Wednesday, July 10, 2013

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
***FIRST PERSON* SERIES**
INGE KATZENSTEIN

REMOTE CART

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>> Bill Benson: Good afternoon, and welcome to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My name is Bill Benson. I am the host of the museum's public program *First Person*. Thank you for joining us. We are in our 14th year of the *First Person* program. Our *First Person* today is Mrs. Inge Katzenstein whom we shall meet shortly.

This 2013 season of *First Person* is made possible through the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation to whom we are grateful for again sponsoring *First Person*. I'm pleased to let you know that Mr. Louis Smith is with us today. [Applause]

First Person is a series of weekly conversations with survivors of the Holocaust who share with us their firsthand accounts of their experience during the Holocaust. Each guest serves as a volunteer here at this museum. Our program will continue through mid-August. The Museum's website, www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests.

Inge Katzenstein will share with us her *First Person* account of her experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If we have time towards the end of our program, you'll have an opportunity to ask Inge a few questions.

The life stories of Holocaust survivors transcend the decades. What you are about to hear from Inge is one individual's account of the Holocaust. We have prepared a brief slide presentation to help with her introduction.

Inge Berg was born in March, 1929, in Cologne, Germany. The arrow points to the city of Cologne. The family lived in Lechenich, a small town outside of

Cologne.

This 1939 portrait shows from left to right, Inge, her cousin Egon, and her sister Giselle.

The Nazis came to power in 1933. By 1935, Inge was no longer allowed to attend German schools. On November 9, 1938, the Nazis carried out a nationwide Pogrom against Germany's Jews, known as Kristallnacht or the Night of the Broken Glass. Alerted to the danger, Inge and her family fled from Lechenich to Cologne. Pictured in this photo are Inge on the left and her sister Giselle.

Inge's family was able to emigrate from Germany. And in May of 1939 they left for Kenya. In this photo we see Inge with her sister Giselle and her mother aboard the Usambara en route to Kenya.

Inge and her family lived in Kenya for the next seven years. Here we see Inge standing outside her family's farmhouse in Limuru, Kenya.

And here we see a group portrait of members of the extended Berg family on their farm in Kenya. Inge is second from the left in the back row. In 1947, the Bergs came to the United States, settling in New Jersey.

After the Berg family arrived in the U.S. from Kenya in 1947, they lived in New York City. After a few weeks, Inge's father found her a furnished room, gave her $100, and she began living independently. Inge found work in Manhattan and went to night school in Queens. She later met her future husband, Werner, and they became engaged in 1950 and married in 1951, 62 years ago on 9/11 of this year. They settled in Vineland, New

Jersey where Werner worked in sales and Inge in real estate.

Inge and Werner moved to the Washington area in 1998. They have three children: Michael, a behavioral health consultant, David, an attorney, and Deborah in financial services at PNC Bank. They have nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Their grandson has just accepted a position as a rabbi in New York and will be moving from here to New York shortly.

Inge volunteers for the Museum by spending about 35 to 40 hours a month translating documents from German to English. She is able to do this from home on a computer. She has completed translating several collections of correspondence including a voluminous seven-year series of letters from a Jewish mother in Vienna to her son in England who left Vienna as a young child on a Kindertransport in 1939. She also completed translation of a huge collection of correspondence by a family in which the husband perished at the hands of the Nazis but his wife and two young children were rescued from a train leaving the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Inge recently finished translating the journal of a man who was on the St. Louis, the ill-fated ship that brought Jewish refugees to Cuba only to be forced to return to Europe. And now she's working on about 160 pages of correspondence from a family in Switzerland who sent their daughter to Pittsburgh in 1938.

Werner helps with the translations when Inge encounters legal and technical terms. Werner and his family came to the U.S. in 1939. He joined the US Army and fought in France and Germany during World War II. He later served as a translator for the American Occupational Forces in Germany. Werner, who recently celebrated his 91st

birthday, is here today with Inge.

Werner, just wave your hand. People know you're down here. Thank you.

[Applause]

Inge's sister, Jill Pauly, was with us at *First Person* in late May. And we've had Inge and Jill here together on a couple of occasions. You will find Inge and Jill working here together on Monday mornings at the donor's desk.

