Karola Frankenthal Epstein (nee Rosenfeld) (1925– )

Name: Karola Frankenthal Epstein (nee Rosenfeld) (1925– )

Birth Place: Schopfloch, Germany

Arrived in Wisconsin: 1946, Green Bay

Project Name: Oral Histories: Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust

Biography: Karola Frankenthal Epstein (nee Rosenfeld) was born on September 20, 1925, in Schopfloch, Germany. Her family enjoyed excellent business and social relations in this small Bavarian village. In 1936, anti-Semitic legislation by the Nazi Party forced Karola to attend a school for Jewish children in a different town. After experiencing anti-Semitism in that town, she felt unsafe. Karola convinced her parents to allow her to accompany her sister, Sofie, to the U.S to live with relatives. The two teenaged girls arrived in Chicago in August 1937.

Karola’s expectations about life in America were shattered when she was forced to keep house and babysit for her relatives. In September 1938, Karola’s parents immigrated to Chicago. The family worked hard to make a living. Before the war’s end, Karola had finished high school and worked as a bookkeeper. She also met her first husband, Siegfried Frankenthal, a German-Jewish refugee. They met through her sister and brother-in-law, Herbert Zimmern, who were living in Green Bay. The couple married in September 1946 in Green Bay, where they established a cattle business.

From humble beginnings, Karola and her husband built a large commercial empire, which included farm real estate and four meatpacking plants. At the time of Siegfried’s death in 1976, they were the fifth or sixth largest employer in Green Bay. They also raised four children, all born in Green Bay. After Siegfried’s death, she married Aaron Epstein of Madison in 1979.

Audio Summary: Below are the highlights of each tape. This is not a complete list of all topics discussed.

Tape 1, Side 1
- Childhood in Schopfloch, Bavaria
- Family life, religious and secular education
- Jewish cultural life in Schopfloch in the 1920s and 1930s
Tape 1, Side 2
- Growing anti-Semitic legislation and behavior
- German Jews disbelief that conditions could turn so terrible
- Early reports of Dachau

Tape 2, Side 1
- Immigration to the U.S., 1937
- Exploitation by relatives
- Social life of Jewish teenagers in Chicago
- Arrival of Karola’s parents, 1938

Tape 2, Side 2
- Religious and social life in Chicago's Jewish community
- Fate of relatives left behind
- War news in the U.S., 1939–1945
- Marriage to Siegfried Frankenthal and relocation to Green Bay, 1946

Tape 3, Side 1
- Husband's family background
- Starting and growing a business while raising children
- Jewish community in Green Bay in the 1950s
- Anti-Semitism in Green Bay

Tape 3, Side 2
- Children and family
- Running the family meatpacking business
- Her second marriage to Aaron Epstein, 1979
- Impressions of Madison and its Jewish community

Tape 4, Side 1
- Activities of her children
- Jewish and Gentile friends
- American attitudes toward Jews and the Holocaust

Tape 4, Side 2
- Impressions of American culture
- Religious life in Madison
- Friends and neighbors

Tape 5, Side 1
- Social life
- Travels around Wisconsin, to Israel and Germany
- Views on American government and politics

Tape 5, Side 2
- Issues facing the U.S. today
- Return visits to Schopfloch in recent years
- Travels to Israel
- Persistence of anti-Semitism
About the Interview Process:  The interview was conducted by Jean Loeb Lettofsky during two, two and one-half hour sessions, on October 6 and 9, 1980, at the Epstein home.

Karola relates her story in a straightforward manner, without a great deal of introspection. Her interview is mainly valuable for its depiction of the struggles that Jewish refugees went through as new immigrants, and for its details about life in Green Bay’s small Jewish community in the 1950s and 1960s.

Karola’s English is infused with German words and phrases. Most are explained in either the text or footnotes of the transcript.

Audio and Transcript Details:

Interview Dates
• Oct 6, 1980; Oct 9, 1980

Interview Location
• Epstein home, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Interviewer
• Archivist Jean Loeb Lettofsky

Original Sound Recording Format
• 5 qty. 60-minute audio cassette tapes

Length of Interviews
• 2 interviews, total approximately 5 hours

Transcript Length
• 88 pages

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Pictures:

WHI Image ID 56620  WHI Image ID 56619
Transcript

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Key

| JL   | Jean Loeb Lettofsky, Wisconsin Historical Society archivist |
| KE   | Karola Epstein, Holocaust survivor |

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

JL: Can you tell me your date and place of birth and the same information for your parents?

