

Oral History, Flora Frank, 8/11/84

Note with tape, translation of article. Neighborhood paper, date 10/15/82

In Wittelshofen, Heinrich Von Wittelshofen. Town named in 1275. Mostly Protestant town. People suffered from castle owner—robbed, etc... Town was named after Caste, built in 1275. In 1380, castle changed hands. Again several times. Farmers gave most to owner and complained. People revolted after a change in 1520 and burned down the castle. Farmers lost the battle and the castle was rebuilt by the farmers under force. Better than ever. Man made canal around the castle. 35 rooms, some very big for meetings and festivals. Large storeroom/warehouse is still there today (barns?) In debt and sold to Schlossheimer (cousin of Flora Winter's grandmother) and Monheimer (grandmother of Flora Winter on her father's side). Jews could not own land before. On 5/15/1856 the castle was burned by lightning. Built four family houses on the grounds with the insurance money. Still stone fence around and cellar exists. Flora Frank's grandparents owned the garden but sold four of the 5 houses. They had the cellar as a basement.

Tape—

Wittelshofen is near Dinkelsbuhl and Buttenwiesen is near Augsburg. Augsburg is about an hour and a half away from Munich. Neither near any borders.

SF: Could you describe Wittelshofen.

FF: Yeah. It was a very clean, small town about 700-1000 people living there and out of the 700, 695 were Nazis.

SF: What did the town look like.

FF: Lots of streets. There was one main street and otherwise lots of side streets in all directions. They were old houses and they were very good brick houses, most of them, and they all had flowers outside on the windowsills. Usually geraniums-white and red-it really was very clean. They were small shops. They were nothing big. We usually went to Dinkelsbuhl or to Nürnberg for shopping.

SF: Did my father ever describe Buttenwiesen.

FF: It was a bigger town than Wittelshofen and it was a nicer town. In the people it seems. They were very helpful people. In Wittelshofen they were about 8 Jewish families to my time and the others were all Protestants and no Catholic could ever come... Buttenwiesen was half Protestant and half Catholic so that was a more... They had more than a thousand people there.

SF: Is Buttenwiesen where they first made Budweiser beer? (Note: Later learned that Budweiser was first made in Budweis=Ceske Budjevoice, Czech Republic)

FF: I wouldn't know.

SF: What did the schul in Wittelshofen look like?

FF: It was a big temple. Oh, that temple was hundreds of years old. I even have a picture of it. I don't know where it is now, but I have a picture of it. It was a big temple and it was really nice. Then everybody moved away and then there was the big temple and nobody to go in. They didn't have stained glass windows, they had plain windows but they were like, you know, in broken glass (?).... There was a balcony for the women. The ark was up front and there were seats on the sides, all the way back. The men were downstairs and the women were upstairs.

SF: You had a rabbi in town?

FF: No, we had a teacher. The rabbi was in Ansbach and he came twice a year because my father was the, what do you call it, the head of the Jewish community...the president, and so he stood with

by us. He also examined us in school. He was good. And then when the teacher, the lehrer, died then everything fell apart. They didn't replace him. There were no more children there. All the children grew up. There were no young people except my sister, and then they moved to Munich and then those kids, Bianca and Sigbert. There were no more young people there. (SF Note: This may be an error. Bianca and Sigbert lived in Wittelshofen.)

SF: Did you keep kosher at home?

FF: Oh, you bet. Oh, you bet.

SF: Did you observe the holidays in a special way? For instance, what did your father do for Yom Kippur.

FF: He stood all the day in the temple with the s???.. With the shroud. Never sat down. All day long. He stayed the whole day, and everybody fasted. We had to bus people in from somewhere else in order to have minyan because we didn't have ten people (Note: probably means men) anymore. So we had to bus people in and they stood by us most of the time.

SF: How about for Passover.

FF: Then we didn't have any minyan. We didn't have any minyan then anymore. We had two nights of Seders. Each one had their own. We had my sister and my brother-in-law and Bianca and Sigbert. We had a beautiful Seder plate. An old Seder plate made out of wood, and it was all hand carved. It was beautiful. My sister in Munich had a silver one. A crystal one. That was really beautiful. We would sit on the chair like this and there was the pillow. Ooh, I got the pillows. I got the pillow cases here. They were beautiful(ly) hand made. It was just very, very beautiful. (SF Note: We have two of those pillow cases.) I was the only one who never sat through, because my father couldn't give a nice Seder, he couldn't sing or anything. So that was never.... it was everything done, but it was never done real singing because he had no voice.

SF: What did you do on a typical shabbat?

FF: The women and the men went to temple in the morning every Saturday, with the hat on and the gloves on and everything. Pocketbook. And we were home. We just did everything we weren't supposed to do. Go in the fields. I told you what I did with the flowers. Didn't I tell you? You couldn't get flowers from the ground, because you couldn't tear it on Shabbos, you know. We had big gardens and the gardens had such beautiful flowers and...I went with Ida and my girlfriend in England (Note: Selma.) who just died and the monster (of the?) the field flowers was a pink velvet flower and it was so beautiful that I wanted to bring it to my mother but it was Shabbos and how could I get it off? So I laid on the floor and I bit it off, and brought it to my mother and I said to my mother, everything I could I gave to my mother, and I said "Momma, look what I got for you" and she said "Where did you get it? You get this on Shabbos?" and I said "Yeah, I didn't get it like this, I bit it off." Every Friday night we had flowers on the table, every Friday night, winter and summer. My mother always had flowers... in the winter you had to take them in you know, because there was all this cold weather and all that. She only had flowers for that reason, because we always had flowers on Shabbos. They were big. I think we were the only house that had it.

SF: You had a special dinner Shabbat night?

FF: Yeah, chicken usually. That was a delicacy. Berches. Potato salad. (For desert...) It was the best. It was made out of yeast dough, challah dough, Berches dough. Then she made it with blueberries, with apples. Yeast dough. It came out baked. In a black iron pot (cobbler?).

It was good. She was the best cook???? She used to pull me in by the hand. You would be surprised how much you learned anyhow. And I didn't want to do any housework ever.

SF: You said you were the only Jewish family in town that had a telephone.

FF: Yah, in the beginning. Then the others, some of them got it too. Around 1920. No it must have been earlier. My sister got married in 1920 and she had a phone and we had a phone. It must have been about 1918.

SF: What other appliances did you have?

