

RG-50.462.0405

Summary

During part 2, the recording is silent from timestamp 00:31:00 to 00:37:11.

Lotte Marcus (née Kaufmann) was born on November 9, 1914 in Buir, Germany in the Rhineland. She was born in her maternal grandparents' house while her father was in the army. Her grandparents' family had the name Roer, named after the river that ran through it, and had lived in the town for generations. When her father returned from the army, Lotte and her mother and father moved back home to the very small town Drove (?). Lotte also had a brother, Ernest, who was born in 1920. Her father was a cattle dealer and butcher and served Jews and gentiles in the town of 1,000. The family was religious and attended the synagogue which also served Jews in the neighboring towns. A rabbi came only twice a year. Lotte studied Hebrew with a private tutor. She attended public school through elementary and high school. She did not experience antisemitic incidents but still felt like an outsider because she was the only child not to attend school on Saturday. Also, while she had many childhood friends, she could not visit their house because of kashrut.

When Hitler first came to power Lotte and her parents' lives changed very little. Most people continued to shop at her father's butcher shop, and she did not experience antisemitism, though one of her gentile friends was warned not to associate with Lotte. She was not, however, allowed to attend college. Instead, she worked in Cologne for a year where she met someone she knew from childhood who would become her future husband, Fritz. Shortly after they were married (1937?) Lotte and Fritz tried unsuccessfully to emigrate to Australia. But in 1938 she received an affidavit from a cousin in New York who had emigrated a year earlier. The affidavit arrived on November 10, 1938. Lotte convinced her parents to emigrate after she did, but they insisted they would only come with their old aunt and her grandfather. They also thought that it would be better for her to go to Holland since that is where some of her friends escaped since it was so close. Nevertheless, Lotte's parents sold their house so she and her husband could pay for passage. Lotte's husband was arrested during Kristallnacht and sent to Buchenwald but was able to leave once Lotte showed the affidavit for emigrating to the United States to the German authorities. They left for the United State in February 1939, and her brother joined them two months later. He later joined the U.S. army and fought at the Battle of the Bulge. He also returned to Germany in 1947 but was unable to find any relatives. Lotte estimated that 28 relatives were killed.

Lotte continued to correspond with her parents until early 1942. By then her parents had 21 people living in their house. Her parents said all was well and spoke of going to Cuba.

Until this interview Lotte had never considered herself a survivor and had refused to talk about her experiences with her children. But after the interview she planned to make copies of the interview and have her children listen to it.