

Interview of Bea Kandell by Brad Zarin, December 10, 2013

Audio file 1

Where were you born and when were you born?

Goeppingen, Germany March 16, 1921

Do you remember your parents? Of course.

What was your father's name? Eugene Bernheimer

What did he do for a living? He was a business man. He ran a small distillery. And he sold tobacco products. He sold to restaurants.

When you said he sold tobacco products did they have a store? Did they sell to the public? Yes

Where was the distillery? In the house in Goeppingen.

How many people worked there? Just a few.

Did he need a license? I don't know.

Were the people who worked for your father mostly Jewish? No

Do you remember the names of the workers? One was George. He wasn't Jewish and he had to get rid of him in 1934.

Where did they store the liquors? In barrels and some of it was bottled and labeled.

Who worked in the store? Our family, my mother. Some extended family.

What was your mother's name? Her maiden name? Selma Simon.

What did she do? She worked in the business and kept the books and helped when there were sales. It was a small business.

Who started the business? My father's father.

How many children did Selma and Eugene have? Three daughters. I am the oldest. Who was number 2? My sister Anne. Who was number 3? My sister Margot.

Of the five people in your immediate family who survived the Holocaust? We all did.

In Germany, did you live in an apartment or a house? A big old house. It was a gabled house, three floors and an attic

What was the house made from? I really don't know. Probably wood and concrete.

Did you have your own bedroom? No, I shared it with my sisters.

Did you have your own bed? Yes

How many rooms was the house? The whole house? I don't think that is that interesting.

Did you live in a Jewish neighborhood?

Not particularly. Jews in the town lived in every neighborhood at that time

Do you remember the name of the street and the address? Yes, 3 Geislinger Strasse.

Did your parents own the house? Yes

Did they have animals? No, we had a garden and a dog. We had a couple of fruit trees but nothing that was used for everyday. Nothing that we needed particularly

Did the dog live in the house? Yes, in and out of the house. We had a few dogs.

Do you remember the dogs' names? No. Do you remember what kind of dog? There were several over the years.

You didn't have a refrigerator before the war so how did they keep food cold? We had an ice box and there were blocks of ice delivered. I think we got a refrigerator in the early 30s.

What kind of street was it in front of your house, Was it paved?

What kind of traffic went on the street in front on the house? Automobiles, occasional horse and wagon. Germany in the 30s was a very modern country. It was an industrial town that I lived in. There was quite a bit of industry. We were about 20 miles from Stuttgart. There was a railroad line that went through and had a stop and a couple of hotels. One of them was owned by a Jewish family distantly related on my mother's side of the family. It was not backward.

Did you live near the train station? Yes we could walk to it.

Was your family religious? No

Did they keep kosher? No

Did they observe the holidays? Yes

Was your father Eugene a man with a long beard and a mustache? No, my father was very modern. He had a little mustache.

Do you remember what kind of hat he wore? He wore a regular hat. No caps.

Did he smoke? He smoked cigars.

And your mother, did she wear anything on her head? No

My father had a phrase he would say, if you lived in Germany and you were Jewish and you lived in a predominantly Catholic town and you worked for a Protestant you got most of the holidays off.

When you were a kid what kind of kid were you? Were you good in school? Were you an athlete?

I think I was pretty fair in school. I was not an athlete. We all learned to swim. I don't remember belonging to any team.

Where did you go swimming? There was a town pool that until the Hitler years you could go. You have to remember that some towns were much worse with regard to the enforcement and our town was not that bad.

What made it not too bad? People knew each other and there was a Jewish business community and the elected or appointed officials weren't that serious with regard to the enforcement in the early years. It got worse in the later 30s. I had some non-Jewish friends in school when I could still go to school.

Did you go sleigh riding in the snow? Yes

Did you go ice skating? Yes, there was a pond that froze over in the bitter cold.

Did you have your own skates? I'm sure I did.

Were those the kind of skates you had to screw on to your shoe? Probably. I don't remember

Did you play volleyball or ping pong? I played ping pong.

How tall are you today? Oh, I shrunk. I'm probably 5 foot or a little under. I was 5 foot 6.

Do you remember any of your grandparents? I remember my maternal grandparents vaguely.

Do you know what your grandmother's name was? 17: 27 Um, my father's parents were dead before I was born. My father was the youngest of ten children. He didn't marry until his early forties, so...it's a little hard to go back that far, you know?

Do you know the names of your mother's parents? Yes, um. Adolph Simon and I think it was...it may have been Freida.

Okay. What do you remember about your grandmother? That she was not well. I mean she died when I was quite young. I don't remember who died first, but he was killed in an accident and she died soon after in the late twenties, I think, so I was very young at the time.

Do you think your grandmother wore anything on her head like a sheittel? Not that I know of.

Where did your grandparents live? They lived in the same town.

What do you remember about your grandfather, Adolph? Not much. Nothing pertinent.

Do you know what they did for a living? He was a cattle dealer.

How many children did Adolph and Freida have? Actually, that was the second marriage. Adolph's first marriage...she died very young and she had had with him four daughters.

Do you know their names? Yes. Those were my aunts, I knew all of them. What were their names? When Adolph remarried they had two sons because somebody, you know how to take care of the young children.

So was your mother from the first wife? Yes, yes.

Do you know the name of the second wife? I don't know. I don't remember that. That was the one who I thought was my grandmother because I didn't know the first wife. The first wife died

when my mother was a kid. So there were four girls and then subsequently there were two boys out of that marriage.

Do you know the names of the four girls? Yes. One was Selma, that was my mother, and then there was Freida – another Freida – she was called Fridel, f-r-i-d-e-l, I think. And Eugenia, and uh Julia

And do you know the names of the uh? B: The two men? Were Alfred and Albert.

So what do you remember about Freida? I can't really tell you anything about her.

Do you know where she lived? In the same town.

Do you know if she was married? I don't follow what you're getting at. We're talking about the daughters of my grandparents? Yeah, Freida was married and she lived in Munich and she emigrated in the early thirties to Buenos Aires.

And do you know her husband's name or what they did for a living? No.

Do you know if they had children? Yes. They had two children.

Do you know their names? Yes. Gerhardt (sp?) and Ruth.

Are you in contact with them or? I used to be. You have to remember they are all in their eighties and some of them have died.

What do you remember about your aunt Eugenia? She had a very interesting life. She married an American man in the twenties who was connected to the United States consulate. And she was actually responsible for helping my parents and my younger sister leave Germany in May of 1939 because she had become an American citizen. She was able to expedite their exit otherwise they never would have gotten out.

So would you say she probably saved your life or your family? Well I wouldn't go as far as that but she was instrumental in expediting their exit.

Do you know what her husband's name was? Casey.

She lived in America? No her husband was stationed in Berlin with the United States consulate service.

Did she have children? She had one son.

Do you remember his name? Walter.

And they all survived the war? Well she divorced Casey, I don't remember when, probably in the forties and her son survived the war, he became a writer. He lived in London.

What do you remember about your aunt Julia? I think I liked her best of all the aunts. She had two sons. One of whom is still alive and lives in Germany.

Where did Julia live before the war? In Berlin.

And what was her husband's name? Werner

And what did they do for a living? I think he was in the retail shoe business.

And do you remember the names of their children? Frank and Peter. Peter and Frank in that order, and Frank lives in Germany now.

Did they all survive the war? Yes.

What do you remember about your uncle Alfred? He and his brother were called Fred and Bert. They emigrated in the late twenties to the United States. And they were instrumental in getting us affidavits and coming here to begin with.

So Fred, where did he live? In New York.

And do you remember what he did for a living? Fred and Bert were in business together – they were importing and exporting goods, I don't know exactly what. A lot of straw goods – I can't really put a name to it.

Do you remember their wives' names? They got married...when I came here in 1938 there were still single. They both married...they both married late. Bert married a woman by the name of Sitta, s-i-t-t-a, and she was also a refugee. And Fred married a woman by the name of Rose and she was born in the United States.