KE: I was born September 20, 1925, in Schopfloch, Germany. It was a little, tiny village. My dad was born also in Schopfloch and my mother was born in Poppenlauer. She was eighty-seven when she passed away in Green Bay.

JL: What year did she pass away?

KE: In 1976. My dad was born October 25, and he passed away in 1966.

JL: How old was he then?

KE: Seventy-four. So he was born in 1890?

JL: We'll figure it out.¹

KE: I can't figure it out. My father was born also in Schopfloch. My grandmother on my father's side, she was born in [Fischach? 1:40] and I think my grandfather was born in Schopfloch. On my mother's side, my grandmother was born in Schopfloch but my grandfather, I don't know where he was born.

JL: Do you remember their names, either side of grandparents?

KE: Sure. My dad's mother's name was Sophie, and my grandfather's name was Herman. My mother's mother was Karoline and my mother's father was Sussman Heinemann. Heinemann was their name.

JL: You don't remember any maiden names of the grandmothers, do you?

¹He was born in 1892.
KE: My mother's mother was a Rosenfeld. Of course, she was born in Schopfloch, too. The same family. I don't know my grandmother's name on my father's side. But I didn't know either one of my grandparents because they all passed away before I was born.

JL: And your maiden name is?

KE: Rosenfeld.

JL: Do you have any special recollections of your grandparents or the relationship with your parents?

KE: My grandparents I never knew. My parents, I had a very good relationship. We lived in a small community. Really, we were a very close-knit family, especially like on — we were Orthodox — on Shabbes.² It was Friday night and Shabbes the store was closed and we'd go out. Like on Shabbes afternoon we would go for a walk to the next village in the summertime. And on Saturday night, after Shabbes was over, with the other Jewish people in the community, they would pack a lunch and they would go to one of the taverns in town and we would have a — that wasn't really a party, but we would get together. The men would have a glass of beer and the women would have some pop or something like that, and we would all get together. It was a wonderful family life, when you really come right down to it. You knew it was Shabbes, or any holiday, that you really enjoyed that type of life. It's no different than it is in this country — everybody works!

JL: What type of people were your parents?

KE: My dad was orphaned. His father was killed when he was just a little boy, so he went to an orphanage home in [Vert/Fert? 4:30]. So he was really alone for many years, because he was the youngest of seven children. He volunteered in the war, and after the war they got married. My mother was a [shidish? arranged marriage 4:50] because my grandmother — she came originally from Schopfloch, too — so they were really second cousins. My mother was a very aggressive, modern woman. She ran the store. My dad had a dry goods store. My dad would go out to the little villages and peddle. He was like a peddler. My mother ran the store.

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²Yiddish for ‘Sabbath’.
and she would go on buying trips. She loved to travel. She was a very modern woman. Where my dad was easy-going. Just, things went his way. It didn't bother him if things didn't go quite the way they should. He was an easy-going person, very conservative though. If I wanted an ice cream cone or something, I would always have to go to my mother and I'd say, "Give me a [finfele? 5:55]." If she would give me the money, I would go and get an ice cream cone. Then if he would see, he would get mad. He would say, "You don't need it!" And that was about it. Then after we came here, my mother was the one. I'm more like my mother. I'm more the aggressive-type person. I want to go forward, where my dad was more content. Like when we came to this country, we lived with my relatives. My dad, he was content because he didn't have a job right away and wasn't secure enough, so he felt that we should just [stay with the relatives], till he was really secure as far as earning a living for us. But my mother and I said, "No, we're going to go on our own. We're going to get an apartment. If we have to work day and night, we will work." I was only thirteen years old at the time. And we did it.

JL: You have only one sister, correct?

KE: I have one sister.

JL: Could you tell me her name?

KE: Sophie Zimmern, and she lives in Green Bay.

JL: When and where was she born?

KE: She was born in Shopfloch. She was born February 17, 1921. She's four-and-a-half-years older than I am.

JL: Do you have any special recollections of her in the early German years?

KE: Well, she was four-and-a-half-years older than I was, so she was away at school. She went to a private school, a cloister in Bettlingen. So really, in those earlier years, we were not that close, because she was away most of the time and I lived at home with my parents. We got much closer after we came to this country. But, like I say, in my early childhood, we were not that close. But now we're very close.