With that, I'd like to ask you to join me in welcoming our *First Person*, Mrs. Inge Katzenstein.

[Applause]

Inge, thank you so much for joining us and for your willingness to be our *First Person* today. We're really glad to have you here.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Thank you.

>> Bill Benson: We're going to start right away. We have just an hour, and you have so much to share with us. So we'll begin. You told me that Kristallnacht, Night of the Broken Glass or broken glass, was the catalyst for the decisions and direction that your family's life took for the balance of the Holocaust and the war itself. You were very young at that time, 9 years old. But before we turn to Kristallnacht and the events that led up to that and what your family did right after that, tell us, first, about your life, your family, your community in your early years before the war actually began, even before Kristallnacht.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Well, before Kristallnacht we were living about 17 miles out of Cologne.

We led a very quiet, normal life. We had friends that we played with. My parents were in business in the town. My family was from the area, as far back as 1670.

>> Bill Benson: So your family lived there for essentially 300 years.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Generations. My parents had friends in the non-jewish community. We were part of the community. But that all changed in 1933 when Hitler came to power. There were the new rules. And amongst them was that Jewish children had to go to school, but the teachers did not teach them. They were afraid to teach the Jewish children. So they were ignored.

>> Bill Benson: So you experienced that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes. And my parents took me out of the school and sent me to a Jewish -- parochial, Jewish school. But there was none in my town, so when I was 7 years old I had to leave home and go and live with a grandmother where there was a Jewish school.

>> Bill Benson: How far was that from your family?

>> Inge Katzenstein: At that time, I would think it was maybe an hour by car. I really don't know the mileage. And during the school year I lived there. At the end of the year, my grandmother, my aunt and uncle moved to Holland. I had to go back home, but I still had to go to school. Then I had to travel as an 8-year-old, 7, 8-year-old, all alone, by bus to a Jewish school in Cologne.

>> Bill Benson: At least an hour away.

>> Inge Katzenstein: At least an hour. Yeah. I went by myself. And I did that until Kristallnacht. On Kristallnacht --

>> Bill Benson: Before we turn to Kristallnacht, among the many rules that were imposed on Jews, the restrictions of many kinds, one of them was that you were not allowed to keep kosher any longer.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Right.

>> Bill Benson: And yet your family was a religious family, as I recall. So your family got around those rules as best they could. Tell us a little bit about that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Well, we had -- there were three ritual slaughterers in our family.

>> Bill Benson: We should mention I think your father was in the cattle business.

>> Inge Katzenstein: My father was in the cattle business. Three of his cousins had a butcher store. And they weren't allowed to kill kosher animals anymore. So as far as the meat was concerned, the way they did it was to slaughter the kosher way and then use the gun immediately to shoot the animal in the head so that if anybody would come to inspect it, they would see that the animal had been shot and not slaughtered.

>> Bill Benson: And neighbors could hear the gunfire.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes. Yes. And you could see the bullet hole. As far as chickens were concerned, they took the chickens to the attic and slaughtered them there, ritually, and hid the knives in the chimneys.

>> Bill Benson: In the chimneys. So if any Nazis came to inspect the house --

>> Inge Katzenstein: They wouldn't find them.

>> Bill Benson: During that time after Hitler came to power in 1933, what happened to your father's business during that time?

>> Inge Katzenstein: It was non-existent anymore. The laws came that in 1933 that Jews were not allowed to do business anymore and gentiles could not do business with them.

Until 1937, my family, of course, had friends and co-workers. There was a righteous family that helped us.

>> Bill Benson: A non-jewish family?

>> Inge Katzenstein: A non-jewish family, righteous gentile who does all my father's business and handed over every single penny to him afterwards. We have been back to see this family, his children and his children's children.

>> Bill Benson: I hope maybe later we can get a chance to talk a little bit about that. So during that period from 1937 on things got increasingly more difficult. Restrictions became greater. Your father's ability to earn an income was greatly impaired except you mentioned he had at least this fellow who helped out.

