

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Blanche Hall
October 15, 2010
RG-50.030*0591

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Blanche Hall, conducted by Ina Navazelskis on October 15, 2010 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Fort Lee, New Jersey and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

BLANCHE HALL

October 15, 2010

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Blanche Hall**, on October 15th, 2010, conducted by **Ina Navazelskis** in **Fort Lee, New Jersey**. Mrs. **Hall**, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed today.

Answer: You're welcome.

Q: I'd like to begin our interview with some idea about your family, your young – your youth, your childhood, who your parents were. So I'll se – ask those types of questions. Can you tell me when were you born, and what your name at birth was?

A: March 2nd, 1913, and my name was **Blanche Katzenstein**(ph).

Q: **Blanche Katzenstein**(ph).

A: Yeah.

Q: And where were you born?

A: In **Schlüchtern**, in **Germany**.

Q: **Schlüchtern**? Where is **Schlüchtern**?

A: **Schlüchtern** is – **Schlüchtern, Frankfurt** and **Fulda**.

Q: Ah, it's between **Frankfurt am Main** and **Fulda**?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you were kind of in central **Germany**. Is that **Hessen**?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Is that the land of **Hessen**?

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A: It's **Hessen, Hessen.**

Q: Okay. Is **Schlüchtern** a village or a town?

A: A small town.

Q: A small town. Who were your parents?

A: **Herman** – the names?

Q: Yeah, the names.

A: **Herman** and **Gutta Katzenstein.**

Q: **Herman** and **Gutta**?

A: **Katzenstein.**

Q: And is **Gutta** spelled **g-u-t-t-a**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. **Katzenstein**(ph). Would you remember about when they were born?

A: [**indecipherable**] but, hell, I had it in my hand the other day.

A2: A – 1881.

Q: Oh, so they were young parents, actually. Or maybe not, maybe 20 - 30 years old.

Herman was born in?

A: He was in – was he – wait a minute.

A2: That's **Gutta.**

A: **Katzenstein.**

A2: This is **Gutta**, eight – 1883.

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A: Wait a – my mother –

A2: No, 1886.

A: My mother was born in nine – in 1886.

Q: Okay, and your father?

A: 1881.

Q: Okay. Are you the only child in the family?

A: I had a brother, he passed away.

Q: Was he older or younger?

A: He was a year younger.

Q: And what was his name?

A: **Ludwig Katzenstein**(ph).

Q: **Ludwig Katzenstein**(ph), okay. And what was your father – what was your father's profession? What did he do to make a living?

A: He was a – a – how – how do you call it, a salesman.

Q: He was a salesman?

A: Y-Yeah. He's – he was in business himself.

Q: In what way? Did he have a store, or did he –

A: We had a store in the house, yes.

A2: Fabrics, right?

Q: What was it – what did he sell?

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A: Clothes.

Q: Clothes?

A2: Cloth.

A: Clothes, huh?

A2: Cloth, fabric.

Q: Fabric, okay, yard goods.

A: Huh?

Q: Does that say – yard goods.

A: Yard goods.

Q: Yard goods, okay. And so did he – you had a store in your own home?

A: Yes, we had a room in our hou – store, okay, call it a store, that's right. But he went out. He had his – he had a car in later years, and before that he had a bundle.

And he went – he had – he had his business really in **Bad Orb**, and for

[**indecipherable**] three days in **Bad Orb**, and – and one and a half days in – in

Neuehof.

Q: Uh-huh, in **Neuehof**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And your mother, did she ha – did she help him in this business, or did she have nothing –

A: No, no, no, she was just in the house, she was a –

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A2: She had the insurance business.

A: Oh, she had her own business. I forgot.

Q: Oh, she had her own business, okay, what was hers?

A: Yeah [**indecipherable**] he was – she was an insurance agent for the **Akner(ph)**
und München Feuerversicherung.

Q: Uh-huh, **Akner(ph) und München Feuerversicherung.**

A: Yeah.

Q: So it means that the fire insurance company of **Aachen** and **Mu-Munich.**

A: Fire and theft, I suppose.

Q: Okay. Of **Aachen** and **München – Munich.**

A: **Akner(ph)** and **München.**

Q: Uh-huh.

A: **Feuerversicherung.**

Q: Okay.

A: That's a long time.

Q: Can you tell me what your earliest memories are?

A: What?

Q: Your earliest memories.

A: My earliest memories?

Q: Memories, yeah, as a child. What is the – when you think back –

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A: Somebody coming?

Q: No.

A: We-hell. [indecipherable] me in my early years [indecipherable] I don't know any more. With – with my girl – wi-with my friends?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: We played on the street.

Q: You played on the street.

A: We played.

Q: Okay. Let me ask it this way then, did your mother do all the cooking and the cleaning at home as well, you know?

A: No, she had a maid.

Q: She had a maid.

A: She had a maid. She did the cooking, but not the cleaning.

Q: Okay. You were born in 1913.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the first World War happened the next year.

A: In –

Q: 19 four –

A: – 1918.

Q: No, that's when it ended.

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A: Oh, that's when it – oh, 1914.

Q: That's right. So it –

A: 1914, yeah.

Q: So your first years were during the first World War. Do you remember anything, anything at all as a little child, of soldiers, of people marching down the streets, of –

A: Well, I remember we were scared of the – of the soldiers as children. You know, saw the soldiers on the streets and we were scared.

Q: Of German sol – of your own German soldiers?

A: It was – I don't know any more – no, there were some – I don't know where they were from. They were not completely black, but they were –

A2: You mean the uniforms?

A: No, the faces.

A2: The faces?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Faces, but they were – where were they from? I don't remember. We were scared of them.

Q: Okay, were they – th-they weren't German soldiers then, they were foreign soldiers. Oh, you didn't know. You were little, you didn't know.

A: They were soldiers.

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Q: Yeah. And your – do you remember playing with your brother when he was born, after he was born?

A: Sure, if – I remember. And how. We were fighting more than enough.

Q: Oh, really?

A: And my mother always blamed me.

Q: Sh – why?

A: Why, she – she blamed me, she always – her son was everything.

Q: Ah.

A: Who knows?

Q: Ah.

A: I don't know any more. Well, we had a good time. We ler – we had a good living, there's no doubt about it. Then when the times were bad, when war start, and the food was – we always had food because we lived in the country. And oh, I – when I went to school, let's see first grade, second grade, who knows, you know? And my mother gave me five cents, or five pennies, you know, buy myself a – a roll, in order to get – I was hungry.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In order to fill my stomach up, I filled up with water. That I remember, I never forget that.

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Q: And – and when did you – when did you start going to school? How old were you when you started going?

A: Six years.

Q: Six years. So that would have been 1919, or 1920, something like that?

A: I never thought of it, I don't know any more.

Q: Yeah. Can you tell us about your school? Do you have any memories of school?

A: Yeah, I do remember. It was okay, you know, the school was all right. We had to – we had strict teachers. One teacher, he – when we came – the boys, they had to bend over, and they got every day before school started, a good licking on the behind, and the girls had to show their hands.

Q: And they got the ruler on the hands?

A: The ruler.

Q: And was that because –

A: A nice stick.

Q: Was that just sort of always? Just – just in case?

A: Sure. That's how the teachers started.

Q: Well, it sounds frightening.

A: Ah, well.

Q: And was it – were there in – in – in **Schlüchtern**, was there a large Jewish community, or was it –

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A: Yes, was a large Jewish community. I don't [indecipherable] but a large Jewish community, yes, it was nice.

Q: Was it – were there also Gentiles living in there, or living there, or was it mostly Jewish?

A: No, mostly Gentile.

Q: Mostly Gentile.

A: Mostly Gentile. Of the eight, I remember, before **Hitler** came, I think there were about a hundred Jews in **Schlüchtern**.

Q: Uh-huh, a hundred.

A: Yeah.

Q: A hundred. And did you have a synagogue?

A: Oh yes, a beautiful synagogue.

Q: Yeah?

A: Upstairs and downstairs. Downstairs the men, upstairs the women.

Q: And did your – were your parents religious?

A: Yes, they were religious.

Q: And did you go to synagogue, did you –

A: Oh yes, oh yes. My grandmother would have killed me if I wouldn't have gone.

Q: Do you have memories of your grandmother?

A: Sure.

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Q: Whose mother was she?

A: My grandparents.

Q: Yeah.

A: My mother's – my mother's parents, and then I have memory of my father's parents. His father died young, he had – ah, what the hell? He had cancer of the liver, and in that time there was no medicine to give him for pain. He hanged himself.

Q: Oh my.

A: Couldn't take the pain any more, he hanged himself. But my grandmother lived a long time.