Who do you think came from a more religious family, your father or your mother? Probably my mother.

Why do you think so? That's just the impression I got because some of her extended family, whom I very vaguely remember, they were keeping the holidays more seriously than we did.

Do you know the names of your father's parents? Jacob and Bertha.

Do you know where they came from? No. I could probably look that up.

Do you know what they did for a living? They had started that distillery business.

You said they had how many children? I think ten who survived. I think a couple of them died in either childbirth or...I know of ten.

And do you know all the names of the ten? I would have to look it up. I have it on paper somewhere.

Did you know your father's brothers and sisters? They were all older. I knew two sisters.

What were their names? They were both deported, they never got out. They were both deported to Thereisenstadt and one of them died in Thereisenstadt. The other one was able to make it out when she was quite old and sick into Switzerland and she still wrote us a letter or two but she died in Switzerland.

Did she die in Switzerland after the war? Yes after the war. She was liberated from Thereisenstadt.

Do you know the names of those two sisters? The one who lived past the war was Rosa Frei, f-r-e-i. She was quite religious, she married a cantor.

Do you remember his name? I think it was Heinrich, the German word for Henry.

Did they have children? He had children by his first wife. As a matter of fact she had an interesting life. She emigrated to the United States in the early part of the century and when his wife who was an older sister of Rosa's died and left a brood of children, she had to come back and marry him. I think her history is already at Yad Vashem.

Right. Do you remember the name of your mother's sister who died in Thereisenstadt? It wasn't my mother's sister.

You're right, your father's sister. B: Her name was – I have to pronounce it in German because I don't know what it is in English: Hermoine. She died in Thereisenstadt. She was never married.

Now, before the war, how did you get around? On foot or bicycle, streetcar, automobile? How did you travel? Well, there was a lot of walking. We did bicycling. We walked to school. My father did have a car.

Do you remember what kind of car it was? It was an Opel. And he had a chauffeur when he first got the car because he didn't know how to drive. And then when non-Jewish people were not supposed to work for you anymore he had to learn how to drive, he never became a good driver.

Did you always have electricity at home? Yes.

The bathroom, was inside the house or outside? Inside. No, we had...I think the house was an old house but my father had a bathroom installed after my father and mother married.

Do you still remember what they used for toilet paper? B: Toilet paper?

Like today? I think so. I never even thought about it.

And did you always have running water? Yes.

Did you have hot water? Yes. We had a boiler in the kitchen. We had...was like a copper colored tank it was probably copper like a tank.

Do you ever remember going to a Mikvah, you know, like a public bath? No, no. I think there was one in town, but I...we never went, my mother never went.

Do you remember how they washed clothes? I think in later years we had a washing machine. We had something I know.

What did they do before the later years? I don't remember. I do remember that there was a washing machine, but I don't remember when that came in, but what they did...if they didn't have it before. We had a woman who came in once a week who did...my mother had a woman who came in once a week to wash and to iron laundry. There was a little round pot belly stove that you put the irons on that had handles that you could take off, wooden handles wooden handles that clipped on. I still have one of them here that...as a doorstop. Makes a very good doorstop.

Now, do you remember having a telephone? Yes.

And was that something you could use as a kid or was it just for the adults? I don't remember using it as a kid, but I think we could have used it if we needed to – we would have to ask for permission.

Do you remember the telephone number? No.

Now Bea, were you born in a hospital or at home? I don't know.

What would you guess? B: What would I guess? I really don't know.

Do you know about your sisters? No. The youngest I'm sure was born in a hospital, we had a hospital in town – I remember that.

Now, do you remember having a lot of toys to play with when you were little? Yeah we had some toys, but...we weren't spoiled kids. I remember there were a couple of friends of mine who always seemed to have more stuff than I did. We were a very frugal family.

So, do you remember anything about what kind of toys you had? You know, frankly, I hadn't thought about all this stuff so you're asking me so many questions that I have difficulty....

You do the best you can – do you remember anything about what kind of games you played with your friends? We had a couple of board games, I don't remember what they were called. I think we played....we played some card games too, my father was a card player.

Do you think it was better the way it was when you were little in Germany or the way it is in America where the kids have too many toys? Well, you can't even think in terms of comparing that! It was a whole different time element, I mean that doesn't fit into this story. I mean I think the kids here do have a lot too much stuff, but there are kids who are homeless who don't have a thing, you know you can't compare; this is the early thirties we're talking about. The twenties when I was little, I mean...that's a whole different life.

So how did you get shoes? Did you go to a shoemaker or did you go into a store to buy shoes? You'd go into a store to buy...!...Germany was very modern at a very early stage. You're referring to areas that I really consider backward, you know.

So how often did you get new shoes? I don't know, it was immaterial; when you needed new shoes you got them. You had more than one pair.

How did you get clothing? Did you go to a seamstress, a dressmaker, or did you go to a store? Some of it was done by a seamstress and some of it was bought ready-made.

Now did your sisters get hand-me-downs sometimes from you? Yes, yes; why not? They didn't like it and sometimes my mother would dress all of us alike and particularly for some of the... they did a big thing on Channukah or on Purim when you got dressed up for Purim she would try to get us similar things, you know, that were sewn up by a seamstress.

Now, do you remember your parents getting newspapers? Yes.

Do you remember anything about the newspapers? No.

Do you know what language they were in? German

Did you have a radio or a gramophone? We had a radio.

Was it a big radio? I don't know.

Did you have a maid or housekeeper? Yes, we did because my mother tended to business we had help.

Was she Jewish? No she wasn't.

So what happened? In the mid30s that became a problem.

Do you remember her name? No.

Do you remember where she lived? She lived in the house. She had her own room. We also had a kinderfraulein, someone who was strictly for children. She was with us when we were really little.

Was she Jewish? I'm sure she wasn't Jewish. By 1933 she wasn't with us any longer because she was with us when we were really little.

Did anyone in your family play a musical instrument? No.

Did you go the theatre or movies before the war? We went to the movies occasionally.

Do you remember going on vacations?

Yes a couple of times. We never got away as a family because of the business. There was a time when one of my sisters and I went to a camp for two weeks. It was run by a Jewish organization. There were 20-30 local Jewish kids. It was a few hours away near the Alps but in Germany. We went there by train.

What language did you speak before the war? German

Did your parents speak anything else? They spoke some Yiddish when they didn't want us to understand. Or a couple of French phrases that my mother knew. Before I had to quit school we had an English class so I knew a few words before I got here but I was thrown into an environment in Cincinnati Ohio where they didn't speak any German and I didn't speak enough English so I had to learn English real fast.

Was anyone in your family Zionist? I don't think so.

Was your family rich or poor before the war? They were moderate. There were people in town that were much wealthier than we were but we weren't missing anything. And there were people that were much worse off. It all depended on how my father's business was. And as business went down and people wouldn't come to the store anymore some of them came to the back door surreptitiously which was dangerous for them as well as for my parents but they still wanted to get my father's specialty, kirschwasser, which is made from cherries.

So how did they make the liquor? He had a distillery.

Where did they get the grapes from? Actually it was mostly fruit liquors. There were farms that sold fruit commercially. The process of making the liquor I don't exactly know. We had these



big vats that the fruit was fermented in. The product of that gets distilled in an apparatus that boils out the product that becomes the alcohol. If you look it up it will explain better than I can how it is done. That becomes a clear liquid like when you buy applejack or slivovitz, which is from plums. If you want a sweet liquor it is colored.

Do you think most of your father's customers were Jewish? No, they were largely not. He sold it in large gallon jars that would go to restaurants and some of it was bottled. In the distillery in the house there were four rooms with stone floors so you could hose it out. He had a way of bottling the liquors but he also sold in bulk like to a restaurant.