In November 1938, November 9 and 10, what we call Kristallnacht now, was a series of vicious attacks against Jews all over Germany. That had a profound effect on your family. I think at that time you were away at school, in Cologne. Tell us about Kristallnacht, what that was and how it affected you and your family.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Well, I went back on November 10. I went to school. It was a Thursday. I went to school as usual. And when I came to school -- no television no radio. People didn't know what was going on. I went to school and in front of school there was the SR, the brown shirts, were standing in front of school on each side of the door, each one holding a German Shepherd with a muzzle. From the outside, our school was right next to the synagogue. And

from the outside when you looked up, we could see that the roof of the synagogue had burned out. And the policemen there said, “Children, you can't go to school today. Go home.” So we turned around and went home.

>> Bill Benson: Which for you, of course, meant an hour away.

>> Inge Katzenstein: An hour away. Instead of the bus I decided to take the train back. Made my own decisions at 8 years old. And I took the train. I passed by our house. And my mother saw me at the window. And when I got home, she said, “Why did you come home?” I said, “Well, there's no school today. They sent us home.”

And then we started to be concerned. We still didn't know what was going on. Later that morning a friend of my uncle's who worked in City Hall, whom he went to school with -- also a very -- very righteous gentile, came over and said to us, "Whatever you hear today, whatever you see, do not leave your house."

Well, the adults in the family started to call each other. They said something is going on, we don't know what it is. And my grandmother -- I had a very astute grandmother who said, "We're not staying here. We're leaving now."

Excuse me.

My father called a taxi and put my grandparents and my sister and I in the car and told the man to drive us to Cologne. My grandmother had her leg in a cast. She put us on the floorboards of the car and put her cast --

>> Bill Benson: You and Jill.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yeah. And put her cast on me because they didn't want us looking out

the window. And they didn't want anybody to see who was in the car. And as we were driving away, we hear this fire sirens. And that meant that the synagogue was burning. All the men ran -- would run towards the synagogue. But my uncle and father did not because the man said don't go anywhere. But they got in a car, and they left.

>> Bill Benson: Your uncle and your father.

>> Inge Katzenstein: My uncle, father, mother. There were three cousins in another town. They used two cars. And all went to Cologne. My mother had an aunt and three uncles living in Cologne in a two-bedroom apartment, and about eight, 10 people went there and took shelter there. And that was the last time I had been to my home or what was then my home until 1996, when I saw it again. But it wasn't my home anymore.

We lived in Cologne. My father and uncle and a cousin did not go anywhere for three, four days. They drove night and day and never stopped just to take gas. Because as long as they were driving, they weren't being picked up. If they had been picked up, they would have been taken to a concentration camp.

They went illegally across the border to Holland. There they were met by Dutch Nazis who were going to send them back. And that would have been sure death. So I had an uncle that lived in Holland who knew someone in the community that had access to the port. And through this access my uncle obtained a letter signed by the Queen of Holland at that time.

>> Bill Benson: Queen Julianna?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Wilhelmina. That said that these people could not be sent back unless

they had written permission and the border guards did not have written permission so these three people could stay in Holland but they were interned in a convent.

>> Bill Benson: In Holland.

>> Inge Katzenstein: In Holland. And they were there from November 1938 to May 1939, until they left.

>> Bill Benson: And you and Jill, your sister, and your mom, and your grandparents and your aunts, you're still, of course, all in Cologne now.

>> Inge Katzenstein: And in that small apartment.

>> Bill Benson: And during that period, November 9 through 10, throughout Germany, hundreds of synagogues were burned, thousands and thousands of Jewish men were imprisoned, Jewish stores were destroyed in the thousands. Do you know if your mother or your parents knew the full extent of that at that time, what was going on?

>> Inge Katzenstein: I believe so. I believe by two or three days later everyone knew what was going on.

>> Bill Benson: Do you know what happened to your home?

>> Inge Katzenstein: It was vandalized, totally. 17 rooms, three floors, there wasn't a saucer or a cup left whole. The linens were found on the compost heap. The Persian rugs were on the compost heap. The prayer books were thrown from the third floor. The bathtub and the sink were pulled out of the walls and found on the street. It was just sheer vandalism. And two or three days later, the Germans issued a law that the Jews had to repair and put their homes back in the same --

>> Bill Benson: And their businesses, right?