Q: And how old were you – did she die when you were a teenager or something?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was she a very strong influence on you?

A: Not that grandmother, my mother's mother was a strong influence on me, yes.

Q: In what way?

A: In every way. She was very strict. Very loving, but very strict. Oh sure, was a wonderful woman, wonderful. And I think I brought up my children like that. She was very strict and she was very loving.

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Q: And, can you give me some examples of both ways –

A: And my grandfather too. My grandfather was a – a – a Jewish teacher.

Q: At a – at a school, at a Jewish school, or as a – a teacher in the German school system?

A: In the Jewish school, but they were paid by the government.

Q: I see.

A: The Jewish teachers were paid by the government.

A2: And they would have in the morning, the Jews would have an hour of Jewish education and the Catholics would have an hour of Catholic education.

A: Yeah, and we got – we had in the mornings –

Q: Okay.

A: – yeah, we had to go to Hebrew school in the morning, an hour before regular school because the – the Christian children, they also had an hour –

Q: Of religious education?

A: Of religious education.

Q: I see.

A: And then we went in – went to regular school.

Q: What are the – did your – did your mother's and father's families, were they also born and raised in **Schlüchtern**? Had they come from somewhere else?

A: My mother's – no, my mother's parents, they came from **Mainstockheim**.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: That's in – near **Wirthswies** in **Bavaria**. And my father's, they were born in – near **Schlüchtern**.

Q: Near **Schlüchtern**.

A: Yeah. Forgot, **Wienschteiner**(ph) or someplace, I forgot which one.

Q: Did – so, in order that I'm not confused, are you – are you saying that when you went to school, you went to a regular public school –

A: Yeah.

Q: – but you had separate religion classes?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And your grandfather was a teacher in one of them? Is that what you said?

A: My grandfather was a Hebrew teacher, no.

Q: Teacher.

A: In **Mainstockheim**, that was near – near **Wirthswies** in **Bavaria**, he was a Hebrew teacher. And during the war –

Q: First World War, yeah?

A: Which war was that now, I forgot already – he also taught a regular school.

Q: First World War, yeah.

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A: It must have been 18 sometimes?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't know what year that was. Yeah, because they needed the teacher, the other teacher went to – my grandfather couldn't go to the army, you know, but they were – both grandfathers couldn't go. This one had only a half a leg, one and a half legs, and I forgot already the other one – my father couldn't go because he had – I don't know what it was. One of those wars, he had something with his eye, some sickness with the eye, forgot what it was. So I have good memories from my childhood.

Q: I'd like to have some – some examples of those – those good –

A: Huh?

Q: What are some of the examples of those good memories? What ma – what makes you feel particularly happy about thinking of those things?

A: Cause it was a nice time in – in – in **Germany** at that time. We were – we had – everybody was happy, everybody lived nice together. There came Passover, my mother sent me with some matzos to a neighbor who wasn't Jewish, you know, they liked matzos and that was a big – big thing for them to get some matzos, you know, three, four matzos.

Q: Mm-hm. And so there was friendly relations with your German neighbors?

A: Yes.

Q: Normally, you would say.

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A: Sure, we had good relations with them.

Q: Did you have also friends amongst –

A: Friends?

Q: Yes.

A: Sure, I had two German – oh, I had two girls, they were not Jewish. One was **Irmgard(ph) Miller**, and the – which she was a nice girl, and the other one was the **Annamarie(ph) Schultz(ph)** and I owe her a spit in the face.

Q: Oh, why?

A: When we were young – when I was about 18, I would say, you know, I bo – my mother died when?

A2: '33.

A: 1933. And so how old was I in 1933?

Q: Thir – 20.

A: Yeah?

Q: 20s. You were 20.

A: 20?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I met that girl on the street, she came one way and I went the other way. And she out of – **Hitler** was in power then.

Q: I see.

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A: Out of the blue sky, she spit in my face.

Q: And she had been your friend?

A: Huh?

Q: And she had been your friend before?

A: Yeah. And the other one, the **Irmgard(ph) Miller**, she was nice. They all were mostly nice, but that was a miserable girl, I don't know why she did it, because I was Jewish. What can you do? If I would – I wish I would see her today, I owe her that spit.

Q: It's been many years –

A: Huh?

Q: – in the way – it's been many years in the waiting for it.

A: I'm waiting a long time.

Q: Yeah. 83 – 87 years, something like that. That's a long time to wait. No, I've got my numbers wrong, it's 77 years.

A: I – I don't even know – I don't even know if she's alive, who knows, I don't know.

Q: So –

A: I have no idea.

Q: – I want to go back to the school days.

A: Whatever.

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Q: So – so, when you went to school, you – it was strict, you had separate religion classes?

A: Yes.

Q: And did you feel like you were different from anybody else, I mean – no? It was –

A: No.

Q: Did you feel German as well as Jewish?

A: Huh?

Q: Did you feel like you were a German as well as being Jewish?

A: Sure, and on Shabbas we had a half a day school. I wore a nice, white apron [indecipherable] to school, because it was Shabbas.

Q: Mm-hm. And – and at school, did –

A: There was no – no anti-Semitism.

Q: You didn't feel that, no?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: No. There was none.

Q: Did you feel different though, from the other children? Were there many Jewish children in the school?

A: Sure there were Jewish children.

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Q: Many?

A: In my class? Depends, you know. My class, I forgot how many. I think I was the only one, probably. Was there another one? No, there was another one. I don't know when [indecipherable] I don't remember how many we were in the school.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: That's too long ago.

Q: Okay. What would you say about – about how things started to change when – you know, when this girl came and spit in your face, and it was such a surprise –

A: How things started, it's a good question. It just – overnight. It just started overnight, you know. They came out of the – how do you call it? Out of the –

A2: The wood. Woodwork.

A: Came out of the – how do you call that?

Q: The woodwork?

A: Huh?

Q: Out of the woodwork, out of the blue?

A: Yeah.

Q: Something like that.

A: Just like that. Just like that.

Q: So, by the time **Hitler** was in power, you were 20 years old.

A: Probably, yeah.

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Q: Yeah. Had you gone – ha – you had finished school.

A: Sure, I was finishing school. I already had gone to another school oh – in **München**.

Q: In **Munich**?

A: In **Munich** on my own – yeah, in – what was it? I forgot already. Oh, I learned to take care of babies.

A2: Baby nurse.

Q: A baby nurse, uh-huh.

A: What was it? Yeah, that was in **Munich**. And – well, I don't know any more.

Q: Did you have a job afterwards?

A: A job?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yes, I did have a job. I had a job by f – by a family with four children, ages 10 to two. And I took care of them. I had to – I had to take completely care of them. I wanted to work because I always wanted to have my own money.

Q: Did you still live at home?

A: Huh?

Q: Did you still live at home at that time?

A: I lived by these people.

Q: Uh-huh.

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A: Their name was **Hyman**(ph) in – forgot the name where they were. In this farm someplace. Was nice people, you know. And then I had a job, another job. I don't know any more, I forgot. Yeah, I don't know any more, this too long ago, you want to know from 150 years ago. All right. What else? Do you remember what I told you?

A2: You used to te-tell us about when you would – you and your friends, you used to go swimming, you were part of a swimming group.

A: Oh, that was – yeah, when **Hitler** was in power, you know. In **Frankfurt**, I lived in **Frankfurt** and with my father, my mother had passed away, and we used to go – we could only go on a Monday night to a s-swimming, to a Jewish – with the Jewish people, you know, they were allowed only so – on Monday nights. That was in **Frankfurt**, that was in – what was the year – how old was I when I got married?

1923? No. '23, I was –

Q: No, in 1923 you were 10 years old.

A: No, I would not be – I was 23.

A2: '35 you got married.

Q: In 1935?

A: Yeah, I got married in 1935, yeah.

Q: What was your husband's name?

A: My husband's name? **Eustyne**(ph).

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Q: **Eustyne**(ph)? And –

A: **Justin**.

Q: **Justin**. And was – where was he from?

A: **Dammstadt**.

Q: **Dammstadt**.

A: I had a good mother-in-law.

Q: Did you?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me about her.

A: They can tell you. They know her.

Q: No, but you're the person we're interviewing. So –

A: Huh?

Q: You're the person we're interviewing, so you tell me.

A: She was a very good woman. She was really clever. She had a big business.

Q: Mm-hm. What was her business?

A: Wholesale of food in **Dammstadt**. They had a few trucks. She was very clever, my mother-in-law, very clever woman. And a very good woman. A good grandma.

Q: Was she, yeah? And i-in – in what ways was she kind to you as a daughter-in-law? Because that's not always the case that a mother-in-law is kind to her daughter-in-law.

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A: I don't know. I loved her and she loved me.

