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Summary

Gertrude (Trudy) Schwarz née Hirsch – Born June 3, 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany. Parents: Father – Theodore Carl Hirsch B. 1888, D. 1976; Mother – Minna Hirsch (maiden name though no relation to father’s family), B. 1892 in Ulm, D. 1990. Family traces roots in Germany back to the 1700s. **Sisters** – Lotte b. 1921; Eva b. 1925, died of Tay Sachs in 1928. Mother had 2 brothers – Leopold and Otto (died in WWI); Father had one brother – Otto.

Before the War – Father worked for Salamander Shoes as a director of the factory. Trudy went to experimental school through 7th grade and then to Gymnasium in 1932. Family not religious; considered themselves Germans. Uncle Otto worked with Chief Rabbi Leo Beck; traveled to different countries asking them to take Jewish refugees; arrested in Beck’s place. Died in concentration camp; his wife died in Auschwitz. Father lost job in mid 1930s because he was Jewish. Then worked for Jewish community. Did not want to leave Germany; by the time they knew they should and applied for US visa, long waiting list. Uncle Leopold went to New Orleans in 1936 with maternal grandparents. Trudy finished school and went to Home Economics Jewish school in Frankfort until Kristallnacht.

During the War - Trudy and her sister Lotte (and Uncle Otto’s two girls) went to England in 1939. Trudy left to be a “domestic” in England on June 10, 1939, then a nanny in Norwich for three years. Also took six-month course in physical therapy. Sister studied nursing. In England for the entire war. Was living in Leeds when the war ended. Parents left Germany in November 1941; settled in New York. Wanted girls to come to US.

After the War – Stayed in England till 1946. Trudy, Lotte, and their two cousins got jobs and free passage on a ship that carried GI brides and their babies to New York. Traveled around US but decided to settle in NY. Got a job as a physical therapist at Columbia-Presbyterian. Met her husband, Joseph Schwarz, in 1949 through friends. He had come to US in 1939 from a small village near Cologne. Before they married, she went on two Polio Missions to help rehab children who had polio. Married her husband in 1952. Had three children – Tom, Peter, and Peggy. Returned to Germany, once when Stuttgart invited her back to honor survivors.

Trudy’s Final Thoughts – She did not feel hostility towards Germans when she returned. She also said that in spite of everything, she was very lucky.