>> Inge Katzenstein: The businesses were gone. But the homes had to be put back into good condition. And my mother had to do that because my father wasn't there. And every day that she went back to do this, they would come and question her as to where her husband was. And she says, "I don't know. I don't know where he is. He disappeared." But they would question her constantly. But she never told.

>> Bill Benson: And not only was she and Jews who lost their homes all over as well as the vandalism to stores, Jews were forced to pay for all of that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: We had to pay for all of that. And not only that, because we were lucky enough to go to Africa, my mother bought everything knew. There was a Jewish exit tax that had to be paid. So in order to be permitted to pack to go overseas, you had to present the bills to the government and pay the government exactly what you paid the stores. And then a supervisor would come and watch and check off every item to make sure that you paid for it before you could close the packing boxes.

>> Bill Benson: So if your mother purchased something to take for, we'll say, an equivalent of $100, you had to pay the Nazi government $100 fee on top of that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: By that time money didn't matter anymore. You couldn't take it with you anyway.

>> Bill Benson: Before we continue from there, so your father and other male members of the family are interned in Holland. It's now December, moving into January 1939. You would leave Germany in June of 1939. So six months later. Tell us about that period of time. Your

mom, grandparents, you're trying to manage. Tell us what life was like without your father there in trying to manage and your mother and the rest of your family figuring out where we're going to go from here.

>> Inge Katzenstein: It was chaotic. There were so many people in the apartment. I was happy to go to school. I continued to go to school. I didn't have to travel anymore. School was in Cologne. And I had a lot of free time on my hands. Because I didn't go home after school. My mother didn't have the time or the ability to watch us constantly because she had to work on the emigration. I roamed Cologne for a lot of that time.

>> Bill Benson: Your sister said you became sort of a -- both a street person of sorts, and she described you as very defiant towards the Nazis.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: And you're a little girl. Tell us about an example of your defiance.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Oh, two things. Once when I got off the bus, a little boy called me a "dirty Jew." He did that almost every day of the year -- of the week. As if he was waiting for the bus to do this. One time I had enough of it. And I gave him a bloody nose.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: Your sister Jill was very proud of you for that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: And after that I ran away. And the other times in Germany, coffee was -- a shortage of coffee. You could only buy it by a quarter pound. And a lot of the stores had a sign in the window, "Jews Not Wanted." And people were standing in line for coffee. And I was on every line for coffee.

>> Bill Benson: You just got in line. And you were able to get the coffee to your grandmother.

>> Inge Katzenstein: I came home with a pound sometimes.

>> Bill Benson: While you were doing that and having time because your mother was so busy trying to figure out how you're going to get out of Germany -- and I think it's important for the audience to keep in mind that war did not begin until September of that year, September 1939, so this is still just a little before the actual war began. So how did your mom and family make arrangements for you to leave Germany?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We had a cousin that married into the family who had a cousin that went to England. And this cousin had a younger brother who came to England and studied to be an attorney and then got a position in Kenya.

>> Bill Benson: And Kenya was part of the British Empire. Right?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Kenya was a British colony. And he, through his law office, and because we had smuggled out money in 1933 --

>> Bill Benson: I have to interrupt a second. You had told me earlier that was another example of your very strong-willed, almost prescient grandmother who in 1933, when Hitler came to power, said we're not using the banks anymore. Right?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Right.

>> Bill Benson: She figured out how to smuggle money --

>> Inge Katzenstein: To Holland.

>> Bill Benson: So you would have some at some point.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: So the relative, the distant relative in England and again in Kenya.

>> Inge Katzenstein: And Kenya. And entry into Kenya at one time cost 50 pounds. But when many refugees started to come, the British upped that to 200 pounds a person.

>> Bill Benson: Was that the fee for visas?

>> Inge Katzenstein: For entry.

>> Bill Benson: And just 50 pounds in 1939 was a lot of money. And they upped it to 200 pounds.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Right. And this cousin went daily to the train station to use the telephone. You were not allowed to make telephone calls in 1939 anymore. And somebody always went with her and stood around her and gave her a signal if somebody was coming. And she called overseas to find out how the situation where the visas were. And finally we got 21 visas to go to Kenya.