Q: Did you – was it more than your own family? Did you feel closer to her than your own –

A: I only had my father, my mother that was –

Q: Ah, that's right.

A: – my mother was gone. You know, my father came every weekend from **Frankfurt** to **Dammstadt**, and stayed with me over the weekend. Sure.

Q: And by that point though, **Hitler** was in power, and the Nazis –

A: He came into power, yeah.

Q: Had that affected their store? Had that affected their business, your mother-in-law's business?

A: Not right away –

Q: Mm-hm.

A: – because they were too well known, you know, for decent business people. But when it came, you know, they had to sell anyway, and we all had to leave.

Q: Well, what was – what was it – what was her last name, your mother-in-law's?

A: Huh? **Halle**.

Q: **Halle, Halle**. And so that –

A: It was **Halle**.

Q: Uh-huh.

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A: It used to be **Halle**, with the **e** on the end, you know, **Halle** with the **e** on the end.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Oh yes.

Q: And so when you came to the **United States**, you just took the **e** off?

A: Yeah.

Q: I see.

A: Because my father-in-law had already a brother and two sisters here, who came much earlier, you know, to the **United States**, and they had changed it to **Hall**.

Q: I see.

A: So we changed ours too.

Q: Okay. And when did you decide that it's time to go? When did your family, your husband, your –

A: Well, I don't know anymore when we decided. It was bad already against the Jews, you know. Oh, yes, that was even before I knew my husband. They took the Jewish men in **Dammstadt**, all the Jewish men, like my father-in-law and my f – my father-in-law and other Jewish men, you know, and they had to – they had to clean the sidewalk with this – a brush. That was before I even met my husband, you know.

Q: And you knew of it, ho – well, how – how did you meet your husband?

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A: Huh, I met my husband, I was – poor guy didn't have a chance. I was invited by somebody, y-you know – I don't know, friend of mine, and who was that – and I met my husband, oh, he was there.

A2: You – you were start – you –

A: I got with him in the car, I don't know how it goes any more. Anyway, I met him by a friend of mine, then he says that he's going to **Frankfurt**, you know, we lived at **Dammstadt** at that time – no, I didn't.

A2: You lived in – you lived in **Frankfurt**.

A: I lived in **Frankfurt**, yeah. So – and I liked him, and I figured I'm going to marry him. So I said to him, oh, you're going to the Café **Falk**(ph)? He said yes. I said, you know what? I was supposed to go there, but I think I changed my mind. I said, where are you going? [**indecipherable**] So he said, I go – and in the [**indecipherable**] in the – the – and Jews at that time could only go to a Jewish café, or in the – in **Hauptbahnhof**.

Q: In the central train station.

A: Huh?

Q: A-At the central train station.

A: The train station.

Q: Okay.

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A: So I said, I'm going with you. So we stayed til one o'clock at night he brought me home. I can talk.

Q: So what – you – you were – you were talking?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Who did the talking?

A: Huh?

Q: Who did the talking?

A: I did.

Q: And he did the listening.

A: Sure.

Q: And I guess he liked what he heard.

A: I didn't ask him, but he asked me – wanted to pick me up on the next weekend, I said, how about tomorrow night? Was Monday night. He said, why? I said, I go swimming and I would like you to pick me up. I wanted him to see me in a bathing suit. That was the end, he had no choice.

Q: He had no choice.

A: No.

Q: Once he saw you in a bathing suit, he was a **done-er**, huh? And how soon after –

A: **[indecipherable]**. Huh?

Q: How soon after did you get married, after you met?

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A: Three months later we got married.

Q: And you moved to **Dammstadt**?

A: Yes, moved to **Dammstadt**, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And did you then – what did you – did you stay at home then, or did you help your mother-in-law in her business? How did you keep yourself occupied?

A: I was supposed to help her in the business, but I had a girlfriend, and I met a girl there, friend of my husband's, his wife, she just got married then too. So we went out every day, the two of us, or three of us. We went to a café in du – in the – in the forest there was a café, and had a good time.

Q: Even in the middle of be – of it being **Hitler's Germany**, you managed to enjoy yourself.

A: Yeah, we did. Then, I don't know how much later, you came.

Q: Were you born in – were you born in **Germany**? What's her name?

A2: My name?

Q: Yeah.

A2: Well, it was **Gerta Gutta**.

Q: **Gutta**?

A2: **Gerta Gutta**.

Q: **Gerta Gutta**. And you were born what year?

A2: In '36.

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A: I got married in '35.

A2: Right.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

A2: I was born nine months later.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A2: She didn't tell you that they left **Schlüchtern** because the policeman, the head of the police came to tell her that her father shouldn't come home any more, the Nazis were looking for him.

Q: Can you – can you –

A: What is this?

Q: – can you tell me about how you – your father came to leave **Schlüchtern** and what – what was the circumstances?

A: Oh, he had left already **Schlüchterntin**(ph) –

Q: I know.

A: My father lived in **Frankfurt** – huh?

A2: Why did Grandpa leave **Schlüchtern**?

Q: Why did your grandf – why did your father leave **Schlüchtern**?

A: Oh, it was on a Shabbas afternoon, and **Hitler** was in power already, and he was in shul, the afternoon and [indecipherable] and he had a – the – a policeman came.

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When he went out of the synagogue, was a policeman there, and he came and he said – they went to school together. He said to my father, **Herman**, don't go home. Go in your car and go away and don't come back to **Schlüchtern**, because I sh – I'm – I have – otherwise I have to take you into **schutzhaft**.

Q: I have to arrest you.

A: Yeah. So my father didn't come home, he went to **Frankfurt** in – in his car, with his – **mein** – my cousin brought him with his car to **Frankfurt**, then I sold the house.

Q: So, did you stay in **Schlüchtern** at that moment?

A: Sure, I was still in **Schlüchtern**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A2: Didn't the – didn't the Nazis come to your house that day?

A: Oh, the Nazis, they came into our house. Was that before?

A2: No, the same day.

A: Came afterwards.

A2: No, the same day.

A: Huh?

Q: The same day.

A: Same day? Possible. And –

Q: What happened?

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A: Oh, they wanted to tur – what happened. They wanted my father. So, I mean, stupid me, I went to the – how would you call it, with a – that – the **Bürgermeister** –

Q: No, **auf deutsche, auf deutsche. Auf deutsche** [speaks German]

A: Where the **Bürgermeister** lived, you know. And –

A2: The mayor.

Q: Where the mayor lived?

A: The mayor, yeah. And I – we had already a different mayor, because th-the mayor which we had before was married to a Jewish woman, they had a child. So he was gone already. So he had an **Hitler** – a **Hitler** mayor, and went to him, and I told him, you should take those guys away which are in front of our house, standing [indecipherable] waiting for my father. And I'm gonna write to my uncle in **Milano**, what's going on in – in **Schlüchtern**. I was 19 - 20 years old. So anyway, those guys, then they dr – called them away, you know. That was the end, and then my father didn't come home anyway, I went to **Frankfurt** and I sold the house and everything. I'm sorry I sold it. Beautiful house. Belongs today to the city.

Q: For – to the city of **Schlüchtern**.

A: City of **Schlüchtern**, yeah, beautiful house. Oh, she saw it. Did you see it too?

A2: I saw the house, it's beautiful.

Q: Was it a big villa or something?

A2: It's a very large house.

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Q: Very large house.

A2: Right – in-in the t – in the – right by the town.

Q: Mm-hm. And were your grandparents still alive then, or they were dead by then?

A: No, no, no, they died already, my grandparents were dead already.

Q: I see. So it had been you and your father living in the house?

A: Yeah.

Q: Just the two of you in the –

A: Yeah.

Q: And –

A2: Her brother was away in school.

Q: I see. And – yeah.

A: My brother – my brother couldn't come back. He was in **Italy**, and he was told he cannot come back, because otherwise they'll take him into – into custody too. And so he went to **Brack**(ph) –

Q: Ah.

A: – to **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: To **Czechoslovakia**.

A: He was in **Italy**, he was studying in **Italy**.

Q: What was he studying?

A: What do you call it?

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A2: Art.

A: Huh?

Q: Art?

A: Art, yeah.

Q: He was studying art? Uh-huh.

A: He was a – a commercial artist.

Q: I see. And your – the person – your uncle in **Milano**, was he somebody who had a position that – that it convinced the mayor to pull his guards away?

A: No, that was just my saying, you know.

Q: I see. Okay, I see.

A: I wanted to scare them.

Q: And, do you think you did?

A: No. But then it went down, down, down, everything. My – my – my – I went with my father to **Italy**, to my uncle for [indecipherable] something. And we were there two weeks and then we went home, and then the bastards that came into the house, they smashed everything on the ground floor.