FF: That was about all. Everything else was done by hand. Washing by hand. Then we had one thing nobody had. It was called a mangle. It was a machine like this, also hand done. When you had your sheets you didn't have to iron them. You folded them together and let them through. There were two round, heavy things and they pressed it. We were the only in town who had it. My mother had all those modern things.

SF: Did you have a wood stove?

FF: No. We had a beautiful stove. On the platter of the stove.. It used coals and wood. We had a platter, it was shiny like stainless steel. It was always shiny.

SF: How did you keep food?

FF: We had was is called a schpice. See our house, as I explained to you before, was built on the ruins of a castle. It was very cold. The cellar was extremely cold. From the kitchen we had a small room where we had a closet in there and it had a screen in front and that room was so cold, what they did to it I don't know. That's where we kept the food and sometimes it even like froze. There was no stream there. It came from the cellar up that cold.

SF: Were there any other fast days?

FF: There was Tisha B'Av. There was Erev Pesach. My father was the first born and the only son where he fasted on Tisha B'Av and 17th of Tammuz, Shivos of Tammuz. They fasted. Tisha B'Av we fasted the whole day, since I was 12 years old.

SF: Are there any other traditions that you remember?

FF: Chanukah. My father went around the table when we sang Mo'oz Tzur Yuh Shu Oh See, always around the table. Why I don't know. He took me by the hand and walked around the table. He had a pewter menorah. It had lions on it. They had to be lit with oil and a wick. (SF: Was he the only one who lit it? Did the women light it?) No. Are you kidding? In Europe? (SF: Did you get a present?) Every day. Not every day. But my birthday was around Chanukah. Nobody got every day. I think we were the only Jewish people who did give each other presents. My birthday presents, Chanukah presents...

SF: What types of standard food did you have?

FF: We had pot roast. My mother made a lot of pot roast. Don't forget we had three people as help so we always had to cook a lot. My mother made loaves of bread for Friday. She made three challahs and two loaves of bread and that lasted the whole week. It was baked once a week. You made it and then it was brought in the bakery. They baked it for you. They knew exactly which was yours and which wasn't yours. That was the whole thing for the week. Then we had everything in the garden. My mother used to say "Go out and get lettuce. Go out and get this and get that..." and that's what we did. It was a good life. It was a real home life. The women did their sewing. Their own sewing. Most of them did their housework. My mother did a lot of baking. Did a lot of stuff for poor people. Brought food, a lot of food, in the plastic with the leaves on top. (SF: Why with leaves?) I used to save the leaves into the plums and I had to bring it to the poor house. I said to momma "Why do you do that?" and she said "People should think that it was done with love, not just given. They should feel good when

the see those baskets.” In the meantime, they didn’t even care what it looked like as long as they got it. (SF: There was a regular poor house.) There were people who lived there. There were two families. It was not Jewish. They were poor people and, you know, whoever had a little more than the next one... We, especially we... I never forget the steps to go up. I used to say “Momma, I don’t want to go there. You break your foot.” So my father belonged to the town council. He arranged that those steps were fixed because he says “I want this done.” They had a big writeup. Because he believed that. That’s where they had

SF: There are a lot of things at home like doilies and things.

FF: Yeah, my mother used to do that when she was younger but she didn’t believe on that anymore. She used to say “Who needs it? Who goes around and washes and irons and starches?”

SF: Did any of the women do jobs?

FF: No.

SF: You were in the choir?

FF: Yah, in the gentile choir. In the church choir. We sang once in the temple. Bianca’s father arranged it and we sang on yontif in the temple.

SF: Tell me about the time your father snipped off the cross.

FF: I played in the Christmas pageant. But it wasn’t anything real gentile, it was just a Christmas pageant. I played the queen. I had to wear a crown. My hair was all like gold and long up to here and it opened up. It was really good. I had to wear a crown. You had to go for rehearsal with the crown on and I had trouble because my hair was so thick and the elastic constantly snapped off. So then I had to put the whole hair and put the thing underneath so my mother had to lengthen the wire and I had to take it home. So the next day when we played, this girl said to me “There’s something wrong with your crown.” I said “What’s wrong with it? I just took it home to have the wire put on, lengthened.” She said “There’s something not right.” The cross was snipped. It was just the length. Not this way. The stick was up but not the cross. “So” I said “Well I don’t know what happened..” Nobody saw it, nobody said anything, nobody even realized it and I didn’t make anything out of it. On the way home I said “Something really terrible happened. Did you see what happened to my cross” My father looked ... I said “Papa, did you do it?” and he said “Yes.” “Why didn’t you tell me?” “Because I know what you would have done.” He says “I don’t want you to wear a cross. As long as nobody says anything. Even if they would have said something I would have explained that. So it went fine and that’s all there is.”

SF: Did you go on vacations? Skiing and stuff?

FF: Yeah. We went to Italy. We went to Switzerland. Skiing. In Italy we didn’t go skiing. That wasn’t from home anymore, that was from Munich. I went away when I was 12 years old. I didn’t have much chance. I helped a lot in the fields. I loved to do the field work. I used to feed the cows. My father extra had for me some young animals, they were like young bulls. They had about four of them. And goats. I learned to milk on a goat. My mother said you have to know everything and I wouldn’t go near a cow. So my father got me a goat. I never forget I had red velvet house slippers. Not realizing what I do I went down with the red velvet house slippers and here I had to milk a goat.

SF: Were any of your father, grandfather in the military?

FF: My father was in World War I. In the infantry.

SF: Was your grandfather in the Franco-Prussian War? FF: I have no idea.

SF: Were there any special medical things that you remember?

FF: No, we were all as healthy as a horse. Nobody was ever sick as long as I remember. Ever.

SF: How about on my father's side?

FF: His father had asthma, and he stopped working when he was 42 years old. It was at times very bad. Daddy supported the whole family. He rode with the bicycle. Every time he wanted ... his mother promised him next time he can buy a motorcycle and every time he had the money together his father started building towards the house. They had the most beautiful house in town.

FF: My father was in town politics in Wittelshofen.

SF: Who sent the castle article. FF: Yeah, the Germans who are still there. It is not a friend. They took the history of the town. It was a historian. There is a girl there, she is as old as Bianca. They are very nice people. They are elderly people. She sent it to Ida.

SF: Were the Jews in Wittelshofen very assimilated or were they kept separate?

FF: No, they were very assimilated...until the Nazis came.