>> Bill Benson: For a fortune.

>> Inge Katzenstein: For a fortune. Which 17 visas were used in the family. Four were not used. And those four people perished. But we thank God -- 17 of us. That was my mother -- my father and mother, my grandparents, my mother's mother, and my father's brother and three married cousins, all immigrated to Kenya together.

We lived in Kenya --

>> Bill Benson: Before -- we got to talk about getting to Kenya. Before we turn to Kenya -- so you're finally -- the arrangements are made. You have the 21 visas. 17 are used with family members. So how did the family, knowing that your father and at least one other relative were

in Holland, how did you make your way to Kenya and what did that involve?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Well, my mother took care -- my mother and her sister took care of all of this. We went in this three different times. My father, his brother, and the cousin who were in Holland went to Kenya in May of 1938. We -- that is, the rest of us except for two cousins -- went in June of 1938. And the two cousins came on the last boat.

>> Bill Benson: 1939.

>> Inge Katzenstein: In 1939. Came on the last boat in 1939. In our group was my grandparents, my other grandmother, three aunts and three children. My sister and I were separated. We went by train from Cologne to Genoa, Italy. It was an overnight trip by train. And my sister and I and the cousin were separated because my family was afraid that we would talk or fight. And we were not allowed to move. We were not allowed to leave the compartment. We just had to sit until we got through Switzerland.

>> Bill Benson: Worried about drawing attention to the family.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Drawing attention or that we would say something. We were children. You can expect children to blabber. So they separated us. And we couldn't fight. And we couldn't say anything until we went across the Swiss border. And then we had freedom. And then we went to Genoa and went on a German ship.

>> Bill Benson: And you had no choice. Part of the arrangements, you had to take a German ship. Right?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes. And we traveled -- I think it took two weeks from Genoa through the Mediterranean, through the canal, the Red Sea, into the Indian Ocean and half the way

down to Kenya. We had freedom on the ship. My parents were careful. But there were also Nazis on the ship that were going to Tanganyika.

>> Bill Benson: A colony of the Germans.

>> Inge Katzenstein: A German colony. They were accompanied by carrier pigeons. The British became very, very leery about the Jews going to Kenya. And when the war broke out, the British considered us enemy aliens.

>> Bill Benson: Because you were German.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Because we were German. No, we weren't German. The minute you stepped on the boat, you were stateless.

>> Bill Benson: But in the eyes of the British, they viewed you as German origin, therefore an enemy alien.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yeah.

>> Bill Benson: Even though you were escaping the Nazis, you were considered an enemy alien by the British.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: On the ship there was an incident, as I recall in which Jill, who apparently liked to sing as a little girl, was overheard singing and the captain of the ship told your mother he'd like her to come and sing before the crew, or the officers' mess. That created a lot of stress for your mother. Why was that?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Because she was afraid that we had overheard some conversation that nobody was to know about it. And she was afraid that we would talk, especially Jill. She was,

what, 4, 5 years old. A 5-year-old doesn't know the dangers.

>> Bill Benson: And she's also afraid she might sing an -- a Jewish song.

>> Inge Katzenstein: A Jewish song.

>> Bill Benson: Right. I think as I remember, your mother made sure that Jill practiced German folk songs.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: That's what she sang before the crew.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: As I recall, there was also -- your family was Orthodox. At least one of your grandparents was absolutely, if I'm correct, adamant that could not go on this journey without kosher food. A German ship. How did you get your grandfather to go on that ship?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Had kosher food from Berlin on a German ship.

>> Bill Benson: So you get to Kenya. Is it the same grandfather who doesn't want to get off the boat?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yup.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: Tell us about that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: The boat landed in Kenya on a Sabbath. Jewish law says you can travel as much as you want to on a ship but you can't get on or off on the Sabbath.

>> Bill Benson: So he wouldn't get off.

>> Inge Katzenstein: He wouldn't get off. Finally we convinced him to get off, but he would not

get in a car to drive. So he walked from the port, in the tropical heat at age 80, into Mombasa.