Were all of your friends Jewish or were they mixed? When I first went to school in the late 20s and early 30s they were mixed but then as other people wouldn't talk to you then they were only Jewish. The non-Jewish ones wouldn't talk to you anymore and drifted away.

Do you remember the names of your friends before the war? Yes, some of them emigrated. There was Lilo Guggenheim. She came here and I still saw her for some years in the United States but I haven't seen her in 50 years. As a matter of fact she was in touch with me some time ago. That was one. I could bring up names of some of the others but I don't think that matters to your interview.

One of them was Hilda Fleischer. Well, those were my two best friends.

Did most of your friends from before the war survived the war or no? B: You mean the Jewish ones? Well those two did. They were both married in New York or the area, but I lost touch.

What kind of education did you have in Europe? I finished just about finished high school the last year...you could be out at sixteen and then I went to a business school in Munich for about six months when I lived with my father's two sisters. That was in 1937 and then in 1938 I came here.

Before high school, how many years of school did you have? I guess it was...you know it was one continuous...it must have been ten.

Was it all in the same school? No, it was a...it was a small town. I think it was two different schools; elementary in one building and the...what they would call junior high or high school in another building. But I never got a diploma.

Why not? Because I had to leave school before the...you know...I was in eleventh grade and I was...I couldn't...German Jewish children couldn't go to school anymore.

When you went to the high school you walked to school? Yes.

How much time did it take to walk to the school? Gee, maybe fifteen or twenty minutes.

And the school, was it all girls or was it boys and girls? It was...I think it was mixed as I think about it.

And what percentage of the students do you think were Jewish? Well in my grade, I don't...I don't remember how many people in the class...I'm trying to think...there were only...in my class there were like myself and two other Jewish girls. In my class of maybe...and I think there

was one Jewish boy in the class...you know you're asking me questions that are really out of my head!

Do you still remember the names of the two girls? Well one was Lilo and I think the other one was Hilda.

Did they survive the war? Yes they were the ones that came here and uh...what we were just talking about! They married here...

So in high school did one teacher teach all the subjects or did they have a different teacher for each subject? We had a couple of different teachers. I remember the English teacher.

What do you remember about the English teacher? Somehow or other...I don't know she just...because it was important that we...knowing that we may leave it was important that we learned English so I learned a little and she sort of made an impression. I wanted to learn it so at least I knew a few words before I got here.

What was your favorite subject in school? I don't think I had a favorite subject.

Did you have your own desk or did you share a desk or? No you had individual desks...this was a modern town!

Do you still remember how they have out grades? Were they number or letter grades? Um, I think it depended on the subject. I think in math you got number grades and in some other things you got letter grades. I think! But Think that's very unimportant!

Did they have gymnastics in school? Yes.

Was that inside or outdoors? Inside.

So how did you learn about religion? Oh we had a separate religious school in the synagogue, in the temple. We had a synagogue that was burned down on Kristallnacht when I was already here and we had a cantor and a rabbi and the cantor gave lessons and the rabbi also so we learned religion.

Now, do you remember anti-Semitism before the war? Of course. When your friends didn't talk to you anymore that was all part of it.

Do you remember being called names because you were Jewish? No, not really. We just knew that people were leaving you alone. They just...it really got bad after I left. My sister who experienced a lot more of that, my younger sister, she had a terrible time during 1938. I left in July '38.

What happened to her? She experienced all that when my father was picked up on Kristallnacht and she could tell you the details of that much better than I could, but I think she's already been interviewed and she works as a volunteer at the Leo Beack Institute in New York so she's up on all that. But, I would...I did not feel that much of it because as I said some towns...by that time, by mid '38, some towns were much worse than where I was and when my parents enrolled me in this business school in Munich because I couldn't go to finish high school they were able to keep that fairly secret so I didn't make any friends there but people let me be.

Where you ever afraid to go out on any of the holidays like on Christmas or Easter because you were Jewish? I don't think we went out on Christmas. We just stayed home, particularly in those years. Early on we may have gone out. My parents had friends in town whose children were either a year or two older or younger and we got together with them.

What do you remember about Shabbos in Europe? We weren't religious. We didn't go to services on Friday nights or Saturday. The synagogue had an upstairs section. It was not segregate but downstairs the men sat on one side and women on the other.

On Shabbos did you have special food? No. But we always had a special meal on Friday night because it was tradition.

What did you have on Friday night? We always had chicken made a certain way. We really didn't have any special food. We didn't have pork in the house but we didn't keep kosher.

The last time we were talking, what do you remember about Purim in Europe? We had a congregation in Goepingen. I really don't know how many Jewish families were there in the 30's. Most of them had not emigrated yet between when I was really young and 1936 or 37. There were some Purim celebrations. There was one Jewish run hotel and they were second cousins on my mother's side of the family. They ran a hotel and restaurant and we had some celebrations there for Purim, kids dressed up. There were other functions there when Jewish families got together or else people celebrated at home.

What do you remember about Succot? It was observed like the other holidays

What about Pesach? It was observed but it was private family. My father never made a seder. It wasn't his thing. He observed the high holidays. We were palmed off on other families, we as children, so we could experience it. I remember having to go to Uncle Morris.

Do you remember anything about Yom Kippur? Yes, we went to synaogogue

What do you remember about the synagogue? Oh, we had a beautiful synagogue but it was destroyed on Kristallnacht. They do have a small memorial there. When I was back in the year 2000, or whatever year it was. I got to see it in 1979 when I made a trip with my daughter I saw it.

So where did the women sit? The men sat on one side and the women sat on the other. Upstairs it was the same way but there was no barrier, or curtain. The center aisle separated the women from the men.

Do you remember anything about Hanukkah? Yes, we got presents and lit the menorah. What kind of menorah did you have? Candles or oil? It was candles, not oil. We played dreidel a couple of times but it wasn't a big deal

How did your family take photographs before the war? I don't remember whether we had a camera for snapshots. For formal pictures my mother called in a photographer. There must have been a box camera that was available because I do have snapshots in an album from Germany so cameras must have been available.

My father was not very good about mechanics like that. He was good at other things. He didn't have the interest or the patience.

Do you remember being sick when you were little? You called the doctor and he came to the house. And he was a Jewish man. Do you still remember his name? No

Did you have any serious illnesses? No, but my sister, one of us had measles...the normal childhood illnesses. I didn't have chicken pox. I don't remember which one I had. It wasn't that serious. Somebody had mumps. I don't remember which one of them I had. My youngest sister, she was hospitalized for something for a couple of days.

You were never married in Europe were you? No, I left when I was 17.

Were you working? No, I was helping out at home in the store somewhat.

Would you say that you had a happy childhood? Yes, I had a normal childhood until things got tough and your school friends didn't talk to you anymore. When I first went to school I had friends in the classroom and you got together with them after school some times. We weren't that heavily programmed.

When did things get bad? In our town I would say in the the mid 30's when all these German rules, you couldn't do this and you couldn't do that.

What kind of restrictions do you remember? You just began to live much more carefully. You didn't take chances on going somewhere where maybe you weren't supposed to go or you weren't accepted. It was sort of its like walking on eggs. There were all kinds of German rules and regulations. It really got bad after I left

Do you remember hearing Hitler on the radio? Yes

How did you feel when you heard him on the radio? We hated it. My father kept saying I fought in the World War, I defended this country. He got very upset and it sort of influenced everybody.

Do you remember seeing people marching in the streets? Yes, and you tried not to, when you're looking out the window you sort of looked through the curtains so they shouldn't see your face looking at them. And when they had a parade for some other occasion, the Nazis marched in that too, you wanted to see it but you tried not to be seen.

What happened to Jewish businesses? They were boycotted. As a matter of fact I have a photograph my father had on the main street a small branch store. And the people who he used to have working there you couldn't have them work there anymore. And they posted 2 SS guards in uniform in front of the store so that nobody would go in. That was in late 38. But people didn't want to be seen, even if you had people who wanted to go in, if it was a Jewish store, people were afraid to go in because they weren't supposed to patronize, or do business with you, so gradually that folded.