SF: Was that recent? The history of the Jews in Germany is that they suffered persecution through time.

FF: No we didn't. Not that I remember. Everything was fine until the Nazis came.

SF: Your grandmother lived with you for a while?

FF: Forever. Yah. My father's mother. See my father was the only child and so my mother married into the house. My mother came.. What happened is this. My mother's parents died and my mother was the youngest. Then she moved from a small town near Würzburg to a little city near Nürnberg because her sister and her brother-in-law lived there. He was a teacher there. She lived with them until she got married. So my mother acquired all the city ways of living so when she was introduced to my father, before they wrote to the teacher in our town to find out about the family. To find out what the family is like. You know they used to do that. He wrote back that the Winter family is a very well known family, they are very nice people and they are pretty well to do, the only bad part is that there is red hair in the family. So this wasn't so easy to overcome. My mother didn't mind about that so my mother married in. They had this in all the old house there. Before you went up the stairs, the bedrooms were up the stairs, and underneath the stairs there was a chicken coop. There were chicken living in the house. My mother said "I will not live with animals under the same roof. Those chickens have to go. I will not move in this house with animals." So before they got married, they built chicken coops to put chickens out because my mother said she wouldn't move in there. She came from a city. What are you going to do, live with animals in the house? So they took the chickens out. Then my mother fixed up the house.

You should see the wedding picture, my mother was a very beautiful woman. My grandfather was crazy about my mother and my grandmother got very jealous. She tried to hurt my mother wherever she could. The way you were brought up, you never answered back to elders. My mother's mother died when my mother was very young so she wanted to be especially nice to my grandmother but she didn't take it nice. Then my father said "There is one thing I'm going to tell you. Either you leave my wife alone and appreciate her and act like she is my wife, otherwise we move out." He says "I can get another house tomorrow, I will not stand for it" So then she changed. But she still...when my two sisters were born...

Sf: You said your grandfather was alive then too?

FF: I didn't know my grandfather. He died when I was very young. Either before I was born or when I was a very small baby. I never met him. But he must have been a very good man.

(My father and mother) moved in with both his parents and they had the nicest room in the house, the grandparents. That's what you did. That was the rule. That was the respect. When my second sister was born my grandmother was very mad that it wasn't a boy. When I was born she was very happy. She didn't know what was coming. My two sisters were so good to her, but not me. I know she wasn't nice to my mother so I wasn't nice to her.

The castle burned down when my grandparents built the house. The living quarters were downstairs and the bedrooms were upstairs. My sisters were young and they got married when I was young. (My father) bought the house where Bianca's parents lived and Ida's mother lived downstairs. She got the milk from us. She got the eggs from us.

SF: You said Ida was illegitimate?

FF: Yah, don't tell Ida. I tell you what happened. When she went to school she was still Ida Bravman and then my father, don't ever, ever whatever you do tell, had to go with her, with Ida's mother, to the city, to Dinkelsbuhl to the court, because her husband died, was killed in the war and she had those two children where she would get the pension for. So my father said to her "It's about time you have that child written over to the same name. It gives you less trouble and less questions and later on its easier for the child to..." and so that's what she did. She used to say me when she was five and when she was seven "I went to my mother's wedding, you didn't." SF: She had a sister? FF: Yah, younger. She was. (can't hear...)

SF: My father's mother was a Frank before and after she was married. Were they related?

FF: No. Not at all. It just happened.

SF: Did my father have any pets when he was young?

FF: They had a dog. They even had a picture taken with the dog. You saw the picture. Like you have a master here, that he could have.... He apprenticed with his father (SF: But his father stopped working). It was always on his father's name. That's why I don't get any pension. See, this is how his mother wrote. His father still owned the business. He worked there but his father didn't. You know, you had such respect that you never wrote it over to... You know that.

SF: Is this the passport you used to leave Germany? FF: Yeah. From Stuttgart.

SF: What does it say here?

FF: Wittelshofen. There I was born the 30th. Wohnort(residence) Stuttgart. That's why I had to go to Stuttgart, to get my papers. See my Wohnort was Wittelshofen but I had to get it there. Mittel. That means I'm medium size. My face is oval. My eyes are gray and my hair is red. (On Siegfried's passport it says) he was a butcher and he was born in Homburg on Main. He was very small, and then in 1903, when they got married, they moved to Buttenwiesen. Also his figure is mittel and his face is also oval and the eyes are blue/gray and the hair is dark and any marks, he had none.

That's his master. That he made his master. See if he would have stayed in butcher out there, he could have had help like he could have taught some young people. See, I just want to show you what happened. Here he had to already be called Israel. Not me. I went earlier. I didn't have to be called. Every Jew had to be called Israel. See. Had by Hermann Frank learned. Three years. But you had to make this in front of butchers. (Notes signatures of people who gave him a test or something.)

He had the nicest house in Buttenwiesen. He always said it and the people from Buttenwiesen said it. Sorry to say they are dead now. That's what daddy said. That every time he had some money saved it went into the house. He had such fights with his father. It must have been a beautiful house. After the Hitler time, when they sent the money for the house, he said 'I don't accept it. This was the nicest house in town and I want to be paid right' and they sent more money. See, he would have gone after them. He would have gone out. He said once to me "I go out. I want what's coming to me. I worked too hard or it" and I used to say "You have go alone without me, with out." He says "I go. Because" he says "they owe it to me. I'm not going to let it go." Not like me. I let everything go.

SF: What happened? It got turned over to the Jewish relief agency?

FF: Ya. Ya. They used that money to resettle refugees. "Maccabee, come here honey."

SF: Was my father's home just a house or a farm? Were there a lot of Jews in Buttenwiesen.

FF: It was a house. There were a lot of Jews. (He kept kosher). Everybody kept kosher.

SF: But you didn't keep kosher here.

FF: I started out keeping kosher. Then he used to get steaks for nothing. Then I changed.

SF: How are we related to the Baums?

FF: Ruth Baum? That was from my father's side too. My grandmother. Remember Uncle Moritz, Ruth's father? His mother and my grandmother were sisters. My father and Moritz were first cousins.

SF: Were you in Wittelshofen during the Depression? During the Inflation?

FF: Ya. (Her father built a barn and bought a piano). I was very young. Me (the inflation) never affected. Not the family either because we had all the eggs and the cows and everything. The people came from the city to us. "Maccabee come here." Uncle Leo can tell you about the inflation. If there was a depression I didn't know.

