

ERNA SCHUTZ
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Erna was born in Konigshutte, Germany, and grew up in Hindenburg where her father was in the liquor business. She stated there was no anti-Semitism before Hitler. She became a typist and stenographer and took a job in Breslau, the capital of Silesia. She married a lawyer and had 2 daughters who went to Jewish school. After 1933 her husband's business suffered but he still practiced. Things got increasingly bad and they started to think about emigration after Kristallnacht. Her brother in law had been a ship's doctor on the Nord Deutche Lloyd and had done the shippers a big favor; in return he was able to get visa for his family and Erna's husband and daughter to leave for Cuba. On Kristallnacht a grateful client had warned her husband that they were rounding up Jewish men, and he remained hidden. He was to Cuba in February 1939. Erna saw him and her daughter off at Hamburg and managed to give him all her jewelry before they sailed. Erna was separated from husband and daughter for 9 months. She lived with her parent and her other daughter during this time. Her parents did not want to emigrate and by the time her parents tried to use their visa and Erna tried to get them to come to America, it was too late.

Erna left for America via Russia and Japan in September 1940, before Jews were ordered to wear the yellow star. She describes her trip through Russia on the trans-Siberian railroad and the beautiful landscape. The trip was paid for by Hifsverein. From Harbin China they went to Kobe and then Yokohama, Japan. She and her daughter sailed for Seattle on a Japanese ship where conditions she cited were horrible. They went by train to New York, where her husband had come and had received all her furniture packed up in Germany, including a Bechstein piano.

In New York they sold belongings and jewelry to get by. By that time her husband was 55 and very unhappy with his inability to get a good job. They went to Mr. Kleinert who had given them the affidavits to emigrate, and he suggested they move to Indianapolis. They lived there three years before returning to New York. Her husband started a restaurant that didn't succeed. Erna took typing through the Jewish Council and found good jobs, first with American Optical Company and then Mayflower in New York when they returned. To Washington Heights. After much difficulty, her husband got a job with Duparquet, outfitters of restaurants. He had this job for 5-6 years. When the restitution issues began in 1953-1955, her husband began to get cases and built a good practice dealing with restitution issues. Her older daughter married a gentile and divorced, but has lovely grandchildren. The other daughter married a man from Breslau whom she met in California. Erna loved the Hebrew Tabernacle, with Cantor Ehrenberg and Rabbi Lehman. Erna, now widowed, lives far away from the Tabernacle but has begun to go back to it for high holy days. She has gone back to Germany several times.