Were you allowed to have a radio? While I was there yes, maybe not after.

Do you remember any other things you saw that were scary? You saw a lot of flags and official stuff that you hated to see. They hung their big flags out. When you went into town there was an

open market once a week, like a farmers market, and my mother used to go there and shop. You didn't do stuff like that anymore. You managed to get what you needed otherwise.

Was it hard to get food? Were you hungry at all? No, I never remember being hungry. There were certain food shortages, generally, there wasn't much in the way of oranges and imports, fruits like that. But I never remember being hungry, I will say that.

During that time you said a lot of the non-Jewish people, the gentiles wouldn't talk to you. Would some of them still talk to you? Yes, as little as possible and if no one else was around. I mean we still had some interactions with some people. It was a relatively small town. Geoppingen was an industrial town. As a matter of fact I have a book that was put out recently that was put out to attract businesses to settle there and do business and evidently it's become quite a good town. You knew your neighbors across the street. I think they were still cordial but they weren't looking to talk to you at length about anything.

Did you realize how bad that things could get? Probably not. That's why my parents didn't start to look to emigrate earlier

My mother's two sisters and their families emigrated much earlier in the other 30's. One had lived in Munich. Munich was much worse as far as anti-Semitism was concerned than the small towns like where we lived. And my mother's other sister's family lived in Berlin and they emigrated to Argentina in the early 30s, probably 1934.

Do you remember your parents talking a lot about leaving? That's why they let my sister and I go. My mother's two younger brothers emigrated in the late 20's to the United States. And they set up a business here but neither one of them was married at the time. They found relatives in Cincinnati Ohio who said that we, the children, meaning my sister and I, she was 15 and I was 17 when we came here, that we could live with them and that would be OK. They couldn't take in the whole family. My mother didn't want two young teenagers living with two bachelor uncles. You could understand that I'm sure?

Do you remember people getting taken away? No, not when I was there. That was later. Or in some towns it may have been earlier but not where we were. My father was taken away on Kristallnacht but I was not home at that point. I was here. And of course I didn't find out about that until much later. Mail was censored. I don't know whether the Germans censored the mail or the United States censored the mail coming from Germany. I suspect the mail was censored in Germany so, I'm pretty sure it was so if they wanted to write to us first of all it would be snail mail so it would take forever. Secondly, stuff was occasionally blacked out but they knew enough not to write anything that would alert the authorities that you were saying something that wasn't right.

Did you ever see anything where they cut people's beard's? No

Were there times when you were very scared? Yes I'm sure there were times when I was scared. And people from Eastern Europe and elsewhere were streaming into Germany even earlier. They had their own problems before Hitler. They had pogroms in Eastern Europe. That is well known. And sometimes we would get someone knocking at the door who was in really bad shape and wanted food and my mother would always arrange to give them food. I don't think

we ever took anyone in. But stake them in to feed them and let them take something along. That happened occasionally. I saw that very occasionally. Maybe in happened more so after 38 before war broke out. Germany went to war September 1.

So how did your parents reach a decision to emigrate themselves? Well once they had us here.

Well how did they decide that you were going to leave? I had more or less finished school. I didn't get a diploma but I had the requisite number of school years and my sister still had to finish school. You couldn't go to the high schools anymore. The Jewish community set up what they could but it wasn't working very well. They saw the handwriting on the wall and you couldn't help but know that you have to leave. All these rules that the Germans came up with. I can't enumerate them to you. I don't know who you spoke to and who else you interviewed and what you learned. But you were restricted as to how much money you could have and you had to give up other things. And particularly after Kristallnacht it got very bad but as I said I wasn't there to experience that. My sister Margot experienced all that. Even in early 38 when my parents arranged for us...

Why did they arrange for you? Was there a specific event? Was there something that scared them? Probably, other people and friends and family were leaving. My father just never thought it would get bad until Kristallnacht when he was picked up and taken to Dachau. I found out about all that subsequently but at that point they realized they had to get out.

Do you know what he experienced there? He would never talk about it. He repressed in totally. I don't know exactly how long he was there but my mother was approached about "selling" of course that's in quotes, giving up the business. Someone in town wanted it so she told the authorities that were in touch with her that she couldn't handle that and he would have to train someone and she would take care of it when they released him. So they did.

Do you have any idea what he sold it for? He didn't really get enough money for it, probably enough to buy passage out. They were subsequently, sometime in the 60's I think through a German attorney who did those kinds of transactions, were able to sell the property, the house, which was knocked down. By the time I was there in 1979 the house was no longer standing. The house across the street was still there, it was not as old as my parent's house.

Do you think that your father was hurt when he was there? I have no doubt. What they made them do, stand for hours on end. He didn't come out with any broken bones or anything. He probably lost a lot of weight. I have no idea.

When you left was this discussed with you? Oh, sure. This wasn't brought on suddenly. We knew a few weeks before that we were going.

Who did you go with? My sister Anne who is 2 years younger than I am. She had been in England. There was an exchange program of kids being able to go to England for a school year because she couldn't go to school in Germany any more. Two years made a difference as far as school was concerned. They called it the kindertransport. She was at a school in rural England for 9 months for the school year, probably the fall, part of 37 and part of 38. When she came back she knew quite a lot of English. I had a year of English in school in Germany while I was still going to school. After I couldn't go to school anymore, my father had a business

acquaintance in Stuttgart who ran a restaurant and he sold them liquors and they were able to let me go there for about 4-6 weeks to help in the kitchen and learn cooking. They did him a favor. The people who were in that kitchen with me didn't realize at the beginning that I was Jewish. It was OK. It wasn't uncomfortable. I took the train to Stuttgart every morning for no more than six weeks. They needed me to have something to do. I should have been in school but I couldn't.

Did you look Jewish? Some Jews have blond hair and blue eyes. I had dark hair. Yeah you're right I didn't have a big nose. I was fortunate. I was good looking.

What about the rest of your family did they look Jewish? No, not particularly.

When your sister went to England did she stay with Jewish people? No, that was a boarding school.

Did she like that trip? No she didn't.

Why not? Actually my parents did her a favor. She felt, she's the middle child, she always felt that she was getting the short end of the stick for some reason, even as she grew up in her 20s. I think it never left her. I don't know if that happens to a lot of middle children or not. She wasn't really happy there. But it was something that was done. Other parents did the same thing if they could.

Why didn't your younger sister Margot go with you? It was an imposition on the people that took us in.

Interview of Bea Kandell by Brad Zarlin, December 10, 2013

Audio file 2: Part II

So you said...why didn't Margot go with you? Well first of all they felt that she was too young. She was only thirteen at the time and the people in Cincinnati said two of us so they thought they would send the two older ones and I don't think you would let a thirteen-year-old do this.

How did you come in contact with these people in Cincinnati? My uncles...they were distant relatives on my mother's side of the family you know there was a big wave of immigration to the United States not only from Germany, from other places too in Western Europe in the late 1800s in the 1890s I think it was and my mother's father, one of the brothers of his, emigrated as a young man at that time and then he married here in the United States and he had a family and some other family who was here from an earlier immigration too knew about that and so the...my mother's two younger brothers got in touch with them and they volunteered to have two of us come. As a matter of fact, my sister did not live in the same house with them and myself because she needed to go to school and they placed her with one of their very good friends and she lived with that family. I mean, I got to see her while I was with this family and I had to learn English real quick because they didn't speak any German.

So when you came to America when was that? In July 1938.

And did you come by boat? Yes.

And where did the boat leave from? The boat left from Antwerp, but I do not remember the name of the boat – I knew you were going to ask me that, I'm sure. Is it your cousin who put you in touch with me? Donna Brad: Yeah. B: She said you know you can research that, but I really don't know how to go about it.

