

LYDIA MAY

Born 9/6/1886 in Frankfurt, Germany. Maiden name Mayer. Father a butcher with 2 stores which were sold when he died at 47. Store not Kosher. Family were Conservative Jews, somewhat observant. Married Maxmillian (b. 1880) in 1904. Moved briefly to Worms and soon back to Frankfurt. Daughter born 1907 (d. 2014 at 107). Husband in furniture business and in German Army in WW I, in the artillery. Inflation made life hard after war as money worthless. They knew of anti Jewish movements as early as 1923. By 1933, Nazis pulling Jews out of homes, singing "Blood of the Jews shall flow by the Knife." Signs appeared saying "Jews Our Misfortune," and "Jews Are Our Misfortune." Jews made to walk through the city wearing sign "We Are Jews." Granddaughter (Renate Frydman) had stone thrown at her while in her carriage. Husband decided they had to get out of Germany quickly. Even the milkman told them to leave for safety. Family frightened by Nazis marching in the streets. She saw Hitler and Goebbels in the street going through the city. Husband got affidavit of support from family in NYC and left. Lydia and daughter's family eventually got affidavits, but only after going to answer questions at Nazi HQ re: B'nai Brith membership and because she was writing letters to FDR. Three B'nai brith Lodges, Frankfurt, Herman Kohn and Markus Solarus were burned. Husband's cousin tried to escape on the *St. Louis* but later was killed. Lydia's uncle was killed at age 94 and 2 cousins committed suicide rather than being taken. Her mother could not go to the US and was taken to Auschwitz and Thereisenstadt and was killed. She says she and family got out of Germany on last train before the war (likely before the Anschluss in 1938) and went to Amsterdam. On the train, she and daughter were questioned and son-in-law strip searched for money at the Dutch border. They left most of belongings behind in Frankfurt. Family spent 10 years in NYC and after daughter and family moved to Dayton, OH Lydia and husband did as well. Husband worked for Sucher Meat Packing until retirement. He died ~1959. Daughter worked for Order of True Sisters, a charitable organization. She says she always knew thing would get bad in Germany after Jewish men taken away in 1933. Now says she is more interested in being a Jew.