion was concerned, and the wives all came with them. The wives all stayed with their –

Q: Husbands.

A: – husbands, mm-hm.

Q: Okay. And the mother of – of your uncle's wife, is the one who helped your grandmother –

A: Correct.

Q: – in **Berlin**.

A: Correct.

Q: And then after the war, whatever few belongings there were, sent them to you.

A: Yeah. She had, I think, died during the war.

Q: Okay.

A: But sent – somehow, I think there was another daughter, my Aunt **Herthe**(ph) had a sister –

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Q: Okay.

A: – who was in **Germany**, and survived the war, and had some belongings, and sent th-them not to us, but to her sister –

Q: Right.

A: – to my Aunt **Herthe**(ph). And then Aunt **Herthe**(ph) gave whatever was for my mother, or for me, you know, that's –

Q: Yeah. Do you – do you recall when your mother found out about her own mother?

A: Yeah, it was very disturbing, yeah.

Q: Were you in – were you in **Iowa** then?

A: No, we were back in **New York City**.

Q: How did she find out?

A: We – through a friend of my grandmother's, who survived the camp, and the war, who went back to **Bielefeld**. And that bothered my mother terribly, that some of her friends, my grandmother's friends survived and went back – and they went back to **Germany** because they had no place else to go at that time, you know? And there was contact between my mother and my uncle – and my two uncles, you know, an o – yeah. And they found – they had the information.

Q: I see. I see. That must have been tough.

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A: And I – we always thought my grandmother would come and live – after the war, and this is what I was told. When she comes, she'll live with us, you know? It was always that optimism, because –

Q: You had no contact, but you didn't know what had happened.

A: That's exactly, I was just going to say that.

Q: Okay.

A: Nobody was aware. I mean, nobody here –

Q: Yeah.

A: – was aware of the camps, and you know, what was going on. Europeans were aware, the people around there, but –

Q: Yeah. So – so your father's brother is able to sponsor you.

A: Correct.

Q: How did your parents leave Germany – do you remember leaving **Germany** itself?

A: Mm-hm, I do.

Q: Tell me what – what happened.

A: They said I cried and screamed on the ship, when I waved goodbye to my uncle, to whoever was still down there.

Q: Yeah?

A: And people thought I was leaving my parents – I was with my parents –

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Q: Yeah.

A: – and people who were around said, are those her parents down there, are you taking her away from her parents?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. So I think that frightened me maybe.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: But you – you don't remember, let's say, the last time you were in the apartment, and as you leave the apartment –

A: No, no.

Q: – and get to ship, and – and so –

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: I just remember that, and I also remember my parents finding out that **Kristallnacht** – we were already in the **United States**, and neighbors or someone, wrote to my parents that the Nazis came for my father, because their records weren't quite up to date, because it was only a few weeks after we left. And they broke in, and the apartment was empty.

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Q: Now, you mentioned earlier that your parents had – had left – ha-ha – fro – lost every – all of their items, everything.

A: Every – everything.

Q: Some people that I've talked to said – would say to me, surprisingly, when we were leaving **Germany**, as difficult as the Nazi authorities made it for us to leave, they allowed us to ship our goods. They allowed us to ship our goods to the **United States**, and –

A: That's true. Our goods were supposed to be shipped, I have the packing slips. They never came.

Q: Really?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So they were sup – they were supposed to leave after you did, the goods?

A: I think even before. They were – they were – I have pages and pages on onion skin paper, tied pages of all their belongings; furniture, Persian rugs, crystals, art work, books, everything.

Q: An inventory.

A: An inventory. It was packed, it was taken. My mother bought a lot of new things, because they thought they could sell them here, so that they would have something to live on.

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Q: To live on.

A: And it never came, and my mother waited, and when we were in **Des Moines** they waited, and when they came back. And then they were informed after the war that they were destroyed by the American bombers or something. Well, that's nonsense, because they should have been sent long before that. So that was –

Q: Okay. So, it was all lost.

A: It was lost.

Q: All lost.

A: Everything. And everything my parents had; linens, furniture, dishes, everything was given to them by relatives. And even the pictures, the photographs, because my parents were so happy that they had a baby, and a –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and that they sent pictures –

Q: Of you –

A: – to everybody, right.

Q: Okay.

A: And they were returned.

Q: When you were in the **United States** –

A: In the – yes.

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Q: That's how you kind of reconstituted a family history.

A: Correct.

Q: Okay.

A: That's correct.

Q: And did you take any toys with you on the boat, when you came over?

A: Ah, the doll. Yes, I did. I had very little.

Q: Okay.

A: But I had a doll, a favorite doll, beautiful doll.

Q: Did she have a name?

A: Well, I gave her a name later, but iwi – the – the manufacturer was **Käthe Kruse**, they called it. And they still make dolls. It's a business in **Germany**, and I guess a woman named **Käthe Kruse** started with these dolls. And I called her **Dorothy**, and it might have been after I saw "**The Wizard of Oz**," I don't remember. But my daughter has the doll, and I – we – I did take pictures of her, and the gentleman who came from the museum, a couple of months ago, took pictures of the doll, I had her here. But I didn't want to donate her yet.

Q: I understand that. I understand that, but tell me about the significance of the doll to you. How come she, rather than any other toy, came with you?

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A: Well, first of all, I love dolls. If you see pictures of me, I – they're always with dolls and doll carriages. It was as though I was born to be a mother. I – that's what – the way I was brought up, a wife and a mother, you know.

Q: Right.

A: And then this doll – also, my Aunt **Herthe**(ph) –

Q: Yeah.

A: – the wa – aunt I spoke about, was a – a wonderful seamstress, and made clothing for the doll, and made the same clothing for me, so that I have pictures of myself wearing almost the identical dress, made of the same fabric as the doll.

Q: And this is when you were already in the **United States**, because she was in the **United States**?

A: No, no.

Q: No, this was still in **Germany**?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Before she left for the **U.S.**?

A: Correct. They came – my aunt and uncle and cousin came to the **United States** when we were living in **Iowa**.

Q: Oh. Oh, I – they came after.

A: They came after we did.

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Q: Okay.

A: And so did some of my other parent siblings. And this is one of the reasons my parents wanted to move back to **New York City**. They missed their family. Nobody wanted to come to the Midwest, you know, it was like the corn, and –

Q: Yeah, of course.