Q: This is in **Frankfurt** already?

A: Ah no, that was all in **Schlüchtern**.

Q: Ah.

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A: They smashed everything to pieces. Was terrible, was really bad. Even our maid was afraid, and she wasn't Jewish.

Q: And this – and that was while you were gone, huh?

A: Huh?

Q: That – was that done while you were gone? While you were in **Italy**?

A: No, while we were in the house.

Q: While you were in the house.

A: In the house. They didn't ask, but just came and smashed everything to piece.

Q: Did you know the people who were doing it?

A: No, no, no. Mostly they were not from my hometown, they brought them in from the outside.

Q: Ah, okay. And hometown people, did they ta – you know, fr – aside from the friend who spit on you, the former friend, how did they cha – did their attitudes change, or had they still st –

A: Never heard of them any more. Never heard of them any more.

Q: So, all the former friends –

A: I would like to see her today, I owe her the spit.

Q: Other people –

A: It's no use.

Q: Yeah.

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A: I could – that's no use, no. I could find out, really, you know. To **Amy's** friend, my granddaughter – granddaughter has some – knows somebody who – ah, who knows? It doesn't matter any more, it's too long ago.

Q: How about other people in the town? Do – did – how did they behave towards you, the Gentiles, when **Hitler** got into power?

A: Most of them were okay, they left you alone. Oh sure, they left you alone, you know. They didn't bother, no.

Q: No.

A: Nobody bothered, really.

Q: Except you – but they – so, in order to – in order to do things that were aggressive and violent, they would have to bring in strangers to do them. Is that what we could understand?

A: But we did nothing.

Q: No, no, no, no. I know you didn't do anything. It was when someone – when they wanted to scare you because you were Jewish, they brought in strangers from outside the town.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. They put in strangers.

Q: And –

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A: The Jews were well liked in – in **Schlüchtern**. They were well liked, they were – we – we danced, went to dances together, you know, the – the Goyim and the Jews. And you know, it – what you call the **[indecipherable]** once a year they had a – how do you call that? Like you have it here, too.

A2: A big dance?

A: Huh? Yeah, you know, a – a –

A2: A festival?

A: Oktoberfest or something.

A2: A festival.

Q: Mm-hm. And it was all joined, everybody joined together to celebrate.

A: Yeah, everybody danced together, everybody joined. There was nothing.

Q: That must have been quite a surprise when it all happened.

A: Huh?

Q: It must have been quite a surprise when it all started to change.

A: Sure, it was bad. What can you do? Couldn't help it, you know, that's what it happened. Some of them went nuts.

Q: Yeah.

A: I met a – I have to go again, you know, I met a woman, she went to **Schlüchtern** **[indecipherable]** in the – by the butcher here. So – but it doesn't matter any more, s – I don't know anybody any more anyway.

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Q: Yeah.

A: I wonder who is alive. Who knows? Today I enjoy my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren, and I hope something like this will never happen again.

Q: I understand.

A: I hope so.

Q: Tell me how you left **Germany**.

A: Why I left?

Q: Not why you left, how you left.

A: Oh, should have brought out a picture. I had my daughter, **Gertie** was six months old.

A2: Three months.

A: Huh?

A: Three months? I thought it was six months – in the basket, in a – what's a – basket, right?

A2: A laundry basket.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Such a basket. **Ay yi yi**. Had her in a basket and the carriage went along too. I – in the carriage I had all the diapers, you know. And I went to – where

[indecipherable] I first stopped for two weeks in – oh God, didn't I just tell it

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before, someplace where I went? [**indecipherable**] to the book. I had an uncle and aunt –

A2: **Milan?**

A: – and they lived in – near **France** – in **France** someplace. I don't know any more. So I went with my daughter, and – how the hell have I got it? Who knows? I don't know any more. In a basket to someplace in **France**.

Q: How did you get there, did you go by train?

A: By train. How else, not airplane. Went by train. And they're so – Germans are crazy. I had to open up the diaper and show her – show them her tushy, just in case I – I –

Q: Had jewelry there or something?

A: Huh?

Q: Just in case you would have jewelry there or something?

A: Not jewelry, money.

Q: Money.

A: **Jesus Christ**. It was no laughing matter at that time.

Q: No.

A: Today I can laugh about it.

Q: Where was your husband?

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A: When I left **Germany**, my husband was here already. He left before me. He left on the first of May.

Q: What year?

A: Mm, good question.

A2: '36.

Q: '36?

A: '36.

Q: Okay, first of May, 1936, he had already left to come to the **United States**, yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: And –

A: I left in July or August, I don't know when it was.

Q: And had you talked? Had – what about his mother? Did she also leave?

A: My mother-in-law?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, the whole family left. They – I make my mother-in-law and my father-in-law and my brother-in-law – my – my other brother-in-law had gone with my husband already. They were here, my husband went with my brother-in-law. And then I [**indecipherable**] the in-laws. And they left on the first of May, **Betty** and **Ernie** and **Joe**, my brother-in-law **Joe**, and my mother-in-law and my father-in-law. We left later. I met my in – my in-laws in **France**.

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Q: I see.

A: [indecipherable] down to **France** already.

Q: Where?

A2: **Le Havre**.

Q: In **Le Havre**, uh-huh, okay.

A: I forgot already where. And I met them there, and then we went together, oh the – the guy was so nice to me on the ship, you know. You have to take this – the big ship could not come into the –

Q: Port?

A: Huh?

Q: Into the port?

A: The port was too big, you know. It was the **Hamburg**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And so I – that guy was nice to me. The – on the ship, what do you call those, the – the sh –

A2: Captain.

A: The captain. It was so windy, you know, and she screamed blue murder. So, he says to me, come with me in my cabin. So, you know, it was too windy.

Q: And so you stayed where it wasn't so windy.

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A: And then, what they did, they sing. On the ship. [**sings in foreign language**]

They make you feel so bad.

Q: Yeah. Because it was a song about leaving your home.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I could've killed them.

Q: And – and so it wasn't easy to leave, was it?

A: No, it wasn't.

Q: Why?

A: Why? I loved **Germany**. I loved my homeland. Had no complaints. My parents had no complaints, we were living nicely. My father was doing very well.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, we lived nice with the neighbors, only until the lousy bastards came. The Nazis.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't unders – I don't understand it, not to this day.

Q: Very few people do.

A: Huh?

Q: Very few people do.

A: I can't understand it.

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Q: Yeah.

A: No.

Q: What about your father? Didn't he leave with you?

A: My father came later. Sent him affidavit, he came. Oh, we brought so many people.

A2: 84.

A: 84 people.

Q: How did you bring 84 people over?

A: With – with the help. We had help. My father-in-law – my father-in-law's sister was married to a congressman, **Blume**(ph).

Q: Do you rem – **Blume**(ph)?

A: Mm-hm. And – and so there was help, you know, and then there was a Jewish woman, she was working on the – where do you call it? On the immigration. And my father-in-law had to go to the immigration, I don't know what for, right away. And he talked to her, and she helped, too. Through that, you know, I mean, until roose – I think it was **Roosevelt** who stopped that to coming in, that you can't get in. The last one who came into the **United States** was my mother-in-law's cousin. She was married, I forgot her name. Then the – then they stopped, they didn't let any more Jews come in.

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Q: So was it the congressman who helped your mother-in-law and you and your husband first come over?

A: Yeah, the – he helped, you know, because he was married to – to

[indecipherable] I forgot, I mi – just said, you know? My – I don't know what, forgot already. Anyway, and that's how we got here. That's – and then we – we were able to bring that many people.

Q: It's an amazing number of people.

A: Huh?

Q: That's an amazing number of people.

A: Yeah, yeah. The first ones we were able to bring here, my – somebody in the family was engaged to somebody and I don't know, anyway, that was the first one to come, be sent an affidavit. I mean, at that time you could send affidavits, and then **Roosevelt**, I think, stopped it.

Q: But during that time, I mean, it means you arrived in the **United States** in 1936.

A: Yeah, okay.

Q: And so there's a couple –

A: One after the other came then.

Q: Okay.

A: **[indecipherable]** were able to.

Q: How did you help? What were you doing in order to help?

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A: We had to – shouldn't say it, you know? Do you think we still told the truth all the time?

Q: That's all right. No one's gonna catch you now.

A: How much you make, you know, you have to tell them how much you make. Come on. Or if you're working, if you make money or not. We were able to bring them in.

Q: But I'm still confused. How did you do it?

A: How? Oh, officially? We didn't tell the truth always.

Q: But what was it –

A: To say how much we make, you know, if we are working or not.

Q: Ah, so you sponsored them in, you sponsored –

A: Sure, yeah, yeah.