Did you speak English at the time? No! Just barely. I mean I spoke...whatever you learn...if you take up a language in high school in a few months how much of it do you learn that you could speak? You may be able to understand people that are speaking to you if they speak slowly, but how much do you...you're not really fluent in the language; you follow what I'm saying? Brad: Amen!

These people sponsored you right? I think my uncles sponsored me.

What was his name? Bert and Fred (Simon?).

And do you remember how much money you brought with you? Ten dollars. I mean the equivalent of...yes, ten dollars. That's all we were allowed to take out.

Per person? Yes.

And do you remember how much...how many belongings or suitcases you brought? Probably a couple. I mean, I just brought clothing. I mean you had to give up all your jewelry in Germany; they didn't allow you any it was all confiscated that was in the...between the mid to late thirties. That was already in effect when I was in Germany.



So do you remember how you felt about leaving? I'm sure I was scared.

Were you allowed to tell the other kids that you were leaving? B: Who?

Like your friends; did you tell your friends that you were going? My...the couple of Jewish friends that I had at the time, yes they knew. You're forgetting we all made arrangements their parents were all making arrangements to try to get out. I know one family who was quite wealthy and they were able to get money out earlier in the thirties while they could still do it...they left for different places you know. A couple of people went to England were able to get to England and then subsequently they came to the United States. Coming back to my learning English when I came back to New York after...when we knew my parents were coming my uncles had asked us to get back here and I took a Greyhound bus from Cincinnati to New York and they picked me up – or, as a matter of fact, another cousin who was working for them picked me up at the bus and took me to their loft where their business was and they had rented a room for me with somebody in Washington Heights until my parents got here a couple of weeks later.

What do you remember about the boat with your sister? Well that was...not really much. We met a couple of people who befriended us who were young people, I think it was a brother and sister traveling together unless they were more than that and we didn't catch on. They were probably in their twenties and we sort of latched on to them once they realized that we were by ourselves, you know. And I remember they told us they were from St. Louis – it's funny the things that you remember. Fortunately we didn't get seasick. The voyage was probably about a week.

Do you remember where you slept? In a state room a small state room, you know. Two of us together.

Do you think that everyone on the boat were Jewish? No! As a matter of fact I think most of them were not. And this young couple they definitely were not Jewish.

So where did the ship arrive? In New York on the West Side Pier.

Do you remember what time of day you arrived? I don't know, no.

Was it night time or day time? It was definitely day time.

So do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty? Yes, yes. That was very exciting – yes we knew what that was.

So who met you when you arrived? My uncles.

(What were their names?) At least one. Bert and Fred! Bert and Fred Simon. I think only one of them met us. I don't think it was both of them.

Had you ever met them before? Yes, yes. They had made a couple of trips back to visit in the early thirties so maybe as late as '34-'35 but...and we were in touch with them.

So do you still remember what you were wearing? No. Ordinary clothes, they weren't as modern as the ones in the United States. When I earned some money...I was working for the cousin's husband in Cincinnati and also going to night school to learn American history and more English and a few things. They had arranged for that. I think I took the bus to the classes, I don't recall exactly. But I remember going to school a few nights a week. And then, when I had earned some

money that I had a little extra money they paid me, I think, ten dollars a week. I mean, after all they had...I cost them like whatever, you know, but they paid me regardless. So when I had a little extra money I bought some clothes like everybody else was wearing here. I felt like mine were a little (bawdy?) I guess.

So where did you stay in the beginning? In their house.

Where was their house? In Cincinnati. Oh you mean when we first got to New York? My uncle had rented a room with a family, you know, people had those large (rovo?) type of apartments with six rooms and they were trying to make ends meet they would rent out a room to somebody.

So how long did you stay in New York for? B: Before we went to Cincinnati? Oh I think three or four weeks.

And what did you do during that time? What was your impression of America? It was a little overwhelming. I learned how to ride the subways and we got around. We knew how to...they told us how to get from where we were living to the subway and to take it downtown to my uncle's office, we spent time there and then...I think we weren't here more than three weeks. Then uh...maybe less...I just don't recall. Then they drove us out to Cincinnati, one of them, not both.

Oh you went in a car there? Yeah, my uncle drove us out that I remember. I came back by bus when uh...a week or so before my parents came. And my uncle...they rented an apartment for them. About 144<sup>th</sup> street or something like that, on the West Side near Broadway.

Yeah, I mean, back in the thirties that was a long trip in a car. B: I think it was in one day. I'm pretty sure it was in one day. I don't remember staying overnight anywhere, but by the time I came back and somebody took me to this other room that they had rented until we could get into that apartment the uhh..(\*brad interrupts\*)...Now let me finish! The person who took me to that room with my luggage introduced me to the woman who he had rented it from and he spoke in German to her and introduced me as who I was that Mr. Simon had rented the room for me and I answered her instead of in German in English! I had gotten so used to English that I couldn't formulate a German sentence and he said...this was a young man who took me up there...my uncles didn't take me so, but this was a German family so the young man said to me, "You idiot! She doesn't understand you in English! She's only been here a short time speak German to her so I said to him in English, "I can't seem to get a German sentence out I have to get used to it again!" (Brad: That's funny.) Yeah, that's why I remember it distinctly, it was so funny! The way he addressed me. Then I started, you know so she could understand me.

So when you came to America did your parents tell you that they were going to come a little bit later with your sister, or...? They probably did, but I don't think it was ever discussed; we just assumed that they would come, but then, of course, when things got bad in Germany and war broke out – the war broke out after they were already here on Sept. 1, 1939.

So do you know anything about what happened to them after you left? Mail was slow and they couldn't write anything – I mean they were carrying on the same way they had when I was still there except things got tougher and tougher and business fell off and then they arranged for...through...they were able to get expedited visas because my mother's younger sister, I think

I told you this in the other conversation, my mother's younger sister was married to an American Vice Consul who was with the office in Berlin so she went...and she had become an American citizen after she married him and she went to the consulate in Stuttgart and tried to expedite a visa and I'm sure that helped because if she hadn't been able to do that they might never have gotten out.

And do you know anything more about what happened on Kristallnacht? Uh, no. I truly...I knew the windows were smashed and the synagogue was burned, I mean, the same story every place.

Did your sister remember any stories, things that happened to her? I'm sure she does.

What happened, again, when you arrived in Cincinnati? Well, it was scary, you know. I'm sure I was upset, but I made the best of it –

Now you were separated from your sister? Yes, yes I was. I don't know how much more you need to know, but –

Ok well why don't we...Bea, the last time we were talking it was when you arrived in Cincinnati, Right? I think so.

Ok, so what do you remember about coming to Cincinnati? Well, I met this strange couple and their daughter who lived in a small, nice house and I was given to understand that the mother of this girl was my mother's second cousin. In other words, her father or grandfather had emigrated to the United States in the late 1800s.

So what was their name? During that wave of emigration. Um what was their name...well her maiden name was Simmons. They changed it, my mother's maiden name was Simon and evidently the parent or the grandparent, now I'm not quite sure if it was the grandparent or the parent, changed it to Simmons. And she grew up in, I believe it was Denver.

Do you remember what part of Cincinnati they lived in? It was a nice part; it was suburban.

Was it a Jewish area, or no? Uh, that I don't know. And she married a man by the name of Sylvan (sp?) Joseph.

And what did they do for a living? Uh, he had a business that manufactured ladies' hats.

Did they live in a house? Yes.

Did you have your own room? No. I had to share the room with their nine- or ten-year-old daughter.

So they had how many children? One? They had one daughter. And she probably resented me bitterly, I don't know, or else I don't remember, but I could imagine that if a ten-year-old suddenly has to share her room with a seventeen-year-old whom she doesn't know, she can't have felt good about that! Who didn't speak the language!