A: – wheat fields. And although we had a nice life there, no – they missed their family and siblings.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they wanted me to have family, if anything happened to them, you know, there was no one there. And during World War II, this – the young men went into the service, and jobs became available in –

Q: In **New York**.

A: – in **New York**. And apartments became available, and so the family found an apartment for us in **Washington Heights**, that was called **Frankfurt on the Hudson**, the area, I don't know if you've ever heard that expression. And so they were with their own people –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and their family. My father was very attached to his siblings.

Q: So he must have been quite happy to move back.

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A: Me? No.

Q: No, no, no, your father.

A: Oh, my father, yes, absolutely. My parents were very happy to move back, because they felt that was where they belonged.

Q: Yeah. And why not you?

A: I was very unhappy. Took me about a year to adjust, because life was so different, and I had friends that I loved, my school, and I loved my friends, and I was content.

Q: How old were you when you moved?

A: Eleven.

Q: Ah, you had already spend a ni – half of your life almost, in **Des Moines**.

A: Correct. Correct.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I – I liked – we lived in a private house. I mean, we had an ap – upstairs, little apartment, but it was a private house. We had flowers and trees, and – and grass and we lived near **Drake** University.

Q: In **Des Moines**.

A: In **Des Moines**. And I took piano lessons at **Drake** University. They – my parents didn't – couldn't buy a piano, but I went there once a week, because I

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thought I could – I really couldn't, I had no talent, but I insisted I could play piano. And it was just a – a comfortable, nice life, and nice for a child to grow up that way. And when we moved to **New York City**, I was suddenly in this huge class of maybe 35 children, and a teacher who never pronounced my name correctly, and – and it – it was just, you know, concrete and brick and an apartment house, and a different –

Q: Yeah.

A: Children play differently.

Q: It takes a while to adjust to –

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: – you know, that – **Des Moines** might be a city, but it's not the same scale as **New York City**.

A: Correct.

Q: And that makes a difference in –

A: Yeah, yeah –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and at that time it was a much smaller city –

Q: Yeah.

A: – than it is now, I'm sure.

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Q: Yeah. We've jumped around chronologically a little bit.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Do you remember the name of the ship that you came to the **United States** on?

A: The **New York**.

Q: Okay. Do you remember what it looked like?

A: Not really, I – I had pictures. I donated them to the museum –

Q: Museum.

A: – already.

Q: Okay.

A: But – so I know it looked like a large ship.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, I don't really –

Q: Do you remember anything about landing here?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me about that.

A: I remember looking out of the porthole, and I wasn't allowed – people ran to see the Statue of Liberty, but for some reason my parents said I had to stay in the room til we were – had to go out. And then I remember standing, looking down at the people waiting for us, you know, a – downstairs, and my father pointed and said,

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that's your uncle. Because I didn't know my uncle. And I remember he was wearing a – a felt hat – fedora, I guess, and a long overcoat, and he was standing there, and I think he had a taxi waiting to take us up to his apartment, and my Aunt **Roslyn**(ph) had lunch for us. And I didn't like what we ate, I know that. It was something I wasn't accustomed to eating. And my cousins, I met my cousins for the first time, **Carol**, who's a year younger than I am, and **Alice** was a baby. And I don't remember ever seeing a baby before that.

Q: So, in some ways, it's such a momentous journey –

A: Mm-hm.

Q: – at such a political time.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And, you know, sort of getting out by the skin of your teeth, because it's so soon before **Kristallnacht**.

A: Correct.

Q: And – and yet, when you're describing it, it sounds like well, you know, we come, our relatives met us, and we had lunch. There's a –

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm, exact – well, this is from a child –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know, my perspective, yes.

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Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Yes. I'm sure, you know, had I been older, it would have been very different, but

—

Q: Yeah. This is what stays.

A: — as a little girl, I remember having a book on the ship with English, with pictures. I remember I loved caulif — very unusual maybe, for a young child, but I loved cauliflower. I know. And — and I remember seeing the word, the picture, and the word, just — you know.

Q: How do you say it in German, cauliflower?

A: **Blumenkohl.**

Q: That's right.

A: **Blumenkohl.**

Q: **Blumenkohl.** By the way, do you still speak German today? Can you?

A: A little.

Q: Yeah?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Have you ever used it in your adult life?

A: In **Germany** — we were in **Germany** for a few days.

Q: Okay.

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A: We were in **Vienna**.

Q: Okay.

A: And of course, with – my mother lived long enough for me to speak to her. But I – I think I've lost some of it. I looked something up recently. I Googled something recently, because I was with friends who were also born in **Germany**, and none of us could think of the word for corned beef. So I said, I'll find it, and when I went home, I Googled it, corned beef in German.

Q: And what is it?

A: **Pökelfleisch**.

Q: **Pökelfleisch**?

A: **Pökelfleisch**.

Q: **Pökelfleisch**.

A: So I called them up –

Q: I would never have known.

A: No, I – well, I just – I had no idea, and I called them up, and I said – I – they answered the phone, my friend said hello, and I said, **Pökelfleisch**. Yeah.

Q: And she knew who it was, and what it was about.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

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Q: When did you become conscious of what had really happened, and why it had happened, that you had moved from this nice, airy apartment in **Frankfurt**, where you had, you know, a polka dot blue room, and – and a – and a lovely dollhouse, to a new country, which was very nice in **Des Moines**, but it was so different. It was half a world away. When did that sink in, as far as the circumstances of all this?

A: Well, first of all, let me say, when – after I lived in **New York City** again, for about – after the first year, living in **Washington Heights** as a teenager was very nice, because then I began to learn the culture of – of **New York**, and things I probably wouldn't have had in the Midwest. So my life did –

Q: Get better.

A: – did get better, and my attitude and all that, got better, yes. And I think as a teenager, and when I read “**The Diary of Anne Frank**,” that had an impact on me, that I said, oh my God, that could have been me, it could have been us. You know, I – the – just becoming more aware, and educated, and reading, yeah.

Q: And did your parents e-ever then, when you became older, start talking more openly with you about what had gone on in the 30s, when you were such a little kid?

A: No. I don't why, but no.

Q: So they never **[indecipherable]**

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A: They went on with their lives, no, no. They to – my mother talked about the wonderful childhood she had. No.

Q: Did they ever talk about what they felt –

A: They were angry, they were – but they went on with their lives. No, they really didn't.

Q: How did their anger get expressed?