Q: – 84 people in.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you – and you wrote. Can you tell me – so you wrote on the – on the applications that you were earning more money than you –

A: Oh certainly, what do you think?

Q: I see, I see. And so that they wouldn't be a burden on the state –

A: Yeah, roll that down, so I don't have to be afraid **[indecipherable]** be sent away.

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Q: No, no, no, you don't. So, i-it was an easier way of doing this, of getting them out of the country this way?

A: Sure.

Q: And was this unusual? I mean, did any – did you know of any other people who were able to get so many others out?

A: Never asked.

Q: Never asked, yeah. And who were the people you were getting out?

A: Oh, the whole **mischpoho**(ph). Friends. I know the first ones were some friends from my mother-in-law. He was a lawyer in **Germany**, was their lawyer in business. And they had two daughters, they were the first ones. They were the first one to ask. And then we have and we were a [**indecipherable**] you know. Many relatives. Sure, all of them, the whole – whole kit and caboodle.

Q: So when they arrived, all the people –

A: They all stopped in our house. They all slept there until they – a day or two or a week, you know, until they found an apartment, and that was it, and then they were on their own.

Q: Where did you live, where was your house?

A: We lived in **New York**.

A2: **Manhattan**.

Q: In **Manhattan**?

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A: In **Manhattan**. Uptown.

Q: Did you have an apartment?

A: Oh sure, we had a nice apartment, big apartment, we all lived together. And then when they came, when the **mischpoho**(ph) came, they all slept by us, until they had an apartment or something, you know.

Q: Do you remember where you first arrived, when you first arrived, where you stayed?

A: Yes, in **178th** Street is fa – **178th** Street I think it was. Today it's not there any more, today the bridge – they had built a bridge there now. Sure, I remember. Oh, that was full of bedbugs. Oh my God.

Q: And – and did that mean that your – that your – your mother-in-law and the lu – your husband's family hadn't established themselves here yet, or had they –

A: Oh no.

Q: No.

A: My husband was here, he was working nights. He was a dishwasher, yeah. And **Ernie** was working daytimes, my brother-in-law, so I found an – I found – there's a letter, a green envelope.

A2: Where?

A: In the kitchen, in the – right there on the – when you come in on the right side.

They were – they had a room together, my ma – my brother-in-law and my husband,

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they were here first. And my husband worked nights, and my brother-in-law worked daytimes, so they had one room. One slept at night and one slept in the daytime.

That wasn't easy. But we were happy anyway [indecipherable] oh yes.

Q: So when you arrived, did you arrive to that place with the baby?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: That was a hundred and –

Q: **78th** Street?

A: **78th** Street, yeah, I remember. Oh, God almighty. We had a bedroom

[indecipherable] that this old big apartments, the long corridors, you know?

Q: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

A: She – she couldn't walk it, she was sitting on her behind and moving herself along that long corridor.

Q: Okay, so this is to wat – 100 fa – this letter is showing that it's to 149 **West 91st** Street.

A: That was where my a – that's where my – where my husband and my brother-in-law –

Q: Uh-huh? Stayed at this –

A: – yeah, of **Winkler**.

Q: **Winkler**.

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A: They have a room rented from somebody.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My brother-in-law worked daytimes and that's when my husband slept. And when my husband went to work, then my brother-in-law slept in that bed.

Q: And then what happened when you arrived? Where did you sleep?

A: Oh no, then we – my husband took a – had taken already an apartment, **178th** Street. And was on a Friday I arrived, and the – and the furniture arrived at the same time, we brought all our furniture. And was on a Friday, moved in there, slept there. All of us.

A2: Who was all?

Q: Yeah, who was all?

A: My brother-in-laws, my cousin – pa – Daddy's cousin, **Manfred**(ph).

Q: Mm-hm, your mother-in-law?

A: M-My mother-in-law, my father-in-law, who else was it? The whole **mischpoho**(ph), whatever that was.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: **Manfred**(ph).

A2: Yeah.

A: Yeah. But on Friday, at that Friday, Grandpa and Grandma, they slept by Aunt **Sophie**.

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Q: And when did you decide to start get – trying to get people over? When did you – your family get involved with this?

A: Oh, right away.

Q: Right away?

A: Yeah, you had to.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You had to. My father-in-law had a sister here, and a brother here for years already. And his sister came to **Germany**, I was married, was just married, you know. And she said to my in-laws, you have to leave **Germany**. My mother-in-law didn't want to do this. Ah, that – that will go over too, won't be anything, you know. She didn't want to leave. My mother-in-law said, let me keep **Gertie**, when she – after she was born. Let me keep **Gertie**, I stay here and you can take a look how it is in **America**. So my father-in-law said no, we all go. And that's how we all got out, you know.

A2: The Nazis told my father, who was very Aryan looking, you can't **[indecipherable]** any more.

A: Huh?

Q: Oh yeah, your – your husband se – your daughter is saying that your husband looked like an Aryan, did not look Jewish.

A: Absolutely, yeah.

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Q: And that he had a friend who stopped being his friend, bec –

A2: [indecipherable] riding around with his friends, they were Nazis.

Q: Hi – ah, he –

A2: They ended up being nat – you know.

Q: Uh-huh, these former friends.

A: [speaks foreign language]

A2: Din – you told me that Daddy used to drive around with his friends that were Nazis –

A: Oh, yes.

A2: – til they told him they can't any more.

A: Oh, yes.

A2: And that's when he decided –

A: He was blonde, you know, he looked like a goy.

Q: Mm-hm. And he wo – and tell me about that, when he was – he still had some friends who were Germans, who were Nazis?

A: Yeah, they thought he was a Nazi. They told everyone he was one of them. And he wasn't, he was Jewish. Yeah, he had a lot of trouble. I told you my father-in-law had to clean the sidewalk with a brush.

Q: That's right, that's right.

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A: Grandpa [**indecipherable**]. It was a crazy time, there's no doubt about it. They were all not normal.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But it shows you you can – you can – ho-ho – put hate into anybody. Absolutely, absolutely, you can. It's jealousy. It's pure jealousy.

Q: But of what?

A: Of what? Are you Jewish?

Q: No.

A: Oh, okay. That's good. They always were jealous, you know, of people who – who – who – who hord – who worked, and they didn't care that you worked [**indecipherable**] brought themselves up, you know, out of the – of nothing. So the people were jealous. Not all of them, but the majority that time, they were ha – they – the hatred was put into them.

Q: Yeah.

A: They just – you know, you can do a lot with young people.

Q: It's true, it's true.

A: Yeah. Wasn't the older ones. Was the young ones. Sure, they were jealous. Look, my father worked, and – and my – my in-laws, they worked day and night. They worked, they worked, they worked. They brought themselves up. But those bums

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didn't care. That's what happened, that **missel** time. Was a miserable time, but we were happy anyway. Oh, [**indecipherable**]. We were happy.

Q: Well, sometimes that's what you need in order to be able to survive, even when it's a miserable time.

A: When you are young, you can take much more.

Q: Probably, yeah.

A: Sure, what do you think? I just hope it doesn't happen any place. No good, there's no doubt about it. Sure, what can you do?

Q: When was the next time you went to **Germany**? After you came back, after you were here and your brought all those people out?

A: I forgot. We were once in **Germany**, my husband and I, don't know when. Do you remember?

A2: 20 years ago maybe.

Q: One time?

A: [**indecipherable**] do you remember?

A2: Maybe 20 - 25 years ago.

A: I don't remember.

Q: So that would have been in 1985 - 19 – something like that.

A: I have a goo – of good friends in **Germany**, not Jewish. **Christina**(ph)

Becker(ph). She sends me a-all kinds of stuff on Christmas, she sends me big

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packages. She is about in the 40s. She was – is – and when we went to **Germany**, my husband and I, we visited my husband's friends. They were never Nazis. And this girl was about eight years old, today she's in the 40s. And she fell in love with me. So every year she comes and she sends me a – she sends me here, for instance, and there I think it is – she's – she sends me a whole lot of stuff from my hometown. Oh, she sends me anything and everything. She's very nice, and her parents are very nice. I just had something in my hand before from them. My husband, they were good friends with her grandparents.

Q: I see, I see.

A: Yeah, the man worked in my husband – her grandfather worked in my husband's business, and they were the same age as my husband, you know? So they were good friends all those years. And now the grandchildren – the granddaughter is good friends with me.

Q: That's nice.

A: Yeah, **Christina(ph) Becker(ph)**.

A2: They – I think **[indecipherable]** business, I'm not sure.

Q: I see, okay.

A: **[speaks foreign language]**

Q: Did they – did they in some ways become involved in your father-in-law's business, afterwards, this – these – this family?

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A: They – they – no, they started their own business then.