Sf: You said at age 12 you went away to school. Was that unusual? Where did you go?

FF: Very unusual. Nürnberg. Those relatives which we supported during the War and Depression with food and everything, they said that they always wanted me. That I can go to school from there. But they didn't treat me nice. They became very rich. They were in the hopf (hop) business, you know hops, to make beer. He was such a good man but he was always on the go and she was home. They had two maids and they didn't treat me right. They didn't treat anybody right, they didn't treat the help right either, but they had a heck of a lot of money and... From there I didn't have far to go to school. Four or five. I went to school six years. I want to tell you something, that's about 50 years ago and I can't remember. The funny part was, because I hated to go back to them, I moved out though. (Then I lived) with friends and there I was forever. Till I left. I used to carry the coals up. They rented out rooms. We paid them too. We paid them a heck of lot of money and I got weaker and weaker and my father took me to the doctor because it affected my eyes and everything and they said we can't believe it but this child is undernourished. It was just terrible. The uncle had nothing to say. He was always gone. He was buying this hopf. In fact he used to bring me presents all the time. He used to say "You don't look happy. You don't sound happy..." "I am happy" I used to say. (I went to) Hebrew school every day. We went home and we changed and we went to Hebrew school. Three hours. I went there until I was finished with school.

SF: What did you do after you were finished with school?

FF: I went to Munich and I worked in the butcherei by the Bambergers. I had a job in München which was like a house....? I had to do the cooking because they were very religious and we had gentile help. But they couldn't touch the cooking so I had to do the cooking but she helped me

with cooking. I loved to do the butcher shopping. He used to say, he had two children, Martin who was married in Baltimore, who we visited him many times, and the daughter who lived in New York. I mean she, she moved after Hitler...she lived in Nürnberg and from there they moved to Schletlinberg(sp?) in Holland and then when Hitler came they moved here. That's the one I visited once and, I told you, she never spoke to me again because I told her daddy worked on Shabbos. She said "You never should have told me" and I said "Why shouldn't I tell you. God sees what it is." (SF: Did you know the Bamburgers before hand.) FF: No, my sister knew them. Ruth's mother. He used to say to me "If I ever give my business up, you're going to get it." I said to him "Herr Bamburger, I would never ever.... It was a butcher shop. Then I went to the Weils. After that, when they to close (?), I went home for a while. Then I went from relatives to relatives and then I wanted to get my papers and I couldn't get the papers and I had to get the papers so I went to Stuttgart. They wanted me and I went there to get the papers and treated me like.... I was discussing it yesterday with Evelyn. No, this morning. I had to call him Herr Weil, and I was like a house tochter (daughter), like they say you didn't get paid much. They didn't even pay social security. If I wouldn't have gone there I couldn't have gotten my papers because they didn't send them back to town so I had to go there. They had me in their hands.

SF: Who sent the 20 mark gold piece to my bar mitzvah?

FF: You mean that time, many years ago? The Weinschens lived next door to us. They had no children. To them I was their child. (SF: She's the one who gave you the scarf?) FF: that's the mother of them. She gave it to me, she told me never to give it away, that was her prize possession. The daughter had no children, that's why the mother gave it to me. The old mother. She died. She was high in the 80s. Rosa Weinschenk, that was her children, and David was her son and he lived near Stuttgart and he had a knitting factory and he married a non-Jewish woman and he sent the gold piece because, during the war, I sent him packages and he felt he wanted to do that. That was nice. He was very generous. I still got some (letters?...) He used to say "What would we do without you." Then when they could get it, he wrote and said "Don't send any more. We get enough."

SF: At one point you talked about a teacher of yours who pulled out your hair?

FF: That was in Streicher's school. Because I called out ??????. It was with Streicher. It was Streicher and he had another teacher with him. And he went there and pulled me, and the guy went like this and I got seven stitches. They didn't let me go home. I didn't sleep and I was all stuck with blood (lots of stuff missing here.) Streicher was a Jew hater. He wrote "Der Stürmer," the paper. He pulled me out ?????? just because I didn't ?????? I never forget that as long as I live.

SF: Do you remember preparing to leave? What happened?

FF: I couldn't leave. I couldn't get my papers. I couldn't stay home because my mother said to me "You have to leave because you get yourself and us in trouble" because I couldn't believe what happened. When they threw down the silver thing, when they came and broke the windows. They came to the house and they wanted money. My mother opened the drawer and she says "We don't have any money home" so they took the thing and they threw it upside down and then they went and then they took the leather weight my uncle gave me. It was such a beautiful one. I always wanted to replace it but every time I get to it I can't buy it. Then they shot the dogs. Then I cried and my mother said to me "You're gonna cry for the dogs. You're gonna cry for yourself someday soon, and for us." Then they went to the window and threw it through the window. By us was everything on hills. They threw the silver ladle, and

this... (SF: Did they confiscate a lot of things.) FF: At that time they didn't. They just threw everything out. They didn't take anything away. It was in 1937. I just stood there. I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't believe it. There were three (Nazis). In regular dress. My mother said "Kind, you have to leave because you bring yourself.... I took one arm and I said "Get out of here." I just couldn't believe it. I said "I can take it." So he turned around and looked at me. I said "I can take it. I can beat the life out of you. Who do you think you are, breaking into houses like this?" He turned around and he went like this, like to say "You're going to get it next." My mother saw that. I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't.

SECOND SIDE OF TAPE—DOES NOT PICK UP FROM END OF FIRST. STARTS IN MIDDLE OF SENTENCE. NOT SURE WHY.

...dollar and she said that Simon, her brother, will send it to me immediately.

SF: You needed a guarantee of a job.