A: Well, they wouldn't go back to **Germany**, they didn't want any part of it, they didn't want to see it, they didn't want to go back. And yet, they were in touch with people, Gentiles who –

Q: Yeah.

A: – they had known from before. They did have contact, they did write. I know that the woman who was my nanny did not survive the war, and they were very upset. She was very kind and very caring, and they had, you know, a good relationship with her.

Q: Did she die naturally, or as a –

A: I don't know. She died during the war.

Q: Okay.

A: I can't tell you, I don't know.

Q: Okay.

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A: And – but no, they were s –

Q: Did they ever go back for a visit?

A: No, no. No. They felt, I think, it would be too emotional, and they didn't. But they really didn't talk to me. They didn't talk to me about anything of substance, ever.

Q: That would be hard. Did you –

A: It was – my mother was very much, children should be seen and not heard, and she was very old-fashioned in me – she was modern in some ways, but old-fashioned in others, that she wanted me – to raise me the way she had been raised, and we were in a new world, in a different place. So –

Q: And that does – yeah. You have to adjust to a new generation.

A: You know, and as I said, I was a little rebellious, because I had my own ideas and my own thoughts, and was really anxious to – to earn my own money, so that I could be on my own. Well, I was never really on my own, because I got married young, you know. But – yeah.

Q: But you had a – your own vision of your own – of your life, and what it could be and should be, that was different from your mother's.

A: Mm-hm, yes. And I fulfilled some of it, I didn't fulfill everything, but that's, I think, the case with most people.

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Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: I – I can't imagine any child who wouldn't have a vision of their own life –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that – you know, it would be unhealthy otherwise.

A: Right.

Q: You mentioned – again, off camera – that you yourself had certain feelings towards **Germany**, and can you tell me what they are, and how you – how it is that you decided to go back, to visit, to see things that were there.

A: Well, I really never went back to visit, we took a tour.

Q: Okay.

A: My husband wanted to go back to **Vienna**.

Q: Okay.

A: He was older when he came, he was 14 when he came.

Q: Okay.

A: And he too, although he had some bad memories. He also had some very good childhood memories, and wanted – he needed closure, and he wanted to see his school, and his neighborhood. And so we took a – as long as **Waldheim** was president, I think it was president of **Austria**, I said, I won't go to **Austria**. And

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once he, I think, retired, and someone else was presi – I said, now we can go to **Austria**. And we took a tour that was **Austria, Germany** and one – one of the other countries, I don't remember at the moment.

Q: And this wa –

A: **Switzerland**.

Q: It was **Switzerland**.

A: It was **Austria, Switzerland** and **Germany**. So part of this tour was spending, I think a night in **Heidelberg**, maybe, and a night in **Munich**. You know, it was passing –

Q: Right.

A: – through. And the **Black Forest**.

Q: So you never went back to **Frankfurt**?

A: No, because I wasn't invited. Which is also something I was very angry about, because everybody was invited, and my mother was invited, and wouldn't go. She didn't want any part of it. But I wrote to them, and requested an invitation, and said I was born there, I lived there for the first six years of my life, and so on and so forth. By the time – they said I was too young, at – I can't be invited yet. I was too young at the time I requested it. They were taking people over 80. **Frankfurt** had a very large Jewish community, and they were – people were scattered all over the

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world, and the letter I got was that they weren't up to whatever my age was at the time. Maybe I was 70 at the time, I don't know. And – unless my husband had lived two years or more in **Frankfurt**, and my husband never lived in **Germany**. So that was that. And then, suddenly, they started to invite me. He was too sick, I couldn't leave him, and I couldn't take him. So I wrote to them, I'm s – I would love to come, but I can't. Three years in a row I was sent this invitation, and three years in a row I was unable to come. The year 2013, right after he passed away, I wrote, I said, I would appreciate an invitation to **Germany**, I'm ready to come. This was they invited – they wined and dined the people. They were invited for two weeks, **Frankfurt** did two weeks. I got a letter back, we have stopped all invitations. And that was the end of it.

Q: Oh.

A: So I said, I'm not going to pay to go back to a city that, you know, they – they wouldn't invite me when I rec – and I – when I requested it, I said, my husband isn't that well, I'd like to bring him, I'd like to go. So – and really, I'm – I would – I think **Berlin** would be more interesting to see, and I would have gone back to my mother's hometown, and I would have gone to my family graves. You know, I would have seen other things, but at that time I was angry with them.

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Q: Let's take a break, so you can have a sip. **[break]** So I was – I was under the misimpression that when you had gone to **Europe**, you had gone everywhere, including where your family was from, and so on.

A: No, no.

Q: And that wasn't the case.

A: Never went.

Q: Never went. What do you feel today about **Germany**?

A: About current **Germany**, or **Germany** in the past?

Q: I'd say current **Germany**.

A: Current ger – all right, I'm not – I think they have tried very hard to do restitution, or give restitution. I think some people just don't approve of that, because they think they – I – they can never make up for what was lost. They just can't. It's a different generation, what was done, was done. They can't change it. And unfortunately, I think the whole world had become more anti-Semitic again. I don't think **Germany** – I don't think the government has, but the people, it's something that's just spreading. And it's not only **Germany**, and obviously, you know, it's all over. But yeah, I – I resent what happened in the past, what happened to my family, what happened to millions of others. And I don't know – and when I

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went – when I did go by bus through parts of **Germany**, I said, this is such a beautiful country, how can people be so evil, who grew up in these surroundings?

Q: What would you want people to know? We talked about this before, throughout the interview, that you can't really become another person when you leave a country, and have to adapt to a new environment. You take something of who you were with you, you know?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And we were speaking about your parents, you know, and about your father being 50 years old, and how he had to find a job, and – and the language they spoke with one another, so on. What would you want people to know in **Germany**, today's generation, of what it – what it's like to be unwanted, and thrown out, let's say, or unwanted and then eventually exterminated, for those who didn't make it. But I'm really after the first process of, you are part of this country, you see yourself as part of this country, and then you see you're not wanted, and you have to leave. And what about that is – how do you describe that to somebody who's – who stays behind, who will never have been exposed to this process?

