

REGINA G. HOFFMAN
RG-50.150.0017. Recorded December 1977

Regina was born in July 1912 in Tarnow, Poland. She grew up in Pirmasens, near Berlin, until she came to the US. She went to a Jewish elementary school. She states she always had a complex about German Jews because they looked down on Polish Jews. Her husband is a German Jew and doesn't understand this. It bothered her that her parents had accents. She made her arbiter and wanted to become a doctor but wasn't able to because after she met her husband to be, (who was already a doctor) she didn't want to leave and go to university. She married in 1937. Her father was wealthy; he had a shoe factory that employed 400 workers. He sold the business to Arians in 1937 and her husbands' practice was taken away in 1938.

Her parents were sent back to Poland and went to Krakow where her father did well. They didn't take Regina because she was married to a German citizen. Her sister and her child were smuggled back to Poland to be with parents which Regina now realizes was a stupid move. Her parents and sister were sent to the ghetto after Hitler came to power and then were sent to Treblinka. The child was initially hidden but then was shot by Nazis. Regina found all this out later. She was glad her parents did know that she was pregnant before they were taken.

During Kristallnacht her husband hid in the forest; he was then sent to France and then was marched 23 miles back to Germany along with his brother and father. He was going to be sent to Dachau, but Regina managed to get him to a hospital because he was ill. By the time they had received an affidavit to go to US. Husbands office nurse had written to her former boss, Mr. Heinsheimer, a lawyer, who wrote to the consul in Stuttgart; They got a miraculous low number.

They went on a ship to NY with 10 RM; President Benes of Czechoslovakia was on the same ship. Regina didn't yet realize that she would never see her parents and sister again. After 2 days she got a job through the Council of Jewish Women. She worked for an ill woman then as a baby nurse in the Bronx. She didn't have training and didn't know much English, so this was a confusing time. He supported her husband so her could study and pass the medical boards, which he did in August 1940. His patients were all German. They had briefly left NY for upstate, but found it antisemitic and came back to New York. Their son Peter was born in 1941 and is now a successful person living in NYC.

Although her husband was depressed for a while, Regina did not feel she had to make too many adjustments to living in New York. She lived in a German Jewish neighborhood and mostly has non-american friends. She went back to Germany and felt very mixed emotions, but when she went to her family home she felt she had made peace. Regina still feels a difference between German and Polish and Russian Jews. She thinks Polish and Russian Jewish husbands are better than Germans.