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Summary

Leah Linton (née Deutsch) was born in Vienna, Austria on August 26, 1925; her first name at birth was Margarethe, but she was usually called Gretel. She had an older sister, Lily, and an older brother, Fred. Her parents were Sigmund and Sophie (née Heinrich). Her mother came from Burgenland, Austria and her father came from Győr, Hungary; he worked as a cattle dealer. Her father came to Austria at 13 years-old as an apprentice carpenter.

Sigmund met Sophie shortly before volunteering for the Austrian army in WWI and married after he returned from a four-year imprisonment in Siberia. Leah describes where she lived, their living conditions in Vienna, and her schooling. Leah attended a public school, while her brother and sister went to a top-notch technical school and gymnasium, respectively. The family had little discussion of anti-Semitism before Hitler took over Austria.

Her sister left for Palestine in 1937-38 in one of the first youth transports. On Kristallnacht, her brother was arrested and sent to Dachau for six months. Leah witnessed much of the public brutal treatment of Jews. Upon release, Fred was required to leave the country immediately, but could only arrange a visa to England. From there, he eventually went on to the U.S. when Leah and her mother went there in 1939. Margarethe/Gretel changed her name to Leah on her entry into the U.S. Her father was unable to join them as his Hungarian birth forced him into an over-filled quota. After their departure, he was sent to Auschwitz, where he perished.

Leah visited Israel for a year in 1949, but returned to the U.S. to take care of her mother, who died the day she returned. Leah discusses some of her various work experiences in the U.S. She married Ted (née Levy) Linton in 1950. His family was from Germany and his father was held in Buchenwald. They had two children, David and Leslie. She re-visited Vienna under the sponsorship of Letters to the Star where they attended a special Parliamentary session where dignitaries apologized for the actions of the government.