A: It's hard – it – I think it's even hard to conceive – I've tried to explain to Americans, who ne – who have no understanding of that, that how would you feel today, at this age, like middle-aged or older Americans, if you suddenly had to

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move to **South America**, you didn't know Spanish, you didn't know the customs, you didn't know anyone? Do you ever think of that? You know, ba – you would lose all your comforts, and all your – everything you had, how would you adjust, and how would you feel about it? I think I've had that thought. And I don't think you – I don't think anyone can feel someone else's hurt or feelings, and know what they're thinking. And I know it was very hard for my parents, but they forged ahead, and they were proud to be Americans. They considered themselves Americans. And, as I said, I wasn't – I didn't – I wasn't fully aware of what happened until much later, because I was very protected as a child. And so I come from a different place.

Q: Now here's I – here's a question that's a bit suggestive, and tell me if I'm wrong. But is it also the – is it that you're also angry on behalf of your parents, because you were so little?

A: Wha –

Q: That is, angry with what happened –

A: To them?

Q: To them.

A: To them, correct.

Q: On behalf of them.

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A: Right, right.

Q: You know.

A: I think so. I think so.

Q: Okay.

A: Because I – in general, I like people, and I think one on one, most people can see eye to eye, or get along. And – but the masses, I don't know, people can be brainwashed very easily. I see it now, with what's going on in the world.

Q: I think you're true, there are – there have even been sifer – psychological studies done that – that say that, when you en-engage with someone individually, their behavior is one kind, and you put someone in a crowd, and it's amazing how quickly that person loses their individuality – or can lose their individuality.

A: Right. Okay, you're saying it better than I did, but that's my thought, yeah.

Q: No, but – yeah, yeah. Is there anything else about your experience of coming from **Germany** to here, that we haven't really touched on, that you'd want people to know about?

A: I don't know. There might be something I'll think of tonight, when I'm in bed.

Q: That often happens. That often happens.

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A: Yeah, but I – I really – right now, I don't know. As I said, I came, I was – I think I adjusted pretty well, I was – I think I was very shy for a long time, because I was different, and the real me didn't –

Q: Come out.

A: – come out. I think I had thoughts and opinions, and didn't know whether I could say them, or should say them, and I was told – always told to be polite, and we're refugees, and we have to set a good example, and we can't this, and we can't that, and we can't that. And so that it took me a while to be able to express myself and be myself.

Q: When do you think that happened?

A: Well, some of it happened after I got married.

Q: Well, that's a very nice compliment to marriage.

A: Yes. After I was on my own –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know, I had to learn, and I went to work very – as – very young, because – and my parents were very upset, because I left college, and I didn't continue, because I wanted to earn money, and I ended up working for an attorney. And I had gone – I – I was not prepared to do secretarial work at all, I had taken academic classes. And I babysat for this family, and I opened up and told them how unhappy I

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was being at home, and you know, living the way I lived. And he said, well, come to work for me, I'll teach you law. And you'll become my legal – a legal secretary. And I came home, and I said to my parents, I'm leaving school, and I'm taking a course in steno, and a course in – in typing. I didn't know any of that. And I did. I did. And he called me one day and said, are you finished with your classes? And I said no. He said, come in anyway. And so I learned to speak with professional people, and he sent me to court to answer the court calendar, and what – whatever it is that I learned. And that helped me grow up.

Q: Helped you become independent. **[phone ringing]** Okay, let's break. **[break]**
Okay, so we heard that your daughter will be bringing the doll that you took with you from **Germany**.

A: Correct.

Q: For us to be able to see and maybe to film, later on. But at this point, I'm going to conclude the interview that we've just had, with the words, this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Marianne Salomon Berg**, on July 15th, 2015, in **Monroe Township, New Jersey**. And we're going to now start with a re-telling of your husband's story. And the first question I will ask, because he is not here to share it with us himself, and because he was one

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of the 50 children that was brought over, we'd like to learn a little bit about his life from you. So very –

A: Okay, I'll do my best.

Q: Yeah. So, before we even show any pictures of him, just let's talk a little bit about how you met **Freddy**. How old were you, who – ho-how old was he, where did you meet? How did get toge – get to be together?

A: Okay, I was 18, just shortly before my 19th birthday. He was 26, he was eight years older than I was. He was a navy veteran at the time. And I had just started working.

Q: At this officer – at this attorney's office?

A: At the attorney's office, correct.

Q: Okay.

A: And he – he was working at that time, as well, I don't remember exactly what he did, but he – we were introduced, actually. I was working, and one of the girls who was working for an accountant in the office, actually met him.

Q: Okay.

A: And she said that they were at a dance in **Brooklyn**, but he didn't live in **Brooklyn**, and he went with friends, but they went outside because they weren't enjoying themselves, and she was outside with her friend. And he didn't seem

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interested in her or her friend. And he said he'd really like to meet a girl who spoke German. He was from **Vienna, Austria**, and he said he'd like to bring a girl home to his parents. So I had been dating a boy who graduated from City College, and had gotten his first job in **Ohio**, and was leaving. And she knew that. So she said, I know a girl, but she's very young, and her parents are very strict, and I don't know whether she would be interested in meeting you. But he gave her his phone number. Her – this girl's name was **Blanche**, and he gave her his phone number, and said, well, let her call me, if she's interested. Okay? She didn't want to give my number. And I said, well, you could call the house. I said, I'd be interested. If you thought he was nice, you know, I would meet him. And she called and spoke to my mother-in-law, who became my mother-in-law, and said, **Freddy** gave me this number, and I can give – I want to give you the number of – of someone. He'll know what it's about. And he did call me, and we did get together. So that –

Q: And that's how it was?

A: That's how it was. That's how we –

Q: So you met in **New York City**?

A: – we met in **New York City**. Well, he lived up – near – not far from me, at the time.

Q: Oh, he did?

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A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, so he wasn't from **Brooklyn**, he was from **Washington Heights**, too.

A: No, he was – he was – he had lived in **Brooklyn** before that, and had friends there, that's why he went.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And how long did you date before you married?

A: Oh, it took a long time.

Q: Yeah.

A: A long time. We were married a year and a half later, which – because I wasn't really ready.

Q: Okay.

A: I liked dating. Yeah.

Q: And what was your mar – what's the date of your marriage?

A: June 7th, 1953.

Q: And what was – what's **Freddy's** full name?

A: **Alfred Berg**.

Q: And his date of birth?

A: Is October 16th, 1924.

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Q: Okay. And he was from **Vienna, Austria**, you said?

A: Born in **Vienna, Austria**.

Q: And so why don't we hold up his picture right now?