FF: No. I needed an affidavit. It said that the person who gives you the affidavit is responsible for you. In case you come and you get sick, he has to take care of you. You're not supposed to be a ward to the state or country. So then I didn't hear and didn't hear so Gretl Weil sister-in-law came also here and she called up Aunt Saler and she said to her "Flora is waiting for an affidavit from your brother, and if he can't give it then my brother-in-law (Note: meaning Herbert Winter, brother of Gretl Weil) would it to me to bring it back so she says "Well, my brother would give it to her immediately but my sister wrote that Flora has trouble with her knees and she's going to be trouble for him." This is something I don't even think you should put on the tape. This was my mother's niece, Aunt Saler's sister, who lived in a small town, also near Stuttgart and she had a breast operation and they were, at one time, very rich. Then he gambled everything away and then they were very poor and she was very sick. She wrote to my parents that they should help her and I should please come. My mother said "Please go there. You do a big mitzvah." That was when I was in-between, you know. So I went there and helped her and she was sick that time and came home from the hospital, and I took care of her. He was a real woman chaser that was part of why they lost a lot, because he had to pay off girls. Then wherever he was he puts his arm around me and first I thought....then all of a sudden he wanted to get fresh so I got very panicky. My cousin was upstairs in the bedroom and I was down there and I prepared a meal and all this. Then the doctor came, Dr. Mertzbach and visited her every so often. I had trouble with my foot because when I was very young I fell in skiing and my knee got water, in the kneecap was full of water. I said to him "Dr. Mertzbach, I have trouble with my foot. What am I supposed to do?" He says "I want to tell you something. Your cousin is well enough to take care of herself and you have to go to the consulate in time to come. You better go home and nurse your foot. Otherwise you never make it." When I told her that Dr. Mertzbach said I really should go home now. You're well enough. You go to café every afternoon grenzien(?) and all that so I'm going to go home." Because I paid all her bills she didn't like that and she wrote to Simon that I'm going to be a risk for him. Irene who came here said "Flora has trouble with her knee. That's a new one on me. What kind of a thing is this. Forget about your brother. I bring her one from Herbert." She sent me one from Herbert and they sent me one from Detroit. Then I had two.

Then I started working at it and the first thing I needed the birth certificate and couldn't get the birth certificate because he says he's not going to give Jews birth certificates. So I didn't know

what to do. I got very panicky. Bianca's mother corresponded with Aunt Gretl. So she says "Aunt Gretl would love to have you. Then you be right there. If you're away from here and write for your birth certificate, he has to mail it. He has to send it, yet." I mean later on they probably could do what they want. So I went to Stuttgart and I wanted to take a lawyer first. Then I went to one of those organizations, whatever they were and they said "we write for you and, if not, you have to take a lawyer" because he has to hand it out. That's how I got my birth certificate in Stuttgart. They had me in their hands and I stood with them because I needed them. That's how I got the affidavit. And that's all. Then I went to the consulate and they let me go through like nothing.

SF: There's some story about somebody not wanting to give you the papers? A girl that you grew up with.

FF: That was in the post office. Well see what happened was this. The affidavit came to, the papers came to my home town. When Irene came back she wrote to me or called me up, I forgot now what it was, and she says "Your papers must come any day." I went there and I wanted to get the papers and I saw something laying there with stamps on it, like American stamps. So I said to her "There is my mail. Give it to me." She says "We don't hand the mail to Jews. There was this post office. It had the door like this, half the size. Here they gave you the mail and here on the bottom, that's where they opened up to hand you the packages. She said "I'm not giving it to you." So I pushed my foot in like this and I went underneath and I threw her in the corner and I said "You give it to me. Otherwise you and me, none of us is going to come out alive here." Then she handed it to me. Then I threw her in the corner.

SF: Then you went home and got packed?

Then I went home and then I had to go for the birth certificate. No I didn't get packed because I had to find out first how long it takes with the affidavit. You don't get it right away. That takes a long time. They had to inquire. That took months and months. It took a year. A year and a half. That's what happened. Then the Weils left and I was then I wasn't even sure then that I get it. Then I wouldn't know where to go in Stuttgart because the Lowenthals, Saler and Weils left at the same time. Then three or four days before this wonderful man came from the (Bureau of Records) and he says to me "I saw you were so nervous and I figured it takes a while. I'm going to give it to you." He brought me my passport. He was such a fine man. He says "I hate to see what's going on but what can I do?" He was a wonderful man.

SF: So then you went home and packed?

FF: Then I went home and I wanted to pack. They wouldn't take my packages on the mail. The post office wouldn't take my mail. Wouldn't take my package. We didn't have trunks made. We had the steamers. The regular steamers. I had to ship it to Munich because it has to be inspected and there was no one who would ever come home to inspect it. You couldn't go from there. In the meantime we had still two horses and we had still our wagon. We were the only ones who had a wagon, where we loaded the cows in to bring it to the markets. So we loaded the trunks and we brought it to where Herta comes from, to that city, to that town (Note: Wassertrüdingen), because we didn't have any railroad where we came from and the post office wouldn't mail it. So we brought it there to the railroad and then they shipped it to München, to Ruth's parents and from there on I went.

In Munich Ruth's father got me the trunks. They had to be made to certain specifications and he did it. I had in there two or three winter coats, a winter suit, my leather coat with fur on the bottom and fur on the neck, and I can't tell you what else. My God what... My mother came to

Munich. She wanted to see me packing. This man who packed was so good. He say's...We had to pack it down where my sister lived, in the washroom. You had to give them a certain place. So he says "I'm going out for lunch now. I be back in an hour. I have to go to lunch. I be back in an hour." He left everything open. There was no seals. People used to tell me that they had iron straps around, metals straps around. You could put in whatever you want. My mother came to Munich and I said at that time "Momma, what are you carrying?" She says "A few things." My mother went down and put...I couldn't go near it. I couldn't go near the packing. I couldn't care what they put in. Ruth's mother went down. She says to me "You don't even know what you have. Go down." I said "I couldn't see." I couldn't see anything from home being taken and given to me. Like my mother wanted to give me the candelabra and they lit it every Friday night. I said "Momma, I can't take it. How can I enjoy it when I know..." And I wasn't married then so how do I know I ever need it. I said "Momma, I can't take it. I just can't take it" and I wouldn't. This silver ladle I took because I said "This will always remind me of what it was." My mother said "You have to have it fixed." I said "No. Its going to remind me. I never have it fixed." Someday when you get it you can have it fixed if you want.

SF: What's wrong with it?

FF: Its banged up from...

SF: This is the one they threw through the window?

FF: Yah, and I went down to get it. I nearly broke my neck going down. It was so steep you know. I have something else here. I never even knew I had it. When I got married I emptied the thing....Well, no, I never got my trunk. That was a big, brown trunk with the initials on FW and when I went from...I wanted to go from Karlsruhe into France because Bianca's brother learned to be a baker. You had to learn a trade, you know. He was there to say goodbye to me and I wanted to see him once more. He was my everything really. He was like a brother to me. I looked out of the train and I didn't see my... they disconnected certain wagons and I looked and looked and I saw a lot of trunks on that one wagon and it didn't go into France. (In it)were my winter coats and my clothes in there. My coats, my skirts, my shoes.