>> Bill Benson: You got him off the ship.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yeah.

>> Bill Benson: So you're in Kenya. It's a couple of months before the war breaks out. And then, of course in September 1, war breaks out when Germany attacks Poland and Britain declares war on Germany. What was your life like in those early stages of living and becoming viewed as enemy aliens?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We were interned. By then my parents had -- not quite then. My parents had bought a big cattle ranch in Kenya, together with the three cousins. There were five families living on this big ranch. We were interned on the farm. Anytime we wanted to leave the farm, we had to ask permission, permission in writing, to leave the farm. In the beginning we didn't leave much, but later, again, we had to go to school and we had to leave the farm.

So if I remember right, we got permission to do this without having to go there every day. But we left Germany as stateless, lived in Kenya for eight years as stateless, and came to America just on a stateless visa. We became citizens after five years.

>> Bill Benson: Five years here.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yeah.

>> Bill Benson: In Kenya, once the war broke out -- because so many of the British subjects there, the men, joined the Army to go fight so people like your father and others who were not

in the military really were forced to tend to the business of the British that they left behind.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: What did that mean for your father and your uncles?

>> Inge Katzenstein: It meant that they had to supervise. They were lucky. My father could go to his supervision on a bicycle. And my uncle managed a farm right next to us. But they had to take care of the British farms. That was their war job, but we were still considered enemy aliens.

>> Bill Benson: Right.

>> Inge Katzenstein: We didn't leave the farm much. My mother -- of course we had to be educated. At first my family hired tutors for us that came to live on the farm with us. But that didn't work. We didn't treat the tutors too well. So then my mother moved off the farm with us to town and we attended British government schools. They were very good, very strict. And most of the students in the schools in Kenya were boarding students. They were boarding schools because the country was so spread out. We could not be boarding students because the boarding schools did not have kosher food. It was really a hardship for my mother and family, for us to move to town to go to school. But we did.

>> Bill Benson: Of course, you didn't speak English when you arrived.

>> Inge Katzenstein: No. No. As a 9, 10-year-old, I was put back in first grade.

>> Bill Benson: Because you didn't speak the language.

>> Inge Katzenstein: I didn't speak English. But we learned the language very, very quickly.

>> Bill Benson: I remember you telling me that immediately here in school and they're forcing

you to learn to sing "God Save the King."

>> Inge Katzenstein: Sing "God Save the King," learn poems by heart, in English. We didn't know what they meant. We couldn't pronounce it, but we learned it. We quickly advanced to grade level.

>> Bill Benson: At the same time, or at least during your time, you were learning a third language, Swahili.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: And you became quite fluent.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Oh, yes. The only way you could speak to the local people was in Swahili. They didn't know English. Swahili was basically an easy language to learn. I've never seen it written, only spoken. And we spoke it very well. But I've forgotten it all.

>> Bill Benson: During that time, beginning right away when you landed in June of 1939 and, of course, the war beginning in September, did you have news of the rest of your family in Germany? Did you know what was taking place in Germany, especially once the war began?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We heard rumors of what was going on. We got one or two letters. We had left uncles and aunts. My grandmother's entire family. My grandmother before the war had 100 first cousins.

>> Bill Benson: 100 first cousins.

>> Inge Katzenstein: She came from a very big family. Her mother had a big family. Her father had a big family. And they were a family of eight. And she is the only survivor of the 100 first cousins.

>> Bill Benson: One of 100.

>> Inge Katzenstein: One of 100. And she survived because she got out.

>> Bill Benson: Because she got out. As you mentioned, the four visas that were not used, they all perished.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: When did the family -- when did your family realize the fate of all of those who had remained behind?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We got Red Cross letters. We got letters from Terenshtat.

>> Bill Benson: Where your family --

>> Inge Katzenstein: That's where my father's aunt and uncle went. We got a letter saying they were ok, and then we found out here -- I don't know where we found out the others. We found out that he died -- the uncle died and his wife committed suicide the next day.

My mother's three uncles and one aunt that we went to on Kristallnacht, we know they were taken to Riga in --

>> Bill Benson: Latvia?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yeah, in 1942. But we have no idea, and even through the Museum we cannot find any trace of them. It just said "disappeared."