A: This is little baby **Freddy**.

Q: Can you focus on baby **Freddy**?

A: And they held him up. My mother-in-law said he couldn't really – wasn't really steady on his feet, but someone behind him was – had a hand on his back.

Q: Okay, he's going to try. And how old was he, about? You know, do you know about how old he was when this picture was taken?

A: Probably about a year, or a little more. But he never changed. People always looked at this picture and said, **Freddy** looks the same, he never changed. Okay?

Q: Okay. You got it? Okay, let's hold up the next **Freddy** that you've – you've got.

A: Okay.

Q: And is this **Freddy** when you got to know him?

A: Well, it was a before. He was in the navy, I – he was not in the navy. I met him later.

Q: Okay.

A: But it's – he was a cute sailor, so I –

Q: And so, this is him at about age 20 something?

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A: Maybe 20. Maybe 19 – 20? Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And he was 26 when I met him.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay?

Q: So this is – got it? Okay.

A: Okay.

Q: So let's talk a little bit about **Freddy**. What was his – what is his story?

A: Okay. Now – **[break]**

Q: So, what was – what's – tell us a little bit about **Freddy's** story.

A: Okay now, I know his story pretty well, because we were married for 60 years, and – excuse me – and his pa – well, now, if you want to start with his parents were born in **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: And my mother-in-law came to **Vienna** with her mother, and siblings, when she was a young girl.

Q: Okay.

A: And my father-in-law came after World War I. He was also a German soldier during World War I, who was an orphan, and had no – only had cousins, but no

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immediate family, and his commanding officer said, **Berg**, you like music, you like to dance, go to **Vienna**. There's a large Jewish community, you'll be happy there.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's where he met my mother-in-law, and **Freddy** was born a year after they were married. And I think they were married in '23, he was born in '24, and then he had a younger sister, **Charlotte**, who was six years younger. And he had a – I think, a happy childhood, a lot of cousins aunts and uncles. Most of them perished.

Q: What – what was his father's business, how did the father's –

A: Oh, he was a tailor. He became a apprentice tailor when he was about 12 years old.

Q: **Freddy** did?

A: His father.

Q: Oh, his father did.

A: **Freddy** was a child, and –

Q: Oh, I'm sorry, yes.

A: No, no, no, his father. His – my father-in-law's father died when my father-in-law was very young.

Q: Okay.

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A: And the mother was not well, and she gave him to a family when – before his Bar Mitzvah, to learn tailoring. And he was an apprentice tailor.

Q: Okay.

A: And so when he went to **Vienna**, he – my mother-in-law's brother had a business, and I think my father-in-law worked with him, as a tailor. That's what he did.

Q: Okay.

A: And I can tell you an interesting story, this is about my father-in-law.

Kristallnacht they picked up the Jewish men, and took them to the police precinct there, and they shaved my father-in-law's head, and they had him there, and one of the policemen came in and said to them, why are you holding this man? And they said, well, he's a Jew, you know, we picked him up. And the policeman said, he's a very good man, he doesn't charge me for sewing the buttons on my uniform. Let him go. So I think that's an interesting –

Q: Wow.

A: – piece of information.

Q: Wow.

A: Yeah. And when – when my – the family – my mother-in-law heard a Mr.

Kraus, who came to rescue the children, the 50 children –

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Q: Mr. **Kraus** was who? So the people will –

A: Mr. **Kraus** was – this is what I wanted to say – a very wealthy attorney from **Philadelphia**, who wanted to help get children out of Nazi **Germany** or **Austria**.

And it was – he was advised to go to **Austria**, that it would be easier to rescue the children from there, from **Vienna**.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: And it was amazing. What he was able to do was just amazing. But my mother-in-law heard about this, and registered my sister-in-law. The children had to be between the ages of, I believe three and 13. **Freddy** was 14, but he went with the family to help – I think he had learned a little English in school – and help with the language. And my sister-in-law **Charlotte** was one of the children – they had 25 boys, and 25 girls chosen for this, and **Charlotte** was one of the girls. And **Freddy** was learning farming, he was supposed to go to **Palestine** –

Q: Okay.

A: – to learn agriculture, okay? And one of the little boys who was chosen for this trip to **America** with Mr. and Mrs. **Kraus** became ill, in the last minute, wi – shortly before the trip. And for some reason they remembered **Freddy**. And instead of going back into their records of a few hundred children, they went to my in-laws, and they said, we remember your son – he was a year older than the others, over the

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age limit, he was 14 – and do you think you would send him to **America**, and would he be willing to go to – with his little sister? And **Freddy** – they said, of course. And **Freddy** remembers that they called him out of his classroom, he was in school, and they said, would you like to go to **America** with your sister, next week, or in two week – whatever, it happened very quickly. And that's how he ended up on this journey.

Q: And did you know of the details of the process of how children were chosen, and how – what he remembers of that journey, of the – everything that was going on, before he got the spot?

A: Well, most of them did have the par – most of the parents did already have affidavits, or visas, whatever they needed. They also had – they all had numbers, and they were all waiting to come to **America**.

Q: Okay.

A: And they had – I know that my in-laws had cousins, second cousins, people here who they could contact, and ask if the children could live with them. Very few of the children had nowhere to go, or no one to be with.

Q: Okay.

A: And I know Mr. and Mrs. **Kraus** took in one or two of the children, into their home. But most of them did have someone to go to.

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Q: So that meant this news would go to the parents in **Austria** or in **Germany**, but in **Austria** this would –

A: Not **Germany** at all.

Q: Just in **Austria**.

A: This was **Vienna**, strictly **Vienna**.

Q: Just in **Vienna**. They already knew that when they agreed to send their child, that their child was going to go to a – a particular family –

A: Correct, that is correct.

Q: – who had been identified.

A: That is correct. And **Freddy** went to a family in **Jersey City, New Jersey**, and **Charlotte** went to relatives in **Brighton Beach, Brooklyn**.

Q: Okay.

A: And the family in **Jersey City** had a car, and every Sunday they took **Freddy** to visit his sister. And this happened for about half a year, and fortunately, my in-laws were able to come to **America** in December of that year, in 1939. They came in '39.

Q: So – so their expectation was that they're going to follow their children?

A: Correct. But their hope was it – it wasn't even an expectation, because **Hitler** had invaded **Vienna**, and it was very bad, and some people never came. And my

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mother-in-law lost some of her siblings, my husband's cousins, some of them never got out of **Vienna**.