SF: And stuff your mother put in too?

FF: No. No. That was the trunk, all clothes. I really don't know anymore what was in it. I had a big trunk. That I didn't even see. That I did not see. That was direct going to the boat or something. I really don't know what was... That had metal strips around it and all that kind of stuff.

I went to Paris. I had a boyfriend there. Before I left my father, who could not stay in the room with me alone, whenever he came in he cried. He said to me "I want you to promise me in my hand that you will leave France. Once you leave you have to leave Europe and you have to promise me. You cannot stay in Paris." Because he knew I liked that man very much. He was a veterinarian. He says "You have to leave Europe and you promised me that and a promise is holy." I come to Paris on Friday and Leubrecht(sp?) was very fromm (pious, religious) and I look out the window and all of a sudden he threw a big bunch of flowers at me. It was already Shabbos. I said to myself "What am I going to do here now. Its late already." It was a delay somehow. I figured I take a taxi because I knew which hotel I go to. That was all arranged. I said "How do you come on Shabbos?" He says "We gave in to a few things" he says. "That's one of them." We were happy to see each other and all that. Then he invited me to go to Friday night to his uncle who was a veterinarian in Paris. Dr. Leubrecht. (SF: How

did you meet him?) In München. He was a friend of Martin Bamberg. He liked me then already and I liked him already. But he always said "Look, we have to leave. There is no sense getting serious here because who knows where luck goes" and I felt its true. Then after we were there and we ate, and they were very religious, very fine people, he says to him "Did you tell Fraülein Winter what's what?" He says "No, no. Later." So I felt very uncomfortable so I said...this is the first time I traveled on Shabbos too, because I couldn't help it, so I said "How far is the hotel. I feel very uncomfortable traveling on Shabbos." He says "When you're in a strange country you do things you never thought you would do." So we walked and I said to him "What did your uncle want you to tell me?" He says "Oh, I got a big surprise for you. A big surprise." I was looking. I thought he was going to give me a ring or something. I said "What's the surprise?" He said "You not going to leave here. You gonna stay here." I said "What for?" He said "Because we got you Auffelhatsgennamt (sp?) We got you a paper that you can remain here." He said it was "...very, very hard and we pulled a lot of strings to get that." I said "You're out of luck. I can't stay here." He says "What do you mean?" I said "I promised my father." He said "Promises are broken." I said "Not to my father. I would never break a promise (to him)." He says "You cannot do it to my uncle." I said "I do it to you and I do it to your uncle. I promised my father. I cannot go back on my promise." I said my father said it broke his heart for me to leave but I have to leave Europe. He said "That's ridiculous. Nothing is going to happen here." I said "My father doesn't say ridiculous things. What my father says it is always true." He says "Please don't do that."

So we had to go to his uncle the next day on Shabbos. First we went outside to a big, big department store. We couldn't go in because we couldn't carry money. I carried every paper I had with me. Then his uncle said "Did you hear, did you hear?" I said. "Dr. Leubrecht. I don't know how to tell you but I might as well tell you right away. I am not staying in Paris." He got pale. He had a beard. He got so pale He says "I cannot believe it." I said "I promised my father that I leave Europe." So he says to me "If you promised. Das ist ein gebot (sp?)" he says. "And you have to fulfill it. I understand." He understood but Leubrecht didn't understand. He never wanted to understand it. I said to him "You come to America." I said "I try if you want to come to America." But he started to finish studying. He wanted to get done with it. So that's how I got to America. Leubrecht was killed too. The whole family was killed I found out.

SF: You had money hidden in skis?

FF: In Switzerland. In skiing all the time. You put it in the skis. There was this shoemaker in München. His name was Mr. Lehrs. He did that for people. He opened the skis. As a shoemaker he knew how to do that. Like you put soles together. We went to Switzerland and the skis. You could never take the skis into the train. You know, there was extra provision outside to put it in. That's how we went. Then we got there and there was a man, another Jewish man, Mr. Tzimitz (sp?), who opened them. You couldn't get smuggle money out from Germany. You were never allowed to legally... That was the only place you could put money. I didn't know anybody in... You had to bring your own money in by yourself. (SF: you smuggled money into the banks in Switzerland?) FF: Yah, you got to Mr. Tzimitz and you had to pay Mr. Tzimitz something for opening your thing and he got a cut in there too. (SF: so you smuggled money in for later?) FF: You wrote to Switzerland that they should transfer it to America. That's what happened and that's where I lost it all.

SF: You lost it all?

FF: I lost it all. I paid it in Cuba. SF: That's another story.

SF: Did your father study the Talmud or was he just observant and prayed?

FF: He prayed. He knew all that. He knew the Chumash and he knew all that. They went to shears (sp?) what its called to sit together on Saturday morning after the temple and they learned together. They did that, yah. Every week somewhere else. Most of the time in our house because it was the warmest house.

SF: Did anybody give you gifts when you left?

FF: Everybody. My sisters gave me rings which I gave to Bianca. I gave her the rings. They gave me jewelry. I lost some and some was stolen. My sisters gave me those birds. The birds they gave me. This little thing I got too. The little bowl up there and the birds I got. This I got from my mother (the girl with the apple) when I went to school. (The cat on the ball) I got from Paula and Beno. Here.

SF: How about the egg shaped bowl with the chickens?

FF: That's worth a fortune. Don't ever give this away whatever you do. (Mother gave it to me).

SF: How did my father get out.

FF: Daddy had a hard job. He got the affidavit through a gentile friend in Bittenwiesen who had relatives here. Through a relative here, his name was Frankenthaler, who was some kind of bigshot at the produce exchange. Once he got here he didn't want to know anything about anybody. He got here (Frankenthaler) and he stood with Hella and Jack Lehman. They got him room and board. They helped him for that affidavit in that Frankenthaler because they got a roomer that time. They needed it to rent out rooms. Uncle Leo got him that job. Before he came he had the job already.

SF: Who gave him the affidavit?

FF: This man, his name was Frankenthaler, and some man I don't exactly how that worked, a gentile man from his hometown who had relatives here, who wanted to help him or helped him, I can't tell you exactly. But Hella and Jack Lehman went to that Frankenthaler who was related to Hella's father and daddy's mother, they were brother and sister, and he got them the affidavit and they went there because they know when daddy comes he will stay with them and pay them room and board and be baby sitter for Laura.

