

## **RG-50.031.0133**

### **Summary**

Liesl Joseph Loeb, born June 17, 1928 in Rheydt, Germany, discusses being an only child; Liesl's experiences on Kristallnacht Nov 10 ("not Nov 9 as in many parts of Germany," according to Liesl), father taken to jail; their non-Jewish tenants provide Liesl & parents shelter after Nazis ransack family's 20 room home; mother flees with Liesl to Bonn, chooses shelter in a Dutch house "believed to be safer"; mother returns to Rheydt, assists husband's release; through friends at Cuban Consulate, passage acquired onboard cruise ship St. Louis May 13, 1939 to Havana, Cuba; embark from Hamburg, band onboard plays folk song, "Must I Leave This Little Place?" waving goodbye to aunt knowing he would never see her again; Passenger Committee formed onboard after hearing rumor of potential challenges disembarking in Cuba, father Josef (lawyer) is asked to chair committee; in Havana Harbor, small boats encircle ship with friends/relatives of passengers seeking reunification; "Father was out every night with captain...it didn't look good."; boats would throw bananas up and the passengers would throw coins to them; Dr Max Loewe attempted suicide (jumping off ship) "He knew if he returned (to Germany), he could be put to death."; June 2, 1939 Liesl reads summary of events onboard as ship is forced to leave Havana then in German (also in English) reads from father's diary, his vivid impressions of events/scenes as they endure a "voyage of drama to voyage of doom."; mention of map in her father's book of "tracks made" by ship; discussion re: Miami/U.S.'s rejection of ship "We could see Miami's beautiful hotels...but we had to keep moving"; June 6th captain receives order to return to Germany, "utter utter desperation" onboard, tone of telegrams to politicians was "unthinkable - that we return to Germany...900 passengers, 400 women & children"; Liesl saw her father rarely - passengers were considering mutiny; "Good news circulated that Holland, Belgium, France, England would take us in"; Mr. Troper ("magic word") boarded as Head of Joint Distribution Committee to greet refugees, Liesl assigned to reading him a greeting; next day, Troper sends Liesl two dozen roses; "Bulk of passengers that entered England survived" (the Holocaust); Liesl's lesson from her experiences, "Concern for our fellow citizen...indifference to a fellow man's suffering is the greatest sin."; family disembarks at Southampton; after Dunkirk, Liesl is evacuated then returns to only her mother as father had been interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien, eventually released; reunited with father August 1940, family goes to Scotland then on Camaronia ship, enter NY Harbor September 10, 1940.