Q: So, within a year, however, his parents –

A: Correct.

Q: – come to the **United States** –

A: Correct. And they were reunited, so they were ve – just very fortunate as a family, to be together, yeah.

Q: Did you know – or did you know his mother? Did you get to know –

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Absolutely, yeah.

Q: Okay. What did they tell you about their lives in **Austria**, before the **anschluss**, and after?

A: They really – you know, they really didn't speak about it that much. They – my mother in law wasn't that well. I think she had several heart attacks. She was not a healthy woman. And I think this was all very hard on her, giving up her children this way, and not even – not knowing for sure that she would see them again. And my sister-in-law was so distraught, that she didn't – couldn't eat. My mother-in-law didn't even recognize her six months later, when she saw her. She looked for her in

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the crowd and said, where is **Charlotte**? Where's my little one? Because – and **Charlotte** always said the people were very nice to her, that she lived with, but she missed her mother, and she couldn't understand why her mother gave her away. And she s – she said it wasn't until she was older that she realized it was like throwing a child out of a burning building. That's how – those are my sister-in-law's words. My sister-in-law passed away, unfortunately, quite young, before she was 70.

Q: Oh really?

A: But – yeah, yeah. But – and – and my husband was – he was always optimistic. He was not bitter. I – it just wasn't his nature, you know. Unless someone did something to him personally, very personally. And he had friends also. He lived he – i-in **Brighton Beach** as a teenager, and he had a lot of friends, and a few of them are still living. His best friend is still living in – and he was happiest when he was with those friends. We had a lot of friends over the years; his, mine and ours, but he was the happiest when he was with his old fre – you know, teenage friends, yeah.

Q: What did – what did he talk about, about Mr. and Mrs. **Kraus**? Did he ever have an impression of them?

A: No.

Q: No?

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A: No. He really hardly knew them. You know, he just accepted – they – when they came to **America**, the children were all sent to a camp in **Pennsylvania** to learn English. They –

Q: Okay.

A: And to Americanize a little bit, they spent the month of June, I think, in the camp, before the campers came, in **Collegeville, Pennsylvania**.

Q: Okay.

A: And then the families picked up the – the – who ca – took them – picked them up from there. And he had one aunt he was very close with, who lived in **Chicago**, the ma – her moth – his mother's sister, who had come earlier, who had no children. And she adored **Freddy**. **Freddy** was her favorite. And – but he really – I – I don't know. He just – he worked, he had various jobs. After – after the navy, and he always took an interest in finance. Was very interested in stocks and money and finance, and he always said that's the way –

Q: To make money.

A: – to – to make money, and he was good in math, and the whole thing int – interested him, business. And so he had we – after we were married, he had about eight hu – 900 dollars that he wanted to invest. His parents really had nothing, you know. My father-in-law wor – in-law worked for **3G** tay – it was a factory, made

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suits, men's suits. And – and my mother-in-law refused to work. She's the only refugee woman that I know who never had a job outside of the home. She said, I have to take care of **Charlotte**, I can't work. And they sent **Freddy** to work.

Q: Wow.

A: He really helped his parents, okay. But it was what it was, you know? But he – oh, took an interest in finance, and he decided – he had read about mutual funds, he read the paper, oh – a great deal. And he called up – there was a company called First Investor's Cooperation, and he called someone up and said, I have a few hundred dollars I'd like to invest. And a man, young man came to our house at that time, and they spoke, and he invested the money. And then he said, we're opening a new office in **Herald Square**, and maybe you'd like to work for us.

Q: Wow.

A: And – part-time. And **Freddy** said okay, and he went there, and he learned the business, and so for a number of years he sold funds, part time. Because he was do – he was in the notions and ribbon business, something entirely different.

Q: Different.

A: And – and he got so involved, and they offered him a job, they were opening another office, as an assistant manager of that office, and we talked about it, and I felt that he would be better off learning the full business, and becoming a

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stockbroker. And he took classes, and he looked for job and applied for a job, and it wasn't like today where you needed a degree in finance.

Q: Right.

A: And he – he did it, he became a stockbroker. He got all his licenses, and that's what he did for the rest of his life.

Q: What happened with the first money that was invested in mutual funds?

A: Oh, it grew.

Q: Did he talk much about **Austria**, when he was growing –

A: Yeah, he –

Q: – or he – when he was with you?

A: – yes, he had a very – he wanted to go back to see – see his school, and his house and – and he showed me where he picnicked and where he swam in the – in the **Danube**, and did the things naughty boys do, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And he remembered the – we went into a shoe store. He said my mother used to buy shoes for me here, and we brought ice cream there, and we – and it was good for him, you know, and he had a nice young life, actually, until **Hitler** came to power, he also had a very nice childhood and life.

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Q: So, were there any incidents that he would remember from after **Hitler** coming to power, and –

A: Only one that's –

Q: Okay.

A: – that some boys beat hi-him up, you know, and ran after him and called him Jew, and beat him up. And the incidents where his father was –

Q: Arrested.

A: – arrested, and at one time they tried to hide him, but somehow he was always – managed to be free.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they were able to come.

Q: Was the significance of being amongst these children, being on that list, was that ever something that was talked about, that what had it been like had there been – what would've it been had there not been the **Krauses**?

A: No. Not to m – no.

Q: Okay.

A: This was his life, this is the way it was. And about the **Krauses** now, he didn't have direct contact, apparently, with them, but Mr. **Kraus** had a friend named **Louis Levine**, who was also mentioned in the book. And Mr. **Levine** lived in New

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York City, Mr. Levine. Mr. and Mrs. **Levine** came to our wedding, they gave us a 25 dollar bond, I have it in writing. And whenever they needed a larger apartment, or needed anything, my mother-in-law would say, **Freddy**, call Mr. **Levine**. So Mr. **Levine** was the branch of, you know, of the family, they took care of the children who needed something in **New York**, or the family.

Q: So it's not just bringing them over, it was everything –

A: Then follow up.

Q: There was a follow up, and it was kind of being part of their lives for however long they needed him?

A: Well, I am under that impression. The family, Mr. **Kraus's** family, who – I met some of them, you know, and the grandson-in-law, **Steve Pressman**, who –

Q: Right.

A: – brought all this to the public, they didn't seem to know that. They thought that when the **Krauses** came home, they never talked about it again, and that was the end of it. But my husband kept a diary while he was in the navy, and I read it recently.