>> Bill Benson: That's what the official records say, disappeared?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Disappeared. We had no idea. We know they were in Cologne because in the correspondence that I translate, there was a letter from Cologne, a mother writes to her daughter in America that these aunts and uncles were visiting her in 40. But there is no record

did they die before, did they get to Riga, did they die on the way. We have no idea.

>> Bill Benson: You would, of course, eventually leave Kenya and the family would emigrate to the United States. Why did you leave Kenya?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Basically, my father felt there was no future for his children. And he wanted us have a better future than being in Kenya. By then we had a good education. We needed to make a living.

>> Bill Benson: It was also a time of turmoil in Kenya. Wasn't it?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes. Oh, yeah. I forgot about that. Right after we left, there was a Mau Mau uprising in the highlands of Kenya. And that's exactly where we were living. Had we stayed there, we may have been killed by the Mau Mau. So basically the third time we escaped.

>> Bill Benson: Right. So you make it to the United States. I think you're 18 years of age. And as we said in the beginning, you were here just a few weeks when you became independent.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes.

>> Bill Benson: What was the transition like for you? What was it like to adjust now? At least you spoke English.

>> Inge Katzenstein: I spoke English.

>> Bill Benson: The King's English.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Yes. And I was 18. I was free to roam without permission. I had started secretarial school in Kenya. I went to look for work. And coming to America and being in New

York, the only place I wanted to work was 5th Avenue. There was no other place in the whole of America where I could have worked. So I bought "The New York Times" and marked all the ads from 26th going up. And everywhere they were looking for somebody --

>> Bill Benson: On 5th Avenue.

>> Inge Katzenstein: I applied for a job. I made it to 26th Street and got one job where I lasted one week. I told them I knew shorthand and typing. I didn't.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: But you sure tried.

>> Inge Katzenstein: I tried.

>> Bill Benson: Share with us, if you don't mind -- you told me a great story about you took a job and you had to type.

>> Inge Katzenstein: That was the next job. I made it to 45th Street to a law office. They shared me with an accountant who was so meticulous. And I had to type financial statements on the big typewriters. It took days. Sometimes you make a mistake and you erase it. This man would hold it up to the light and say, "Miss Berg, you erased. Do it over."

>> Bill Benson: The whole document?

>> Inge Katzenstein: The whole document. Well, I learned how to erase without his knowing.

[Laughter]

You use chalk.

>> Bill Benson: Aha. Ok. A skill we probably don't have to use too much anymore.

>> Inge Katzenstein: No.

>> Bill Benson: If you don't mind, I think we have time for a few questions from our audience. How does that sound?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Ok.

>> Bill Benson: So if you have a question, we'll have a microphone for you on either side or at least over here. Wait for the mic. Make your questions as brief as you can. If I think that not everybody heard it, including Inge, I'll go ahead and repeat it. And then Inge will respond to your questions. And if not, I will continue asking questions for a couple of minutes.

Any brave souls have a question? We have one right here in the middle. A young woman here. We'll start with you. Here comes the mic.

>> What was it like to go back to your home or your house and what condition was it in? Was it the same building when you went back in 1996?

>> Bill Benson: If you didn't hear, what it was like when you went back in 1996. You took one of the questions I was going to ask, so thank you for that.

>> Inge Katzenstein: It was a very funny feeling. All the old memories came back. They had changed things. It left me cold, very cold.

>> Bill Benson: And, Inge, didn't you try to get in to see your home?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We tried to get in to see it a few years later. And we couldn't. So we were able to look across the wall into the backyard. And there our Sukkot -- if you go, it is the harvest festival -- and that was still standing in the backyard. But no feelings.

>> Bill Benson: And you couldn't get back in because the owner wouldn't let you back in.

>> Inge Katzenstein: No. She wouldn't let me back in.

>> Bill Benson: As recently as late 1990's?

>> Inge Katzenstein: 1998.

>> Bill Benson: Ok. A young lady here had a question.

>> How did you convince your grandfather to get off the ship?