So what did you do in the beginning? They enrolled me in some night classes and they showed me how I could get there with public transportation; I believe it wasn't too far, it may have been the local high school and I was taking some English classes and some American history.

Were there a lot of people from Europe in those classes? I don't know. They were small.

Now, we haven't talked in a while so I forgot – at this time where were your sisters and your parents, where were they? My sister who came over with me, two years younger, she was placed with one of their friends' families.

So was she close by? That was Anne, right? She was not close by, but she was still going to high school with the two daughters from that household.

I mean, was she in Cincinnati? Yes, she was with me – except not physically in the same house.

Did you talk to her a lot? I think we saw each other like weekends.

So who do you think was in a better situation, Anne or you? I suspect she was.

Why do you think so? Because she was able to finish high school and then she went on...she put herself through city college later when she got to New York. I never went back to get my high school equivalency test paper, which I regret to this day. Obviously, I learned English well enough.

What was going on with Margot? (B response to last question:) Wouldn't you say? Brad: Sure, Absolutely. Yes. B: My sister Margot was still at home with my parents. In Germany.

Oh ok so they didn't come over at that point. B: No. They were very fortunate that they could get out in May of 1939. I think I had mentioned that to you; it may be in your materials.

So were you, did you work in the beginning? Uh, yes. My...the man of the house, I mean, I called them by their first names – they said so – and he took me to his business and they gave me clerical work to do. So that I was occupied part of the time.

And did you meet any people your age? Did you make any friends at all? Not in Cincinnati. No.

So what was your impression of America in the beginning, in Cincinnati? Cincinnati is a good town! I mean, it's a town that was built on, they say it's built on like seven hills.

So when you were there do you remember going to the synagogue or on any vacation? No, not really. I did go to the...they weren't observant. I think I may have gone to synagogue a few times. They probably went on the high holidays, I suspect. I don't recall.

So how long were you there? From, I guess it was July or August '38 until May '39. And in that period I learned fluent English.

Really? Really.

Now had your parents come over yet? With your sister, or? They were due in May. That's why I came back to New York.

So, were you writing letters to them? Yes, but...and I was always waiting for mail from them, but there wasn't much that they could say, you know. The mail coming out of Germany was censored by the Germans so it was very...not much information as to how things were going in Germany at the time. And mail was slow.

So you came to New York because you knew that your parents were going to be there? My parents let us go because they were hoping to follow us, but they didn't have the necessary

papers yet. But they weren't sure, you know. This was before war broke out between Germany and...I think they went into Poland first. And after that, things got very tough, but my parents came out before that, but in 1938 my father still thought maybe things would turn around and he could stay and we might come back; or else they would look to see if they could get out if it was possible. You know, you had to wait a long time to get a visa and you had to have an affidavit that you didn't become a ward of the state, and my mother's two younger brothers weren't making a lot of money, but they were able to get the affidavits to the consulate in order for them to get out, but I think the only reason my parents and my younger sister were able to come out was because my mother's younger sister had been married to an American Vice Consul who was stationed in Berlin.

So did you come to New York with sister? Yes with one of my sisters; with Anne.

So how did you get to New York? On a Greyhound bus from Cincinnati.

Now when you went back to New York were your parents there yet, or? No they weren't there yet, but they were...we knew that they were coming, we knew that they had gotten all the papers and that they had booked passage on, I don't know which liner.

So where did you stay in New York? My uncles rented a room for me, somewhere in Washington Heights where there were a lot of German immigrants who had come here who lived in Washington Heights.

Was Anne still in school? Yes, she came after the school year ended. And then my uncles rented an apartment for us and when my parents' furniture – they were able to take out their furniture – when that arrived, we moved into that apartment.

Do you remember where that apartment was? It was on 144<sup>th</sup> street, or...it somewhere in the 140s.

Do you remember how big an apartment it was? It was like you know what they call them, the railroad flat kind of apartments, I think it had...about five rooms, I think. And a kitchen and one bath.

Do you remember how much rent they paid? No. Haven't a clue.

What do you remember about your parents arriving? It was exciting and it was difficult. And I didn't want to talk German to them because I said, "You have to learn English," and they were upset, you know. I was a teenager and there were the normal frictions.

And how do you think your parents felt about arriving? I think they were mostly relieved that they got out. Particularly as war broke out.

Do you think they understood that they could have been killed if they stayed there? Maybe not at that time but certainly...I think probably, yes. When they, you know... I would assume so.

In the beginning, how did you parents learn to speak English? Or did they? They did! My father didn't learn very well, but he did ok. My mother became quite fluent, she always had a heavy accent, but she became quite fluent. My father was never that fluent, but he learned it. He used

to...what we always kidded him about was that he used the word – he mispronounced the word “miscellaneous” he always called it “miss-uh-neel-ee-us”. It was a private joke sort of.

So do you think your father brought a lot of money with him or very little? Very little! He couldn't take any money out, that was the problem. You couldn't take any jewelry out, you came with ten dollars, like. You must have heard that from other people.

What did they do to make a living? Were you working? They were working with my uncles in that business.

What kind of business was it? That was an import/export business. Straw good and other things.

So what were they importing and exporting? Some kind of straw, natural goods, straw goods. I don't really know exactly what they...I mean I probably used to know, but I don't recall what they were...handbags that are made of straw and some other goods.

Do you have any idea how much money they were making? It was always tight! No I don't.

And what were you doing? The people in Cincinnati had a connection with a millinery manufacturer in New York and they got me a job there.

How did you get to work? On the subway.

Do you remember how much money you made? I think the first year I was in New York I was probably making twelve or thirteen dollars a week.

Did you have a bank account? I probably started what they called the...at that time they called them Christmas Clubs; you put in either a dollar a week or fifty cents a week or whatever you wanted to put in to accumulate a little money by the end of the year. And I contributed to the household and I allowed myself about twenty-five cents a day. The subway was a nickel, so you spent ten cents for transportation and ten cents for a Chock Full O'Nuts cream cheese sandwich and a drink – all for...you spend no more than between twenty-five and thirty-five cents – you wanted a doughnut, that was a nickel – you spent either between twenty-five and thirty-five cents for a day.

So did you like Cincinnati better or New York? Well I was happy to be back in New York. Cincinnati, incidentally, is a beautiful city. Have you been there? Brad: No. B: The model for the – this is an aside – the model for the...Roebbling who he built the Brooklyn bridge, built the model for the Brooklyn Bridge in Cincinnati going over the Ohio River – a lot of people don't know that – and if I had found that out at that time I had forgotten it, but I found it out subsequently; it's smaller, but it's the same construction because it was different from any other bridges that had been built at that time, and he tried it out with a small model. I got back to Cincinnati a number of years ago for some occasion, I got to see it and I said, “Oh that looks like the Brooklyn Bridge!” and that's how I found out how that happened; it's a very interesting story.

What exactly were you doing at work? I was doing clerical work, listing orders and copying stuff. It wasn't exciting.

Do you remember where the company was located or who the owner was? The company was located on 39<sup>th</sup> street in the millinery district.

Do you know what is what called or who the owners were? At first I went with one company, and their name was Brandt, and then I went with a (buying) office from there to a different company and they were purchasing hats for different stores. Then I got involved with that.

How long did you stay in the millenary business? Probably until I got married.

Were you still staying at home? Yes. I couldn't afford...gradually my salary increased, and I was doing nice work for this (buying) office; taking clients around to different companies, but I couldn't afford a place for my own.

Did you have a refrigerator? B: In New York? Yes.

Even in the beginning? I think so, but I wouldn't swear to that.

You didn't have a car did you? B: A car? No! Of course not. We had then moved from the 140<sup>th</sup> up to...we were in the 140s a few years and then we moved to 179<sup>th</sup> street and Fort Washington Avenue.

Why did you move? It was...the first apartment was a walk-up apartment and it was difficult for my parents. My mother had some kind of a heart condition so...she lived to a ripe old age, 88, but we needed something that had an elevator.