Q: Okay.

A: And – after he passed away, I read the diary. And one of the pages said, I'm very – I was very worried about my parents that they can manage, you know, that they

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have enough money – cause they always depended on him to help, because he was the big son, and **Charlotte** was the little girl who wasn't you know si – and then he wrote on one page, everything is good because **Kraus** – he didn't write Mr. **Kraus**, he di – **Kraus** sent some money to my parents. Now, this was during the war, this was a number of years after this. So somehow, maybe they contacted Mr. **Levine**, and he called the **Krauses**, maybe they contacted the **Krauses** directly, I don't know. I don't know.

Q: Tell me a little bit about **Freddy's** life when he came here, and then how it came to be that he was in the military, the U.S. military.

A: He was drafted. He was drafted. That's all, they – the boys were drafted. And he became a citizen while he was – see, once they were in the military, they had to be citizens, so they did that very quickly, and he became a citizen, I think, in **Ventura, California**. He was stationed in **California**. He loved it. He loved the girls, he had a wonderful time, he was a sailor, he was cute, you know. Now I – I didn't know him, cause I was not – I was really still a child. You know, the eight years made a big difference at that time. He was 18, I was 10, you know, th – made a big difference. And so he – but he was not unhappy. He –

Q: You mean about his military life?

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A: About an-anything. Because he – I read the diary. He was sent to **Okinawa**. The war actually ended just before he got there, and they – he told me – the one thing he told me about was a hurricane while they were there. You know, they built the **Quonset** huts, and they were almost blown over. They built the **Quonset** huts for the marines, because he was in the **Seabees**, and the **Seabees** were a construction battalion, that's what **CB** stood for. And so they built **Quonset** huts, and they were – and he said that he – sometimes they picked on him, some of the, maybe southern sailors, and people who didn't know –

Q: And they picked on him because –

A: Jew. Because of his religion

Q: Oh, because of his religion.

A: Because he was a Jew. And he said there were services on Friday nights for the few Jewish sailors who were there. And he would – they would give them candy, and cookies, and he would bring it back and give it to the other sailors, and that's how they came around to treating him well. So, I remember that.

Q: Speaks of a particular nature.

A: So –

Q: Very good natured, it sounds like he was.

A: So that's what –

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Q: Yeah.

A: – he told me, you know, and then things became better in that area. And one of the guys always protected him.

Q: Did – did you main – maintain contact with the **Krauses** as you started your own family, and –

A: We had no contact with the **Krauses** –

Q: No, no –

A: – none whatsoever.

Q: Or **Levine**? Or with Mr. **Levine** after your wedding?

A: I think maybe **Freddy**, I think maybe his parents wanted to move again, and said call Mr. **Levine**. I – I always remember that, call Mr. **Levine**. But I don't think so, I – I remember meeting him, I could picture him, but I – not that I know of, and certainly not with the **Kraus** family. I really – I really didn't know about the **Krauses**, except that I saw the few pictures, because they were in the newspaper.

And you know, now I'm very friendly with one of the boys who was on that – this – I don't know if you heard the name **Paul Beller**, **b-e-l-l-e-r**? **Paul** lives here, in this area.

Q: And he was one of the children?

A: And he was one of the children. And I – I don't know if this is pertinent, but –

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Q: Okay, can – let's cut the camera a little bit. **[break]** Okay, so **Paul Beller** speaks about his experiences?

A: Oh yes, yes. He was one of the 50 children, and he's very vocal, and he likes to speak, and **Paul** is about a year older than I am, you know, so we've –

Q: Okay.

A: An-And he lives in this area.

Q: Okay.

A: Sorry.

Q: Yeah. We'll con – let's cut a second. **[break]**

A: Okay.

Q: Okay, so you're talking about Mr. **Beller**, is that right? Yes.

A: Correct, Mr. **Beller**.

Q: Who – who has also – who was one of the 50 children.

A: Correct.

Q: Now, when did he enter your lives?

A: Oh, he entered my life long before I knew any of this.

Q: Oh, really?

A: I had a very close friend in **Washington Heights** named **Lila**. **Lila** had a brother named **Harold**, one year older. **Harold** had a best friend named **Paul**, okay? When

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Freddy showed me – when I was dating **Freddy**, and he took me to his house for the first time, he showed me the – the newspaper spread of the 50 children, and I looked at the children, and I said, that looks just like **Harold's** friend **Paul**. So, that's how far back I go with **Paul**, since I was about 12, maybe 11, 12 years old.

Q: Wow.

A: And when I spoke to **Harold [indecipherable] Harold**, a-and later, years later, ha – **Harold** married **Evelyn**, and I became very close with them as well. And I said to him, was **Paul Beller** from **Vienna**? And he said yes. I said, that's it, that's him. And the children had a 30th anniversary party for **Harold** and **Evelyn**, and the **Bellers** were invited, and we spoke, and **Freddy** and **Paul** were introduced to each other. They didn't know each other, because **Paul** was a younger child, and **Freddy** was, as I said, 14, and wasn't interested in the little boys.

Q: So in – in some ways, this also tells me that once the chil – there was never anything in the group that made it cohesive, where they stayed in touch afterwards.

A: No, he – he had no contact with the children.

Q: Okay, with the other 50 – 49 children.

A: And nor did my sister-in-law.

Q: Yeah.

A: Nor did my sister-in-law.

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Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, when did the 50 children realize that they're one of 50 children? Was it, excuse me, when the book was published?

A: No, no, he o – first of all, he always knew it, but he – they had a reunion in 2003 maybe, in **Philadelphia**, because the Jewish center, the synagogue that the **Krauses** belonged to, somehow got this information, and started to take an interest in contacting the children.

Q: Okay.

A: And they had a reunion, and we went.

Q: I see.

A: And they showed us **Philadelphia**, and then we stayed at a hotel, and it was – it was lovely. You know, they had a dinner, and the press was there, the local press there. And it was very lovely. But **Freddy** said it's too little, too late. He wasn't that interested any more. He wasn't that well at the time. I said, let's go.

Q: I see. I see.

A: And so they – you know, and a lot of them were not – they couldn't contact every – everyone, and a lot of them also were not interested, or didn't – couldn't travel that far, didn't want to. But we went, and you know, every so often we were

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together with the **Bellers**, through the **Franks**, through our other friends. And they lived in **Baltimore** at the time. And they moved to this area about six years ago, seven years ago, yeah.