>> Bill Benson: How did you convince your grandfather to get off the ship?

>> Inge Katzenstein: I didn't do it. My father did. I didn't -- I'm sure he realized that he was -- the first time in the tropics and that it would be dangerous for him not to get off the ship. Because we were not used to the tropical heat or the tropical sun. Don't forget, Kenya is right on top of the equator. And the sun shines 360 days a year.

>> Bill Benson: A bunch here.

>> Did the hatred you felt from the Nazis and Nazi sympathizers, did that affect your faith or your family's faith one way or the other and make you a stronger Jew or less? Did it affect having that -- having that hatred?

>> Bill Benson: The Nazis and what they did to your family, what effect is what you went through and the rest of your family that you described to us, what effect has that had on your faith? Is that a fair question?

>> Inge Katzenstein: Of my faith? It made it stronger. It made it stronger. Because the only person that could help us was the good Lord.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you. Back here.

>> It said that your husband was a fellow refugee from Nazi Germany. How did the two of you meet?

>> Bill Benson: Good question. How did you and Werner meet?

>> Inge Katzenstein: We met in Brooklyn, New York.

[Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: Tell us more.

[Laughter]

And have been married almost 62 years.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Right.

>> Bill Benson: Ok. Great question. Here and then back to you.

>> Could you explain the kosher food for those that may not know?

>> Bill Benson: Explain what kosher food is.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Basically there are laws of kosher food. It starts with the animal being killed in a humane manner, and it also separates dairy from meat. And there are special slaughterers for humane killing and humane handling. And that's basically - the separation of meat and milk.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you. One more question and then I'll ask one more before we close.

>> I would like to know, did you personally know any Jehovah's Witnesses during this critical period?

>> Bill Benson: Did you know personally any Jehovah's Witnesses who were also very much persecuted by the Nazis?

>> Inge Katzenstein: No. No. Personally, I was 8 years, 9 years old. I couldn't know any. A lot of non-jews were persecuted by Nazis: priests, homosexuals.

>> Bill Benson: Gypsies.

>> Inge Katzenstein: Gypsies. Not only Jews. It's just Jews was the majority.

>> Bill Benson: Inge, I'm going to ask one question before we close. Just recently, within the last two years, you came in contact with somebody, I believe, that you knew from Kenya. Would you just share a little bit about that with us?

>> Inge Katzenstein: During the time in Kenya, my mother had like a boardinghouse. And people came to live on the farm. She had to do this in order to earn money so that we could go to school. School was extremely expensive in Kenya. And one young man came from Aden. He was a Yemenite, from a very, very wealthy family in Aden who usually sent their children to Switzerland, but he needed to live in the highlands because of his health. He wouldn't go to Switzerland during the war, so he came to the highlands of Kenya where we lived and he came to live with us.

After the war he joined the British Army. My family kind of adopted him. He would leave. He would come back. He would leave. He would come back. After the war we went to America, he went to England. And we lost touch. And one day he Googled the Museum. And he found us. And he got -- that's how he got back in touch with us.

We also -- we had a letter from someone who lives in Texas, who found my husband. It was a niece of one of his Army buddies that got killed in France. Her parents died. They went through the attic and found my husband's letter to them to the parents after their son had died, who got wounded and died during the war. And they found Werner's address, and they sent us the copy of the letter that he wrote. That's what the

Museum can do for you.

>> Bill Benson: And they came to the Museum to get you. That's remarkable.

We're going to close the program in a moment. I want to thank all of you for being with us today. I remind you that we'll have *First Person* programs every Wednesday and Thursday until the middle of August and then we'll resume again next March. So please check the Museum website to find out more information. I hope you'll come back and join us ideally this year, but if not, in the future years.

It's our tradition here at *First Person* that our *First Person* gets the last word. So on that note I'd like to turn to Inge to close our program today.

And, Inge, you can stay behind a few minutes if anybody has other questions to ask you? When you step off the stage? That would be great.

>> Inge Katzenstein: My last word is, you're not born hating. You're taught to hate. So, please, when you hear hate, stop it wherever you can.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you, Inge. Thank you.

[Applause]

[The presentation ended at 2:00 p.m.]