Q: I see.

A: The **Bakers** started their own. Oh, I should have – I think I threw out, just before.

What did I do with it?

Q: That's okay.

A: Was a big business, they have a big business, so they started their own, afterwards, and the big ta – it's a big company today, very big company.

Q: What did they do? Do you know what they –

A: They are – they are ha – are in food.

Q: **Maidensmitten**(ph)?

A: In food –

Q: **Maidensmitten**(ph).

A: – wholesale. Oh, yes. But I think I threw it out.

Q: And now, the people that you brought over.

A: Yeah.

Q: The 84 people that you managed to get out of **Germany**, did they stay – did you stay in contact with them?

A: Most of them our bed.

Q: I know, but afterwards, after –

A: Sure we had, sure. Certainly. We all lived together in **New York**.

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Q: Mm-hm. You say one cousin?

A2: I think so.

Q: What about one cousin?

A: **[speaks foreign language]**

A2: You have one cousin who's still alive in **New York**, who you brought over?

A: Who's that?

A2: I don't remember.

A: I forgot. In **New York**?

A2: Or somewhere. Oh, **Florida. Inga(ph).**

A: Huh?

A2: **Inga(ph).**

A: Du – **Inga(ph)**? Yes. Oh, yeah, the **Inga(ph) [indecipherable]** and her sister is alive, I don't know where she lives. In **Israel**, I think. And who's anush – I have forgot **Heidi**. I had – must be more, but I can't remember right now.

A2: **Gerta Forbes.**

A: **Gerta**. She lives in –

A2: **Florida.**

A: Where?

A2: **Florida.**

A: In **Florida.**

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Q: **Florida**, uh-huh.

A: And I can't remember right now. Some of them, they're younger than I am.

Q: Was there anybody who you wanted to bring over and couldn't?

A: Yes.

Q: Who, for example?

A: The doctor who brought her into the world.

Q: Oh.

A: Didn't let them out any more. No, didn't let them in here any more. Didn't let them in here any more then, **Roosevelt** closed. **Roosevelt** wasn't so nice. We thought he was God.

Q: And what happened to him?

A: Died in a concentration camp. He and his wife and his child, yeah. His wife became Jewish when she married him, the doctor, and the boy was Jewish and they killed them all. No idea **[indecipherable]** you really have no idea? I had before here, a list.

Q: Oh, you had a list of the people that you –

A: I have a list someplace. **[indecipherable]** I do with it?

Q: And what is that book that I see? Is this sort of like memoirs?

A: What have I got way in there?

Q: This is my things.

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A: That's yours.

Q: That's mine, mm-hm.

A: I had a list with the – oh, where did I put it? Take a look what I got over there.

A2: No, this is not it.

A: No, that's not –

Q: Can you tell me what this book is? Is this a book of me-memories?

A2: Birth certificates and different things like that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: No, that's not. I thought I just had it before.

Q: Is this the list of the people that you would have brought over?

A: No. A whole list who got killed.

Q: Oh, a list of who got killed.

A: Where the hell did I put it now? I don't know any more. I had it here someplace, I don't know where I put it. What you have laying there on **[indecipherable]**. Should interview my son-in-law, my daughter's husband.

Q: Yeah?

A: He came here – what he went through. He is from **Poland**. He is from –

A2: **Gdansk. Danzig.**

Q: Oh, **Danzig**, that was a tough place to be.

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A: Can't see it, can't find it, who knows? Nah, that's not it. Now, it must be here someplace. No, what's in that book, or underneath the book, or in the book?

A2: It's not – yeah, it's not there, it's not.

A: It must be. **[indecipherable]**

Q: Okay, okay.

A: I can look it up, what's the difference?

Q: It's okay.

A: I've got plenty.

Q: Was that the list of people who didn't make it? **Geburt und tod**, birth and death, it says.

A: Do you speak – you **[indecipherable]** German?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I once – I don't know where I – I don't know where I got that from. It's very good. **[speaks German]**

Q: You want me to read it?

A: Yeah, why not?

Q: **[reads poem in German]**

A: I have in that book, maybe. It must be somewhere. I had something. Well, what's the difference, it's enough. I have nothing in there.

Q: It's a – it's a sad, but it's a very meaningful poem.

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A: Isn't it?

Q: It's lovely, you know, in that sense, it's lovely. Do you speak German at all with your children here? Do you both understand German?

A2: Basically.

Q: Basically. So even –

A2: I can read it a little bit. I took German in college for two years.

Q: You took German in college for two years. And your parents, did you speak, here in the **United States** with your husband and with your in-laws –

A: What?

Q: Did you speak German with them, or did you speak English with them?

A: On the beginning, probably German. That's how **[indecipherable]** started.

A2: My grandmothers – I spoke German before I went to school.

Q: You spoke German until you started school here.

A2: Yeah. And then my grandmother said, you live in **America**, you speak English.

A: I don't know any more.

Q: **[speaks German here]** And this is sent in a 1936, on March 6th, there is a letter that was sent to your husband, Mr. **Eust** –

A: Yeah, this was sent to my husband when he lived by **Winkler**. He – he and his brother, they had one room together.

Q: Yeah, you told me about that.

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A: And that's where they lived, by **Winkler**. I kept that.

Q: It's authentic, you know, so many years. It's a 74 year old envelope.

A2: Thanks.

Q: So – you look way better than the envelope.

A: Oh, she knows how old you are.

A2: Oh yeah. My son is 54.

A: She looks good. My daughters look wonderful.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Ah, yeah. Well.

Q: What – what else do you think is important for other people to know about what happened to you and what you participated in, went through?

A: I tell everybody not to hate, yeah. Well, no good. And **[indecipherable]** you know. Don't forget to laugh. It's like the – like the people, you know, don't hate.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't hate anybody. I don't care who it is, what they do, I don't hate. I might like – don't like somebody personally some, but – but otherwise, there's no hate in me.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that's the only thing, don't hate. You know, got to be happy, and take the every day life as this – well, her husband went through a lot.

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A2: They have his testimony.

Q: Do we? Yeah?

A2: **Spielberg**.

Q: Ah, **Spielberg** does.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is there anything you two would like to add to your mom's story?

A2: No, I can't think of anything, do you?

A3: I'm trying to think [indecipherable]

A2: I would like to know who the – the person was who was –

A: Was?

A2: – who was married t-to the – to the senator, or the whatever he was.

Q: The congressman **Blume**(ph).

A2: Congressman.

A: Who was married to the [indecipherable] Uncle **Michael's** –

A2: Oh, **Beetsy**(ph)?

A3: No, **Beetsy**(ph) was Uncle **Michael**.

A: The **Michael** – Uncle **Michael's** sister-in-law.

A2: It's his sister.

A: Huh?

A2: Aunt **Beetsy's**(ph) sister was married to –

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A: Aunt **Beetsy's**(ph) sister, that's right.

A2: – to – was married to Congressman **Blume**(ph)?

A: **Blume**(ph), yeah. [indecipherable]

Q: But you don't know who – what her name is. We just know her as Aunt **Beetsy's**(ph) sister.

A2: Right. Probably could look it up if –

A: [indecipherable] right. That's a long time.

A2: My mother loves life. She likes all kinds of people. She has friends who are Asian, she has friends who are Indian. She is friendly with a Muslim pharmacist. She – she – she likes the United Nations, you know, she doesn't – you know, she likes people who are nice to her. You know, she doesn't find anything wrong with a lot of people, as long as they're, you know, good and nice, she –

A: Sure.

Q: Yeah. But I –

A: I like everybody. There's no doubt about it.

Q: Well, that's a wonderful legacy. Tha-That i –

A: That – that's me.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's me. That's how I always was. I had two girlfriends, they were twins. One was small, one was big. I don't know if they're alive. One went to **Israel**, and the

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other one went to **Chicago**. I don't know, it's such a long time ago [indecipherable] any place.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was nice, so we had a wonderful [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: I had really good [indecipherable] it was nice where I come from in **Germany**, in **Schlüchtern**, I would go back today, but I – it's too far, I can't take that any more. I – I would love to, oh. But I have no hatred against my hometown, you know, against people who might be still alive even the – the **Annamarie(ph) Schultz(ph)**. She moved to **Frankfurt** as f – as far as I know. I wanted – I told you once, maybe you can find out if she's still there, on the – on the computer.

A2: What my mother didn't tell you is that when she came here, she had many different jobs, you know, she – all her life.

Q: Tell me what some of those jobs were.

A: Oh, yeah, I had plenty jobs. I – I started out first taking care of a baby, and the parents in **181st Street**. I never forget that, at that time, was my first job. And we lived together, my in-laws and I, so I could go working, yeah, but I had her, you know, so my mother-in-law took care. And my mother-in-law really brought them up, both of them.