Q: So, since that **Philadelphia** meeting that wi – that sounds like it was the first time that there was any bringing back together –

A: Correct.

Q: – of these children.

A: That's correct.

Q: Has there been any subsequent such meeting?

A: No, not until **Steve Pressman** –

Q: Wrote the book.

A: – took an interest, and – well, he did the documentary first.

Q: Yes.

A: And then he wrote the book.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then people were interviewed for it.

A: Yes, and also, after the documentary – now, **Freddy** couldn't be interviewed, because he had had a stroke, and wasn't well enough. So that's when **Steve**

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Pressman asked me, do you – can you answer some questions? And I said, I'll do my best. And that's when they took an interest in me.

Q: Okay.

A: And we were invited – well, first of all, the museum invited people at a showing – for a showing of the documentary. And **Laurie** and her husband **Bill** – my daughter **Laurie** and her husband **Bill** ended up going, because we couldn't go. And they said, your children, you know, can go. And then sh – about a month after my husband passed away, there was a reception for one of the **Pressman** – not one of the pre – one of the **Kraus** grandsons, **Peter Kraus**, the – the museum had. And we were invited to that, and I called up and I said, my husband just passed away. Can I come and bring my children? And they said yes, of course. So I – **Laurie** came, and my son **Dan**, and we went – that was at the plaza hotel. It was lovely. And so, you know, we attended that, and it was interesting.

Q: What is it from –

A: But there were only two – I just want to say –

Q: Okay.

A: – only two of the children were able to come.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah.

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Q: To the – to the actual –

A: To that, to the plaza, to that dinner, yeah.

Q: Okay. Is there anything else that you'd like to add about your husband's story?

A: Nothing that I can think of really, but you know, it was a – it was really very traumatic, leaving your parents, and not knowing whether you'd see them, and having your parents be willing to send you, I think. And – but he just accepted that as part of his – that was part of his life. And my sister-in-law didn't speak to her children, she – I have a niece and a nephew, and they said they can't understand, they didn't even know that Mr. **Kraus** existed. **Charlotte** never spoke about him. She only said they came to **America**, they went to a camp, then they went to live with Aunt **Sophie**. You know, it was like – and then the parents came. And they never questioned anything more, and she didn't talk about it.

Q: Could it be th – di-did they have a reason why? Do they know why she never would have talked?

A: No. No.

Q: Okay.

A: They were a little upset. They said, oh, we would have honored – my father was so active at the synagogue in **North Woodmere**, in **Long Island**, they would have

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honored Mr. **Kraus**, they would have, you know, done something, and – but they didn't even realize, they weren't aware that this was a man who did this.

Q: Okay. Well, let's wrap up then with – with the end of **Freddy's** life. Tell me, when did he pass? Can you give me the date?

A: Yes, September – September 16th, 1920 – no, not 19 – 2013.

Q: So, just under two years ago –

A: Correct.

Q: – he passed away.

A: Correct.

Q: Okay. So, from 1924 to 2013.

A: Correct.

Q: All right.

A: He was – yeah.

Q: Yeah. We'll conclude that – it's not so much an interview as a retelling, right now, about **Alfred Berg**. And, let's cut the camera for a second. **[break]** Okay, so now we're going back a little bit, to the interview we had with you.

A: Yes.

Q: And you mentioned during it that you took one toy with you on the boat when you left **Germany**, and that was your doll.

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A: That's the one I remem – I don't know if there was anything else, I thi – I have no idea, probably not.

Q: Okay.

A: But this is the doll.

Q: This is the doll, this is **Dorothy**.

A: It survived, dor – **Dorothy**. But at that time she wasn't a German **Dorothy**, I don't know if she had a name. I think when I saw "**The Wizard Of Oz**," I gave her that name, I'm not sure.

Q: Okay. And so why is it that she ended up still being here, all these years?

A: Well, first of all, I love dolls.

Q: Okay.

A: Loved doll – I still like dolls. And I played with dolls a lot, and – but I think I didn't really play with this one. I think I just liked having her. Because when I was very small, I got a **didy** doll, which was a rubber baby that I could feed, and she would – and it was – seemed more realistic to me, but I just liked having this doll, more than playing with her.

Q: Okay.

A: And so she lasted. We always – I always kept – and my mother gave a lot of my toys away later – later on, because I didn't give anything, I would have kept

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everything forever. And she gave them to relatives with younger children. And somehow, this one survived, this baby survived.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And is – the dress, is that the dress that your aunt made for her?

A: Correct. My Aunt **Herthe**(ph), who I spoke of earlier, was a wonderful, wonderful seamstress. She could – I have pillows she made, I have other things that she made, as well. And her workmanship was superb, even her little, the snaps and the lining, and everything she did. And she made some clothing for me. She made clothing later on in life for my daughter **Laurie**. And she made this dress, and I had a similar dress, made out of the same fabric, and there's some –

Q: And there were – there's some –

A: – probably some other clothing. And this is – came I – probably with the doll, the – a little pencil case from **Germany**.

Q: It looks very much like a European –

A: It's from **Germany**, definitely, and the slippers, of course, and – I don't know if I can reach.

Q: Let's hold on just a second. I'm going to cross the lens for a second, and reach over, and y-you can show some of these –

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A: Okay, this is the skirt. Okay. Now –

Q: So these are some of the clothes you had for her.

A: Yes. And I would change her clothes every so often. This was a skirt.

Q: Okay.

A: Has some pleats in it, and this is typical of skirts that little girls wore, with the straps, and this. And then she had an overcoat that the hat goes with, and –

Q: And this is all stuff that you – that came with her from **Germany**?

A: I – it came all from **Germany**, made in **Germany**. I mean, they don't do work like this any more. Look at the buttons, and the lining. Everything is there, intact.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the blouse.

Q: Oh, that's just darling, okay.

A: The blouse. Beautiful things. And two little aprons, because we all wore aprons.

Soon as – I wore an apron. When I came home from work, first thing I did was put an apron on.

Q: Well, she's – she survived a lot.

A: She survived a lot, mm-hm.

Q: Okay. Thank you for sharing **Dorothy** with us.

A: You're very welcome. I'm glad I was able to do that.

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Q: Okay, thanks again. All right. That's good. We're done.

Conclusion of Interview