Now there were a lot of German immigrants in Washington Heights, so did you make friends or did you parents? We had some relatives who were there too, so we got to meet with them.

Do you remember their name? Yeah...Rosenthal and...somebody by the name of...I don't wanna go into it. Too complicated.

How did you meet your husband? I met him through a temple in Forrest Hills, some of the people I met in the millenary business...some of the young women who were working in different offices and one of them was telling me that there is some social evening at one of the temples in Forrest Hills, if I wanna go she can arrange...I can go home with her that evening and stay over at her house and I was there a couple of times – not too often. And on one day I met this nice man who took me to lunch a few days later and we started dating.

Was he from Germany? No. He was living with his mother who was widowed in Fresh Meadows, but he had originally lived in Brooklyn. He had was born in Hartford, CT.

How much older was he? B: Than I? Eight years.

And what was his name? Leon Kandell.

And what did Leon, what did he do for a living? He was a salesman.

What kind of things did he sell? Corrugated paper goods.

Did he have a car? Yes.

How long did you know Leon before you got married? Probably about eight months.

Did Leon have brothers and sisters? Yes.

What did his mother think of you? You know, you are this refugee from Europe... \*Bea laughs heartily\* I think she had no objection to that, it was his sister-in-law who was bugged by it.

And what do you think she didn't like? Don't ask me, she was a very peculiar woman.

What do you remember...when you would go out on dates, where would you go? I don't know!

Well what do you remember about your wedding? It was a small, small thing. Immediate family, you know, and I wasn't a white bride you know, money was tight!

Where was the wedding? It was in a residential hotel in New York in one of the, what do you call them, like...an apartment...it had a dining room that they rented out for occasions...it wasn't really a hotel. I think they called it that, but I just don't remember the name of it.

How did you get a wedding dress? I just got an ordinary attractive pale, beige, short dress and I got a veil, a small hat through the millenary industry with the appropriate veil, and that was it.

So at your wedding was there dancing and music? If there was it doesn't really...I think you should leave that out.

So did you go on a honey-moon? Yes, we did.

So where did you go? We went to Bermuda.

Did you go by boat? Yes.

So after you got a married, where were you living? In Fresh Meadows.

And were you still working in the millinary? Yes.

Did you have children soon, or? Let's see. My daughter was born two years after we were married. Brad: Mazel Tov! B: Thank you!

So how many children do you have? Two, I have two children; and my son was born two years later. Brad: Mazel Tov! \*Bea chuckles happily\*

When did you stop working? When we moved to Long Island, which was really right after, let's see, it was...we bought the house the same year we were married.

Where was the house? Where I am still living now!

47:23 – 47:35 \* Tape goes silent \*

...B:Rosalyn Heights, yes.

So when did you buy the house? In 1952.

And how much did a house cost back then? At that time, our house cost about...between twenty-two and twenty-three thousand dollars.

Why did you decide to move to Roslyn? Because we wanted to go to Long Island – my husband's idea, you know. A lot of places you couldn't...as a Jewish couple you couldn't buy a



house in many places in Long Island. I'm sure you've heard that story often, and we saw this ad in the Sunday Times...we had seen some realtors, but nothing was really right, and we had seen this ad in the Times where the man who was selling it – well the couple – was specifying in the ad how much cash down was required in order to assume a four percent GI mortgage. Now you have to realize the mortgages when these houses first went up, they were four percent to GIs and they were considerably, I don't know how much more for other people, but in order for us to buy...this was a resale in other words, this was not a new house. The house was two years old when we bought it. And in order to assume the mortgage at four percent rather than paying a higher mortgage, you had to be a GI and my husband was. So we looked at it, and he had enough cash for the down payment that this guy wanted and so we bought the house.

How many bedrooms is it? It's three bedrooms. I mean it was, even then advertised as three bedrooms it's a (Levitt?) house, are you familiar? There was one room that they called either bedroom, or whatever you want to call it, it had one of those swinging bookcase walls so you could close it up or you could leave it open. And we added two bedrooms in the back subsequently, you know, because children were really sharing one bedroom.

Now when you moved to Roslyn were there very many Jews there or not too many? Yes. It had become...the Rosalyn Country Club area which is where I live had become...suddenly when Jews came in the area a lot of people who were at the house when it was new of some plans were moving out and took their gains right away and today it's not the same anymore, it has changed a lot.

Do did your children go to Wheatley High School? Yes, they did.

So what kind of business did Leon end up doing? He stayed with that. He was with this firm a long time.

And what was the name of the company? I don't want you to put that in.

When your children were young, did you tell them what happened to you during the war? Sure. Because my parents were still alive; their grandparents.

And how old did your father live to be? Almost 92.

Did they always stay in Washington Heights? B: Wait a minute, was it 92?...Let's just say he lived to be in his early 90s.

Did they always stay in Washington Heights? Yes, they moved to an assisted living residence in later years called Isabella house.

Now how did you feel after the war was over and you started to hear about what happened? It was all a lot of turmoil, but you're busy with a young family – though of course my kids were born right after the war. I can't put my feelings into this at this point. Brad: No? B: No.

How did you parents react? A lot of the people they knew weren't there anymore. B: That's right! And a lot of families weren't there anymore. When they do the memorial service on Yom Kippur afternoon I see everybody marching past me. Something I still remember from when I was a child.

Now did you appreciate, after the war, how lucky you were? Yes, definitely.

Did the war change your belief in god? \*Bea laughs heartily\* You don't want to know my belief in god. I believe in the tradition and that Judaism should survive, but don't ask me whether I believe in god. I can tell you a funny story, but you should probably leave it out. Brad: Go ahead. What's the story? B: When I was hospitalized a number of years ago Rabbi White came in to see me in the hospital and he, you know, it was a short visit it was very nice that they come to see you and then he said, "Can I make a Mi Sheberach for you?" You know what that is? Brad: Yeah B: Yeah, and I looked at him and the nurse was standing was standing at the foot of the bed, fixing something or whatever it was, I looked at him, shook my head toward him and then to her and I said, "Not now" and he just laughed. He says, "You are my resident atheist. You come to services and you do the right thing working on the social action committee..." and it was just very funny.

Now do you think that this is because of the war, or do you think you would have been like this anyway? That's hard to say. I mean I didn't come from a very observant household, but I mean your opinions change.

Now had you ever seen a Black person before the war? Likelihood is yes, maybe not in my hometown, but when I was in Munich...I don't know. You better leave that out! I might have seen somebody but...

Now do you ever remember eating oranges or bananas before the war? Very rarely. Very, very rarely.

Was that oranges or did you every have bananas, or? I think it was oranges, more likely than bananas.

Right, that sounds right. Now, would you say that you were an angry person after the war? No.

Were you angry at the Germans? Well...I don't know how to put that. I mean I was, I think...just generally everybody was just very upset about the whole thing that happened; you were just glad it was over.

So would you say you have any injuries from the war? No.

Do you think you have emotional injuries, or no? No, I don't think so.

So why did you survive the Holocaust? Well, because my parents were wise enough to let us leave and that they followed after, you know?

Right. So you've gone back to Germany to where you grew up? I've gone back to Germany, yes.

When did you go back? B: When? I made a trip with my daughter in 1976 to a few places and we stopped there at my hometown once for a couple of hours and I went back the second time in, I think it was 2000, I have to look it up – I really couldn't tell you.

So did you go back to the house where you lived? The house was no longer there. The house wasn't there on the first trip either.

\*Taping Session Ends\*

So the last time we were talking it was when you took a trip to Germany? Yes.

So what do you remember about the trip? Well, the first one was a trip that I took with my daughter and we only stopped in my hometown, that was in 1976, for a short period of time. And the house had already been knocked down. And I saw the school where I went to school and the main town and...

