

Interviewee: LOEB, Liesl Joseph

Date: Nov. 17, 1998

Interviewer: Self-taped Memoir

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No. of Audiotapes: 3 English

Restrictions: Permission of Ms. Loeb needed before any publication

SUMMARY

Liesl Joseph Loeb was born on June 17, 1928 in Rheydt, Rhineland, Germany. Liesl, together with her father, Josef Joseph, an attorney, and her mother, Lilly Salmon Joseph, was a passenger on the S.S. St. Louis. This German luxury Liner sailed on May 13, 1939, from Hamburg toward Havana, Cuba, with 937 Jewish refugees on board.

Liesl speaks about her family background and life leading up to *Kristallnacht* which she experienced, hiding in her own home while Nazi hoodlums were vandalizing it. She describes the months leading up to embarkation and conditions which had to be met before leaving Germany and immigration into Cuba, which was to be temporary until the family's quota number was called for the United States.

She describes the trip and its complications from a child's perspective. She speaks of her father's sense of duty as the chairman of the passenger committee and the commitment and devotion of all its members. The desperate situation of the hapless passengers to whom no country offered a haven, especially not the United States, is emphasized. After 40 days at sea, the passengers are rescued through the efforts of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), by four countries - England, Holland, France, and Belgium.

Finally the Joseph family lands in England, and their life as World War II began is described. The destiny of most of the passengers who were taken in by Holland, France and Belgium ended in tragedy when these countries were invaded by the Nazis.

She describes attending school as an "evacuee", the internment of her father on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien and arrival in New York on September 10, 1940. She concludes with her graduation from high school, and her immediate marriage thereafter. Several footnotes pursuant to the St. Louis story are added at the end of this memoir.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Rheydt, Germany

Kristallnacht

S.S. St. Louis

London, England

Internment enemy alien