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Summary

Eva Thalheimer (née Katzenstein) b.5/26/1931 near Göttingen, Germany in little town Reinsfeld; close family-brother Fritz (Fred), grandparents, aunt, her step-son Harry; a grandmother's maiden name Lilienthal, a grandfather's name Schwalm, brother of a grandmother, Max, lived in Bovenden, Germany, had lost a leg in WW1; happy childhood, conservative Jewish family (grandparents Orthodox); came to America 1939; Eva's father had sold chicken feed, continued in US launching successful business; left Germany 1938 for Amsterdam, father felt they should leave because "things were not looking too good," says Eva (Hitler was in power by then); after immigration, moved into Washington Heights, Manhattan where German Jews were settling; at 19 yrs. old, met future husband Walter Thalheimer (Holocaust survivor), marriage Sept 1951; introduction to Kurt Moses (Holocaust survivor); husband had served in Korean war then assigned to Fort Dix 10 months; miscarriage; at age 26 had a son; Walter's reluctance to speak of his experiences in the Holocaust; couple's move 1958 to Chicago after uncle offers job in his industrial First Aid supply company; Walter later forms company in their sons' names Gary & Ronald - Garon (or Garron), Inc.; prompted by Skokie 1978 Nazi March Northwestern Professor Butz, denier of Holocaust, Walter becomes part of new HMMFI-Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois - after Walter's death, Eva step into his board role at newly-named Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center Director; important early figures to HMMFI Erna Ganz, Lisa & Aaron Derman, David Figman; Walter serves on HMMFI Speakers Bureau sharing his unique story living under the Third Reich for the entire 12 yrs; Walter born in small German town in state of Württemberg; couple's experiences in visiting Germany post-war; other early figures at HMMFI including Judy Lachman; recollections of first HMMFI building; Walter sculpted a terra cotta clay menorah, depicting Jewish history, Eva gifted to museum after Walter's passing 1997; discussion on other early figures important to museum, including Holocaust survivors & liberator Bernie Schutz; introduction of non-survivors to museum board such as Judge Michael Bender & his son Ira; recollections of Skokie 1978 Nazi March; discussion re: plans for new museum building; Eva's volunteer work at museum; interview closes with photographs and documents from Walter's donation to museum.