Did you visit a cemetery, or? We did visit a cemetery, but when...where some of the old family was buried, that was a little bit out of the town where the original Jewish community of the town I grew up in was formed.

Who maintains the cemetery? Or is it maintained well, or? It is maintained yes, or at that time. In the 1970s it was maintained, and they also established...that hadn't been established at that time yet, but it was established subsequently, a Jewish museum in an old church that wasn't being used and they showed pictures of the old times, and I have a book on that, that was published later that's called the Jewish Museum in Jebenhausen of Jewish Families from\_\_(1:00:25)\_\_ I don't have the exact title.

Did you see anybody that remembered your family? No. We weren't there long enough.

Are there any Jews there anymore? B: Now? I have no idea.

And what happened on your second trip? On my second trip we were even less time in that town because I was with some other people, so you can't even refer to that really.

Did you ever visit a concentration camp or no? Frankly, no. I went to visit the...in Berlin there is, in one of the suburbs, there is a house called the Wannsee House where they formulated a lot of the, the Nazis formulated a lot of the atrocities, the rules...have you heard of this? Brad: Yeah, that's a famous place. B: That, I saw. Brad: Yeah, there was a Wannsee Conference. B: Yes, yes. And I had bought a book there, but I donated it to Temple Sinai.

Now have most of your friends in America, have most of them been other Holocaust survivors, or no? No, not really. Just, whatever...family that moved down. My other friends are American friends.

Do you think the Americans understand what people had to go through in Europe? Do you think the American Jews understood or not really? I think the ones of my generation or a little younger, they understood. I don't know about the young people. I mean is it your cousin who put us together, or? Brad: Yeah, yeah. B: I mean she knows that Temple Sinai has done a lot and they teach the kids the courses in the religious school so I think they have to learn, you know from...hearing from people and reading and hopefully they understand.

So have you ever been part of a survivors club or a group? No, not really. No. I subsequently, here, met some people who came out of Vienna and had a real tough time...a friend's husband who had crossed over the...walking over the Pyrenees on foot and you know...people who went to other countries before getting to the United States, I had heard from some of them, but I was never really friendly with them. This woman who was from Vienna, we talked often and she's had some bad experiences, but she's been back several times since.

How many times have you been interviewed before? I really haven't. Once by Temple Sinai. My daughter made copies for the family

I told you, now; do you ever have bad dreams at night from the war? No.

Have you ever talked to students in a school about what happened to you? Not really. As a matter of fact I had an appointment to do it at Temple Sinai to the class once and then I wasn't well and (Abby?) last year asked me to do it sometime this coming March; I hope I'm up to it.

Do you need any psychological help (because?) of the war? I guess I could have used it!  
\*Laughs\* Didn't have any. I think we could all use some psychological help from time to time. I regret that I didn't teach my children German when they were growing up, but my husband wasn't speaking German – that shouldn't have prevented me, but I could have taught them some.

How did you feel when you would see older people speaking German? In the beginning it sort of bothered me because I felt that we should assimilate, I mean we should become Americans. When I came here, I didn't want to talk German to my family after I had learned English so well in six or eight months.

Now have you read a lot of books on the Holocaust or seen movies? Not particularly; I've seen the important movies, you know, *Schindler's List*, you know what comes out that's interesting I tried to see. But the movie that I haven't been able to get anybody else to find out about...I was hoping...something about...called *Lost Letters*, have you ever heard of it? Brad: No. B: And I...it was an art movie that was maybe ten or twelve ago and it dealt with buried treasure and letters in \_\_\_(1:06:58)\_\_\_ somewhere and someone went back to try to find them, and it really haunted me, but I haven't spoken to anybody who saw it and I don't know if it's around at all.

Do you find that the movies or the books that you've read that they seem pretty realistic; that that was how it was, or? Well I wasn't there at the worst time of it, you know. So you can't...

How do you deal when you see Jewish people driving German cars? I used to feel terrible about it, years back. But after my parents got restitution from Germany, I changed my mind.

So if you went in the store and you saw something was made in Germany would you buy it? B: When? Now? Brad: Yeah, now. B: Now, yes. Yeah. In the sixties and seventies I wouldn't have bought it.

Now do you get money from Germany? Do you get restitution? No.

Why not? I mean did you try or no? Somebody in the family tried, we got very little...my parents got it until they died, but I subsequently did not get it – maybe if I had followed up I might have been able to do something about it, but unfortunately I have to muddle through the best I can without it. \*Chuckles\* ...I know that there are people, I mean children like...I'm a child of somebody who really lost his business. I know that some people do get it and still get some, but I think at this point it's no longer...personally, I think at this point it's no longer necessary.

Now, have you ever experienced anti-Semitism yourself in America? B: In America? I don't think so. I mean a lot of people in the forties, a lot of people said, "Oh these immigrants" and they didn't like them. Maybe it was just a feeling because of the jobs and so forth, but I don't

think personally I...didn't have any problem with it – in my working life I didn't have any problem with it.

Are there any things today that remind you of the war? Like if you see a policeman or a siren or a train or...? No, no.

9/11? Did 9/11 remind you of the war? It's a totally different thing. Do you get people who, you know, if you ask them that question that they do feel that way? Brad: Yeah, yeah. B: Really?! I'm surprised. I mean... Brad: Yeah, I've interviewed people who when they go in the shower they think about...um, you know... B: Well if that's what they think about now, then they really need psychological help. Brad: You know, well no, there's a lot of people who if they see a policeman it bothers them. Or a siren sometimes it bothers them. B: Well, maybe they lived...personally lived through more horrible experiences. I can't say that.

Do you have any issues with food? Do you buy too much food? Do you never throw away food? I definitely have what we call a Depression Era Mentality. \*Laughs\* I'm frugal, I try not to throw anything away - but if it needs to be thrown away, it needs to be thrown away! \*Laughs\*

Now, when your children were young were you overprotective of them? Were you more worried about them than other parents, do you think? I don't think so. Not growing...not with my children growing up in this area.

What kind of activities do you do? Do you play cards? Do you walk? Do you go to Temple? What do you do? Well I play cards. Right now I'm very limited with what I'm doing. I swim.

How far do you swim? About a half hour.

Really? That's pretty good at your age. B: I hope I am able to get back to it, that's all I can say because right now I am just...I'm depressed and disgusted with myself.

Right...so what kind of cards do you play? Bridge.

Did you ever play cards for money, or no? No. I crochet – I used to knit, but now I crochet.

What kind of things do you make? Afghans.

Like a rug? Like a lap robe, you know. Temple Sinai has a social action committee and there are a few of us who make lap robes – some people make baby (work?) that gets donated, you know lap robes get donated. I am a little busy with that.

Now you have grandchildren? Yes, I have two grandsons.

You don't have any great-grandchildren do you? No, no.

Now what are the names of your grandsons? One's name is Seth Weil, w-e-i-l, and Josh Weil.

Bea, you did a very good job, it's not easy to talk about this. And the reason that you were talking about this, we are going to hope that people are going to listen to what you are saying, and we're going to hope that the Holocaust, that it never happens again. B: Well we do hope so, that's no question.

How old are you? B: Now? Brad: Yeah. B: 92.

So that's a long time to wait to be interviewed, isn't it? Yes! \*Laughs\* But I never looked into it! I mean I was interviewed once by Temple Sinai, but it wasn't in as much depth and it was more, also, Temple related...how we joined Temple and so forth. I have been a member for many years, but I never really felt deeply religious. I am definitely not religious, I just believe in the traditions and in the fact that Judaism has to be carried on and survive, and as far as the bible itself is concerned \*laughs\* it doesn't mean that much, you know? I am sure that there are other people, I mean when you have gone through something like this, how can you believe in god, you know? Brad: There are a lot of people that don't believe in god after that – I have interviewed plenty. B: Yeah! So that's exactly how I feel. Maybe that's why the rabbi calls me his resident atheist. \*Chuckles\*