A2: Cause she worked.

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A3: She always worked.

A: She was a wonderful woman, she was really a wonderful woman. My father-in-law was a very good man, oh. He was so good. And I had a job taking care of a baby, the – I-I got a j – I got a job. I took care of the baby, the people went away in the country for two weeks. Can you imagine that, somebody trusting somebody?

Q: With a baby.

A: With a baby. That was that one. Then I was a cook once, in a club in **New York**, in – that was all young people. They had rented an apar – a house, one of these brownstone houses. I was their – I was their cook, I cooked the meal, the evening meal for them. I had to cook and I had to wash dishes, there was no dishwasher, and a group of 80 - 90 people. What else did I do? Oh.

A2: You worked for **Benrus**.

A: Huh?

A3: You worked at the hospital.

A: I worked in a bakery.

A3: In the hospital.

A: I worked – huh?

A3: In the hospital where you met **Alice**.

A: I worked in the hospital, Jewish Memorial Hospital, with my friend –

A2: **Alice**.

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A3: **Alice**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: **A-Alice Abersano**(ph). That's how I learned English really, because she was so – she wouldn't speak German, you know, she was American. That's how I really learned English, with her. We worked together in the kitchen. Yeah, I don't know that [**indecipherable**] stuff of – it's okay though, forget about it.

A2: Okay.

Q: It's about a plant.

A: And what else did I have? I worked once with my friend **Alice** – oh, we got a job in the – no, I don't think we got a job, but we went for a job. At that time was the year – it's big, thick – a big – what was there? I never got a – in the – in the meadows, there was a – a – it was a – what was there? I was there for a few months.

A2: In the world –

A: Huh?

A2: – fair – World's Fair in **Flushing**, in **Queens**? In **Queens**?

A: Yeah.

A2: The World's Fair?

A: World's Fair.

Q: Uh-huh.

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A: The – we had a – oh yeah, I had the – a – they – they were looking for somebody to work in the cafeteria in the – in the – forgot the name of the cafeteria. And so we went, my friend and I went for the job, they wouldn't take me because I was Jewish. The –

Q: In **Flushing, Queens**?

A: Yeah, don't worry, you had that here too. And they wouldn't take me, so she wouldn't take the job either. I don't know what I did, I did so many things.

A2: You worked in **Benrus**.

A: Huh?

A2: You worked on watches, fixing watches.

A: I worked – yeah, I worked on watches.

Q: Yeah?

A: My –

A2: **Benrus**.

A: Huh?

A2: **Benrus**.

A: **Benrus**? Oh yes, I worked, and I was so good, you know? I was so fast, I'm fast worker. They had to let me go because a woman, another young woman was there seven years. It was piecework. So I one, two, three I was finished, but I did it, you

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know? And the other woman was there for seven years already and she was jealous, and they had to let me go. I was the last one to come in, they had to let me go.

A2: And then you worked for Daddy. You opened your own business.

A: Yeah, I worked for Daddy, I worked more. What else did I do? I worked.

Q: What was your father – what was your husband's, your father's business, what was that?

A: He started business, I forgot when, wholesale coffee.

A2: Coffee. Coffee and tea.

A: Yeah.

A2: **Whole Coffee Corporation.**

Q: Ah, okay.

A: Yeah. And then I – after **Susan** was born –

Q: And you're **Susan**?

A: – I wanted to – they wanted me in – in the – not the **Benrus** company, another big company, watch company. I-It was –

A2: **Bulova.**

A3: **Bulova.**

A: **Bulova.** They wanted me, and my mother-in-law said, either you work for your husband, go in your husband's business, or I am not going – not going to take care of the babies. So I had no choice.

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Q: No choice. When were y –

A2: Ask her what she did [indecipherable]

Q: What did you do there?

A: Huh?

Q: What did you do in your husband's business? What was your job?

A: Everything. Oh my God, what I did. I forgot already.

A2: You packed coffee, you roasted coffee.

A: I packed coffee and tea with – at that time, you know, you could send overseas to the American soldiers in **Germany**, they – they – they got packages sent, which they sold there. I [indecipherable]. So we had to lift ourselves up, and we were on the line – on the – how do you call that?

A2: A conveyor?

A3: Assembly line.

Q: A food line?

A3: Assembly line.

Q: Assembly line.

A: Assembly line. One of the guys went into the bathroom – because on an assembly line, you know, every [indecipherable] you know. You made packages and it's so – so much in each package. You have to work, you know, you can't just go in the bathroom and stay there. So we had the guy who went to the bathroom and stayed.

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So, I can – you can't do that, you know, he was supposed stay on also. Well, I went in and I got him out. And then I fired him.

Q: Of course, of course.

A2: But she lifted the heavy cartons and –

A: Ah, I did that [indecipherable] I have – I am strong, and I'm fast, and I liked the work. So, today I am lazy.

Q: I think by age 97, you're allowed.

A: I don't know, I'm lazy.

Q: I don't know whether one would say that, after hearing all this.

A: I'm lazy today, I don't want to do nothing any more, see television. No –

A2: But you like to talk to people.

A: Huh?

A2: You like to go out and talk to people.

A: I like to go out and talk to people, you sure?

Q: I'm glad you're talking to me.

A: I think they all know me over there in the mall.

Q: Yeah?

A2: Near where she lives.

Q: Yeah? Okay. She doesn't live here?

A2: Yeah, she does.

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Q: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

A2: We go over.

A: I live here.

Q: Yeah.

A: Until I die. I'm not going any place.

Q: You're staying.

A: Yeah. What for? I'm going away with her in the winter someplace.

A2: On a cruise.

A: On a cruise.

Q: Can I ask when were you born?

A3: 1942.

Q: 1942. So, two girls, you have two girls.

A: Yeah.

Q: One born 1936, the other born 1942.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Any other children?

A: No.

Q: No. And what happened with your brother? You said he died recent –

A: My brother died, he had no children.

Q: Uh-huh.

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A: No.

Q: Did he – di – you brought him over, too? He came over as well?

A: Oh yes, sure. My brother, my father, my brother and – no, **Ludwig** – ou-ouch, my
– my shoulder hurts me.

Q: Yeah.

A: My sister – no, my brother brought his wife over from **Czechoslovakia**. She
came from **Czechoslovakia**. I don't know, we brought a lot of people over already,
too many for count already who they were. They – mo-most of them are not alive.
The uncle, you know, and his parents and – and **Chemmy**(ph), and the **Ilsa**(ph) and
who knows?

Q: A lot.

A: But that – most of them are – are dead. I don't know who's alive. Yeah. One in f
–

A2: **Florida**.

A3: **Florida**.

A: **Florida**.

A2: **Gerta**(ph) –

A: Huh?

A2: **Gerta** was – was born in **Germany**, or here?

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A: **Gerta?** Oh – oh no, she was born – I don't know any more, **Gertie**. It's too long ago. Who knows? It was a nice – it was nice living here right away. We had good times. The first – the first Sunday when – when I was here – my husband was here before with my brother-in-law, we went to the beach. And my mother-in-law went along all the time. She was there from the beginning on. My father-in-law didn't go. So we went to the beach, you know, and took our sandwiches and a blanket and **Gertie** was happily play.

A2: We used to go to soccer games on Sunday.

A: Huh?

Q: Used to go to soccer games on Sunday?

A: Oh, my husband went every Sunday for the – to the soccer game. They were used to it, and in **Germany**, you know –

Q: Of course, it's soccer.

A: – every Sunday [**indecipherable**]. I had a good life.

Q: Well –

A: It was a good life. I'm lucky. Her husband didn't have such a good life.

A2: But now he's got lots of kids.

Q: How many grandchildren do you have?

A: I don't know any more. Seven.

A2: No.

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A: How many grandchildren?

A2: Oh grandchildren, yeah, sorry.

A: I have seven grandchildren, I have 23 or 24 great-grandchildren.

A2: 24 with **Stephanie**.

A: Oh, with **Stephanie** it's 24.

Q: That's quite a legacy.

A: Great grandchildren.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, they're wonderful. They are.

Q: It must mean a lot for them to hear their great-grandmother say so, too.

A: They call me Grandma **Blanche**.

Q: And do they all live around here?

A: Huh?

Q: Do they all live around here?

A: Yeah, they all live – oh, the only one who doesn't live around here is **Adam** and **Stephanie**.

A2: They live in **Albany**. My grandson.

A: Oh, and **Norman** lives in –

A2: He lives in **Long Island**.

A: Lives in **Long Island**.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: It's nice.

Q: It is.

A2: When she says it was very nice times because they went to the beach, in other words, without –

Q: Fear.

