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Summary

Eric Stern, born in 1921 in Cologne, Germany (population 750k, 14k Jewish); married wife in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1948; 2 daughters (live Cleveland and Washington); 1 grandchild; no brothers and sisters; father died Dec 1929; German, main language spoken in home; moved with grandparents 1932; small town of Crailsheim (7k population, 200 hundred Jews) between Stuttgart and Nuremberg; belonged to congregation, no rabbi only cantor; anti-Semitism not created by Hitler, some friends and acquaintances left for Palestine; Zionists and German Jews didn't leave; Eric went to catholic school classes (Cologne); 5 ½ years old, realized antisemitism existed (6 years before Hitler); was called names, lousy Jew, dirty Yid; 5th grade began learning Latin, 2 years later French then English; 1932, political turmoil; rise of Hitler; belonged to society of German-Jewish youth (non-Zionist wing of population); in school until Nov 1936. Between 1932-1936, family had servants, chauffeur, cars; family had associations with Gentile kids (more in Cologne, no areas where Jews were concentrated). 1932, government changed; 1933 Hitler elected by 48 percent parliament/45 percent monarchist (gave him 53 or 54 percent); became Chancellor January 30th. March 21st, 1933, national holiday declared; people put out flags to celebrate; Wurttemberg state flag black and red; 2 national flags, black, white and red (imperialist flag until the end of the first World War), and swastika flag; people forced to take down state flag; Jews discouraged from participating; was Gentile holiday; 7 weeks after Hitler elected, storm troopers showed up at family's home asking for Jew Rosenfeld (ill grandfather); then went to uncle/aunt's apartment asking for the Jew Dreyfuss; arrested him; every male Jew in town arrested except for grandfather; interviewed, some beaten; conservative uncle accused of being communist; concentration camp set up in Heuberg (not far from Stuttgart); 10 days later, national boycott day against Jewish businesses; business signs "don't patronize Jews"; late 1933, 11 year old youth/kids in school taught how to throw hand grenades; rearmament businesses for clothing military and labor battalions; 1934/1935, laws passed restricting Jewish kids in schools; Principal Siegle joined storm troopers and sometimes taught in uniform; Vogt a violent antisemitic, Latin teacher, would have Eric beaten every week; 1935, Nuremberg laws passed; grandfather & uncle left Crailsheim and moved to Stuttgart in 1936; 14 years old, received passport with a "J" in front; went to England; April 1936, started classes; attended boarding school in England; teacher originally from Germany ran the school for German-Jewish kids; graduated in England; vacationed in Germany 1937; on ship Europa met gentlemen (Savage) from Duluth, MN (had office in London); 2 years later helped get his mother out of Germany; Kristallnacht, Nov 1938; every male Jew placed into camps; uncle Ludwig taken to Dachau concentration camp, released within days; Munich Agreement Sept 1938; moved to London mid-1937 went to London School of Commerce; lived with friend in boarding house; received money through Jewish federation; arrangements made in Germany by Jewish organizations to get people out; preference given to those in camps; Eric had a friend (Hersch) whose father was in Jewish National Federation in Berlin; 1947, helped him (and father's cousin) get to U.S.; Mother's father died March 1938 on day Hitler took Austria; mother relocated to England; stayed in Brighton, England until they left the country; February 1940 arrived Boston; mother arrived May 1940; settled in Nashville, then Chicago; 1942 drafted into U.S. Army; April 1943 became naturalized; February 1944 served in England; stationed in

Manchester, London, Edinburgh Scotland; VE day went to Norway until October 1945 (first GI in the country); Norwegian Jews also arrested and taken to concentration camps; served in Frankfurt, Germany; served as an interpreter/translator for Professor, Dr. James Palack, civilian from University of Michigan, assignment to reconstitute German government. Settled in Chicago, lived there until 1949, then lived in Canada, Washington, Detroit; 1958 settled in Cleveland.