SF: How did my father end up in Dachau?

FF: Like everybody else. They came and they took you. Just because you were Jewish. '37. I got out in '37 and daddy got out in '38. No, I got out in '38 and daddy got out in '39.

He had trouble walking because they gave them shoes, all of them shoes, two numbers too small and in those two number too small shoes they had to march. Whoever couldn't march they shot. (SF: How long was he in Dachau?) FF: I think two months. (SF: Did he ever talk about it?) FF: Yeah, oh God, did he ever talk about it. Terrible. He see so many people dying. There was one elderly Jewish man who died right in his arms. He just had to lay down. From marching and starvation. He couldn't march because the numbers...that daddy's feet... Do you remember his toes were so crippled? That was from that. He forced himself to do it.

SF: Did he have nightmares about it? FF: Oh God, I tell you something. It was unbelievable. He went like this all night (Note: FF showed arms flailing). That was already a year later or a year and a half later. Did he have nightmares. It was terrible. I wanted him to go to a doctor.

He wouldn't go. He says "You help me. You help me." Oh he was hit and everything. It was terrible. SF: What was the food like? FF: I don't know. If he ever (described it) I don't know. They beat him. He got out because the mayor of his hometown was a friend of his and he (daddy) had a group, an athletic group. He was the leader of an athletic group. They all went to fight for him. They said "We want him out, we want him out" and they got him out. Somehow or another. They were different than by us. Then he got here.

SF: You said the Nazis came and took away your goods?

FF: We lived up the hill. They just took it down. What they did with you, where the loaded (it)... You couldn't go to the window and look. They turn around and shoot you. SF: did they take your father's wagon? FF: Not while I was there. 1938 and then the Kristalnacht was in October of 1938. I left in April. March or April. That was '38. Then they confiscated everything. They threw you out. I understood they took my parents and the Jewish people there to a prison. They had to walk. How they ever came from that prison to my sister in Munich I never found out because it was a big distance and I don't think they had any money or anything. I don't know. I just don't know. I like to know that myself and never found out.

SF: Do you remember where you were when the war broke out?

FF: I was pregnant with you a week or two. December 7th. We had company. The Meyers. My thoughts were "Oh my God, I hope daddy doesn't have to go and I hope I can hear from my parents. I hope they don't break us up that I don't hear from them anymore." Then we wrote to them and we told them when you were born. Then I got a telegram. A Red Cross letter. Did I ever tell you that? I wrote them from the hospital when you were born, and also to my in-laws. My father always said to me "If we can't write to you direct, we write with the Red Cross." See, he was so smart that he knew all this but he still didn't want to leave. He said "strengre hen redieren nicht mar (sp?)"—strong men will not last long. Everybody said that. They never thought that he would last long. So then I was nursing you and the mailman rang from downstairs. He lived up on top, on the third floor. Remember that? No, you were too small. I called down and said "What is it?" He said "Mrs. Frank I got a Red Cross letter" and I run down and he handed me the letter and I fainted. I thought it was a letter that my parents weren't alive anymore and I fainted and I hit my head against the steps and I lost milk. You kept screaming and screaming and they wrote a letter in which they congratulated us for your birth and they said they were so happy that we got a boy, because I always wanted a boy. So that was the letter and I never had any milk and I went to the doctor, Dr. Wesley, and I said I can't understand this child is crying day and night and he tried and he says "You're all dried out. What happened?" I told him and he said "When you're scared that can happen." Then I had to put you on milk. You know, and all kinds of formulas, whatever that was. That's why you turned out so good.

SF: What kind of persecution do you remember?

FF: They wanted to beat me but I never stood still long enough. Constantly name calling and all this.

SF: Was this the people in the town?

FF: Yah, they were not too bad to me. In fact there were some of the boys that I went to school with, to public school, and they came at night. We had around our house those big gardens and they came in the bushes, crawling, and they came up and they said "Don't you leave Flora. We don't want you to go. No one's going to do anything to you. We don't want you to go."

There were a few boys who said that. FF: I said no. What changed you...

SF: I thought you said people who you used to help were spitting at you?

FF: Yeah, the neighbors when I went down from my house to pass by. I had to pass by. She said "Heinele (fond term for Heinrich), what do you do when Flor passes by?" and he spit. That's the only thing I wrote back to that mayor when he says I should come and visit or something. I wrote back to him, that's the first time I wrote back to Wittelshofen, I said "What happened to those people?" And I wrote to which people I meant and he say's they all died. Too bad. He says he remembers my parents very well. I even know who he was. He was a little boy. Maybe now in the 50s. He was a little kid then.

SF: You had several workers on the farm?

FF: Yah. We had those neighbors. We supported them and we gave them half of our gardens too. See our gardens went around five houses and that house was one of them and they didn't have much garden on their own. So my father always said "Take care of it and whatever comes off the tree you take." That's what happened. They took it and then they turned against us.

FF: (The workers) helped with the hay. You had to get the grass off the ground and you had to work it and all that. Whatever you have to do on a farm they did. Our man lived above the barn because he had to feed the animals when you had the high snow. You couldn't leave the house. The barns were just down the road but you couldn't get out of the house. You couldn't open the shutters. Sometimes two or three days. Always had enough stuff in the house because you couldn't...you always had everything in the house anyway. That was a good time. That's when you were home and the house was so nice and warm and all that. It was very comfortable. Very good.

SF: Two stories. One when you came home once and nobody wanted to light the fire because it was Shabbos and the other when you came home and there was a beggar there and you wouldn't eat with him.