A2: – having much money, they had – and no fear, you know, so they enjoyed each other's company. Cause I remember when I grew – was growing up, the house was always full of people.

Q: That's a wonderful thing.

A2: Yeah.

Q: It's a wonderful thing to see –

A: What did you say [indecipherable]

A2: The house was always full of people when I was young.

A: Oh, yes.

A2: So that was their enjoyment, you know, being together.

A: Yeah.

Q: To me it sounds like a very rich gift to have.

A2: It was nice.

A3: It was, it was.

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A: So what did we have? Sandwiches, mostly. Not big stu – you know, sandwiches.

My mother-in-law made sandwiches.

A2: Nothing [indecipherable]

A: We were happy. We really were. It was nice. They had a nice youth, my children.

Had nice grandparents, were wonderful. My pa – ecli – my – my [indecipherable]

my mother-in-law was a wonderful woman, wonderful woman, yeah. Very clever.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Very pretty, too.

Q: Also, it i – it's impressive, that if she had a business in **Germany**

A: Yeah.

Q: – and they were large business people, to be able to adjust to a different life,
where you don't have as much, where you have to struggle more, and still – still ha –
be positive, still be –

A: Yeah.

Q: – happy, and thankful and being able to enjoy things. Those are huge gifts. Not
everybody can do it. Not everybody's able to, not everybody has the inside to be
able to do this.

A: I remember my mother-in-law and I, you know, before I – no, I worked. If – I
worked at home. They gave out at that time homework, the business, whatever it
was. And she worked at home. When I took her out in carriage, I took her t – along

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when – summer, when the weather was nice. I took it along and I sat on the bench down near the lo –

A2: The [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, an-and I made it on the street, too, you know, the homework. And my mother-in-law and I very often would meet. At lunchtime we ate together, and she had – we had sour cream, which was new for us. We didn't have that in **Germany**. Sour cream and – and bread. Oh, it was so good, you know? We were satisfied. We were satisfied. We had more in **Germany**, but we were satisfied.

Q: Mm-hm. You wanted –

A2: When you first came over, on a Friday night, it was the Shabbas dinner. Tell her about you – th-that.

A: The first fra – we came on a Friday and we – my husband had rented an apartment, we're in there, and all of a sudden I hear Jewish songs. Oh, I s – that felt so good. Where does it come from? The windows were open because was a – it was in the – in August, you know? And right a – right nearby there, let's say like the next house, were Jewish peop – German Jews living. And they were singing the songs from Friday nights.

Q: So it wasn't like you were in completely a strange land.

A: No.

Q: There was still something familiar.

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A: That was wonderful.

Q: Yeah.

A: My father-in-law, I don't know, when we came, my mother-in-law send them out, cause we lived up in **178th** Street – 78 - 79, I don't know. And so my mother-in-law said to my father-in-law, go out and get some – what was it? You have it in English, the same word. I forgot. Oh, what was it? I can't remember this now, it's came –

A2: **Challah?**

A: Huh?

A2: Was it **challah**? Was it something to eat?

A: No, it wasn't **challah**, no, it was – I forgot. So he goes out, and he goes in the store, in the grocery store, he says, give me – I forgot. So, the man said to him, I know what you want. I can't – I can't do it now, it fell out of my head

[indecipherable]

Q: It was some food item, something from food.

A: Yeah, was something from food. I don't know any more.

Q: All right, was this –

A: That was okay. **[indecipherable]**

Q: **178th** Street, is that up by the cloisters? Is that –

A2: Yeah, not far.

Q: Not far, so isn't that –

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A3: Not by the cloisters, it's by the bridge.

Q: I see.

A3: By the – by the Port Authority.

A2: Adjacent to the bridge.

Q: Uh-huh.

A3: In that area. I don't think we – we didn't live – we didn't live up –

Q: Uh-huh.

A3: – that [indecipherable] the poor section.

A: Then later we moved to **Second Street**.

A2: Which is down near **200 Street**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, that's where they went to school. Their [indecipherable] she went to – you went to college – to – not college.

A2: To what?

A: Where did you go down – downtown?

A2: School. High School. Oh, **Washington Irving**.

Q: **Washington Irving**.

A: **Washington Irving**.

A2: I [indecipherable] downtown.

Q: Where did you go?

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A3: **George Washington** High School.

Q: I see. Well –

A: It was nice.

Q: Is there anything else that you think we need to

A: I don't know.

Q: – record here, that we should capture, as part – as your mom's ta – story?

A: All I can say, it's a beautiful country, the **United States**. I'm very happy I'm here. And I don't hate the Germans, no I don't.

Q: I think that's also quite a lesson.

A: Huh?

Q: I think that's also quite a lesson.

A: I don't hate them.

Q: Yeah.

A: I would go again, visit them, but it's too much for me –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I don't think I could do it.

Q: It's a – it's a tough journey.

A: Huh?

Q: It's a far journey and it's a long journey.

A: Yeah, it's a long trip.

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Q: Yeah, yeah, it is.

A: Maybe I'll try it again, I don't know.

A2: She better be done.

Q: Okay.

A: I'd like to.

A2: She'd like to go again.

Q: Yeah, she'd like to go, she'd like to go.

A: Sure, I would like to go. I don't know.

Q: Well, you know what Mrs. **Hall**, if there's anything else that you remember, that you would like to add to this, if your children or your granddaughter wants to get in touch with me, we can – we can try and record it again over the phone, or we can write a note in – in your file of some of the things that you might have wanted to add.

A: Yes. Make me younger so I can go.

Q: It's like when people ask, what – what else would like, you know, when they serve me in the stores, I want a winning lottery ticket.

A2: The only –

Q: Yeah?

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A2: The only thing that – when she said they came over with their furniture, if I remember correctly, you couldn't bring all your furniture, you had to buy – you had to buy cheap furniture, or something.

A: No, we had beautiful furniture when we got married, we couldn't bring them because [indecipherable] was a mistake. My husband said –

A2: [indecipherable] they brought it from **Germany**, but they couldn't [indecipherable] made it sound like they brought everything.

Q: Yeah, no.

A3: Couldn't bring everything.

Q: Okay.

A: Oh, what beautiful furniture, oh, but my husband said, they're too big. I'm sorry, you know, should never listen to a – to a man about furniture [indecipherable]

A2: Oh, I thought they wouldn't let you bring it, it was Daddy. Okay, I take it back. [indecipherable]

Q: They don't have the same relationship to wood like we do, it's true.

A: Huh?

Q: Men don't have the same relationship to furniture as women do.

A: No.

Q: No.

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A: I had yet gorgeous furniture. Oh, my God. I had night tables they were laid out inside with **marmor**.

Q: **Oy yoy, oy yoy.**

A: You know **marmor**, right?

Q: Yeah.

A2: What's this?

A3: Marble.

A: Marble

Q: Marble, marble, yeah.

A: I mean, don't bring it, bring – that we bought – that we bought new furniture and brought them here.

Q: Yeah.

A: They're okay, you know, but there's nothing special.

Q: I understand.

A: They're good furniture, I hope they didn't throw them out.

Q: Well, somebody did, somebody kept them.

A: Maybe somebody would take them.

Q: Yeah.

A: They're good, you know, they – I mean that they'll last another hundred years or more, oh yes.

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Q: It's true.

A: This one is old, she wants that, **Gertie**.

Q: Oh, yeah?

A: Yeah, bec-because it goes together with the other one.

A2: Aunt **Frumpa**(ph) wants it.

A: Yeah, but I don't care.

Q: Okay. Well, I'm going to wrap up now.

A: It's old, you know how old that is here?

Q: How old is that?

A: Oh, who knows? That was – must be about at least 150 to 200 years.

Q: Wow.

A2: Wait a se – how is it that old?

A: Huh? That comes from Uncle **Oscar**(ph).

A2: Oh, oh, okay.

A: I think so, sure. What e – what else now. Somebody has a glass that – you have a glass that's from Grandma, no?

A2: Yeah.

A: **[indecipherable]**

A2: Okay

Q: I've got to – I've got to wrap this up, excuse me.

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A: Not – this stuff doesn't last that long, here.

A2: Not what you buy **[indecipherable]**

A3: She has to finish.

Q: Okay. We can talk about that, but – but as far as the interview is concerned, I need to wrap it up.

A: What?

Q: I need to finish the interview here.

A2: She needs to finish the interview.

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay, and I – by doing it, what I say is, this concludes the **United States**

Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Blanche Hall** on October 15th, 2010.

Thank you very much for talking with us, for sharing your story.

A: It was a pleasure.

Q: It was a pleasure for me as well. Thanks again.

A: You're welcome. You can come and visit me any time.

Q: Thank you.

Conclusion of Interview