FF: That was when I went to high school. He was in the bus with me. We had no train. As I told you there was no train depot where I came from. The train went to where Aunt Herta came from, der Wassertrüdigen, and from there we had to take a bus. The bus went there twice a day, morning and afternoon. The trains met the bus. Otherwise sometimes you had to wait a half hour. So I went in the bus and there was this man with a black coat and a beard, and when we got closer to the town he says to me "where is the banas(?)," that means the president of the Jewish thing. So I said "Oh, that's my father," I said. So he says "Well how do I get to him?" I said "Oh, they're going to be at the bus to pick me up so you can talk to him." I went out before him because I didn't respect this type of people. My father was already mad when he saw me going out before an old man. So I said "Papa, there is the Pollack who wants to talk to you" so my father said to him "What can I do for you?" He must have told him he is poor or whatever. I don't know. My father said to him "You come home with me and we take care of you." So I put my papa on the side and hugged and kissed him and I said "Papa, if this Pollack eats at our table, I'm not going to sit with him. I'm not going to sit at the same table as that Pollack sits." My father just put me down and walked away, back to this man, and excused himself and went to this man. Before we up to our house he called my mother and he talked to my mother something. When I came home up there, oh God the maids were there with big hellos and the table was set so nice and always flowers on the table and a present, always a present when I came home. My mother used to hang the present on the window so that when I came up the hill I saw already that a present was waiting for me. You know that Tyrolean jackets or whatever. So I went in there and I wanted to take the present down and my mother

said "Leave it here till later. Leave it here." I thought "That must be a big thing that I have to leave it there. I can't rip it apart right away." Then my mother went out into the kitchen where the soup was steaming and everything, whatever there was. I don't know anymore. I helped carrying it in. The soup by us was always served in a soup tureen. We never ladled it out. It was done in the kitchen and then you brought it in. Then my mother said "You take this plate. Take it out in the kitchen" so I took it out to the kitchen.

I was sure I said that I wouldn't eat with that man on the table there so he is eating out there. I wanted to sit down and my mother said "No, you brought your place out there, that's where you eat." "Not me in the kitchen." "Yes, you in the kitchen. You wouldn't eat with this poor man, so you have to eat where he isn't. That's the kitchen." There were the cats and there were the dogs and there was I, because our help always ate on the table. I cried and I cried and I cried so loud that my father just couldn't help hearing it. Then he came out. He says "What is it?" "I have to eat here because this Pollack eats in there." My father said "This is not a Pollack. This is a poor man, a poor religious man, and I want to tell you something right now. If this is why we sent you away, to come back as such a snot nose, then you aren't going to go back. You stay home because you have to learn bringing up at home. They don't do it, we will do it." My father never spoke like this to me. He went in again and there I ate. I wouldn't even go in to get more food. I wouldn't go in and get my meat. Our help they were sitting there and they felt terrible. That's where I had a terrible day. I had a few terrible days, and my mother said to me "If you learned a lesson, you can come back." The next day I couldn't eat there either. The man was gone but my mother said "You learned a lesson, if you learned a lesson." But I came to Munich and every time a Pollack came like this, I felt the same way. Mr. Schindler was a real Pollack. He said to me "I am gonna bring you a Pollack. You're gonna marry a Pollack." I said "Mr. Schindler, don't punish me, don't say that.." I don't know. I never learned it at home. I never learned it at home. Just a terrible, terrible thing. I felt very bad.

SF: What about the fire?

FF: The fire? I came home and in between coming here and staying home, still waiting for my papers and all that, and it was very, very cold. God it was so cold. See I left in April or March and I was home for two months. It was winter. Winter. So we sat there and we sat there, my momma wrapped up in things. I said "Momma, that's no good. If you get sick, you have no doctor. You can't do it. So my mother said "I can't lay in bed all the time." We had no more help, we had no more maids, nobody you know. I said "I'm going to do something. I know it's a sin but I'm gonna do it. Before you and papa get sick I'm gonna go out and make a fire." My mother went like this but she said to herself "I wish she would do it." I went out and I put in a fire and the wood was cracking and I went in and said "You're gonna feel all right soon. I don't feel good in doing it. I did it the first time in my life but you're not going to get sick because there is no one, no doctor who would take you, no hospital who would take you." I said "You need to help yourself." (SF: Because they were Jewish?) FF: Yah. So my mother didn't answer me. My papa comes down and says "What is it, what is it?" My mother says "The Goye are here." My father went right back up in his room. I said "Papa, I know you say that I am half a goy for doing it. What's going to be if you are sick? If the lieber Gott (dear God) sees this, why do you do this kind of thing? Why do you sit here? It's the first time in my life I did it, but somebody has to help you people." He said "I don't know who brought you up, I

don't know. The big ones would have never done it." He always said that. I said "Well I did it and I do it. I'm glad I did it." Then they came. Then the Oberdorfers came and the Gallingers came. They all came to see what the goye did. And every Saturday they came marching in. They knew I'm gonna do it anyhow. But I put food in the stove to heat up. My parents wouldn't eat it. That they wouldn't do. (SF: Because you had cooked it on Shabbat?) FF: Yah. I heated it up. SF: When did they normally eat on Shabbos? FF: After Shabbos was out. We usually ate the main meal lunchtime but on Shabbos we didn't. We ate the main meal after Shabbos. That's what I did. I ate.

SF: The maids left at that point?

FF: They had to leave. Long before. (SF: Nobody would let them work there.) No. They made it terrible for them.

SF: When did it get really bad?

FF: It got bad already before I left. When I left it was already bad. But they left us alone. Somehow they were afraid of me or they liked me. They liked me. The town really liked me. Whenever I came home they brought me flowers and everything. They always said when I come sunshine comes. "Oh, Flora is home. The sun is shining." They always said that. In fact, once made a joke. It was so snowy, they said "Send Flora out, the snow is gonna melt." I was always very happy. I had no reason not to be. The only trouble what I had was with my hair. They didn't like red hair. I got over that very fast, because it was such a beautiful hair. It was so, so full of luckin(?) they used to say. When I had it open, when I played...I had braids and when you opened the braids it was just like gold flowing. It was very red. At times it was redder. They told me in the summer that if you go in the sun, the sun is bleaching it so I walked around in the sun like crazy. I wanted bleached hair.

SF: Tell me about where your mother looked up and said "there won't be anything but trouble from there." Was it Berchesgarten?

FF: No. That was our mountain (Note: the Hesselberg). Not Berchesgarten. Is near Munich. From our bedroom, the view from my parents bedroom was so beautiful. All the mountains were there. It was just beautiful. Some people came... we had this doctor and he used to come and he used to say "Please let me paint from this window." And they did. I used to say "Oh, momma, it looks so beautiful" but you get so used to it. She says "This is going to bring nothing but tzoris (trouble)" and it did bring tzoris. They put a youth castle up there and that's where they came every few weeks, der Streicher and the Goering and the thing. They came with the white coats and with the big glasses, those dark glasses. We used to wear them for skiing. You know, the blinders. They came and when they came the bells were ringing. The heart cruze (Swastika?) went up, the flags went up. It was just terrible. My mother used to say "Didn't I tell you it's a curse." It was a curse.