JL: Were there any other family members in your town or in the nearby area?
KE: No, they weren't really family, but there were about five, six other Jewish families living in our town.

JL: There were no cousins?

KE: No. But the Jewish community really was those few people that lived in Schopfloch. They were very close. We had a beautiful synagogue and a Lehrer. But none of them, none of them got out, that was the sad part. Except one girlfriend. She lives in Israel, but her parents and her grandparents and the rabbi — they all were killed. And some other family, they all perished. None of them got out. My parents lived. I came in 1937, and my parents didn't come till 1938. But after we left in the beginning of 1938, there was a ruling that Schoploch should be Judenfrei. So all the German Jews, the few families that were left, they all had to disperse to other cities, if they ever were able to get out. So my parents moved to Nuremberg and had to get rid of the house and the store and everything. Of course, they were pressured into selling, practically giving everything away. And so they moved to Nuremberg. Some of the families moved to Stuttgart, [Boetzberg? Bortsberg? Poetsberg? 9:00], but unfortunately none of them did get out except my parents. They came just a year later. They came in August of 1938.

JL: If your family was the only one there in Schopfloch, when did the family actually come to that area? Didn't you have any relatives in Schopfloch?

KE: Not the last few years. Schopfloch was a great big Jewish community in the 1700s, 1800s. It still has today a great big cemetery there and all the surrounding areas from maybe [dreisich, firtsich kilometer], that the people come there to the cemetery. So all of my ancestors, really they were born in Schopfloch, but they dispersed.

Now, we had relatives. Like my dad's brother was in Munchen. Another one lived in [Hichlinginger? Hichlingenger? 11:00] with a sister. They all moved away, just like in the United States. They moved

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3German for ‘teacher’.
4German for ‘Jew-free’, i.e. without Jews.
5Munich.
to larger cities, because there really was nothing there. My dad worked. There was an uncle of my dad and mother's, of course. They had a knitting factory in Schopfloch, and my dad worked there and all his cousins worked there. But the factory must have been sold in the early 1900s, or disbanded, I don't know. One cousin lived there yet until the early 1930s, but then they moved to Nurenberg, too. Like I said, Schopfloch really was a large Jewish community, but the offsprings really did go away to other cities. There were a few people. There was a cattle dealer there yet. Most of them were really merchants in Schopfloch, the ones that I remember during my time.

JL: You said a few minutes ago that there were only five, six families left?

KE: Yes, when I lived there, sure.

JL: So it really shrank?

KE: It really shrank to practically nothing.

JL: Did you ever have a chance to get to visit the others who had moved away, or was it too far?

KE: You mean the people that lived there from years and years ago?

JL: Yes, and that had moved to other towns.

KE: No, the only ones that we visited was like the Rosenfelds, the cousins of my mother and dad. Those in Nuremberg, we did have very close contact with them.

JL: Did you have any family or close friends in the U.S. prior to the war?

KE: My dad had two brothers and a sister that lived here, and that's how we got the papers to come to the United States.

JL: Were you writing them?

KE: My dad corresponded with his brothers and sister all the time. Both of them, I guess, came either before 1900 or when they were young people.

JL: Why did they leave?
KE: Better opportunities. Like I said, my uncles both were butchers, and they decided to go, and since my grandmother was alone, I don't know where they learned, but they went to Lehrschul\(^6\) for butchers in, I imagine, bigger cities. Then they never came back to Schopfloch. They went direct to the United States.

JL: What were their names?

KE: Emil Rosenfeld and Julius Rosenfeld and Martha Strauss. My dad's sister, she was a widow for many years, her husband was killed.

JL: Martha?

KE: [Yes.] In World War I. She had one son, and my uncle Julius had no children. Uncle Emil had two girls. My dad had brothers, the brother I mentioned and two of the sisters in Germany.

JL: Can you describe the community in Schopfloch a little more?

KE: As far as the Jewish community was concerned, we were like really one big happy family. Like they would have get-togethers like on Simchas Torah\(^7\) or Chanukah or any holiday, we would get together. We always were very close. There was a family by the name of [Hertz? 15:15], there was two families and they had one daughter. This is the girl that is in Israel. There was another family by the name of [Herschel? 15:25]. They did get out. I made a mistake; they did. In fact, both of them, their son still lives in Chicago and he was a little bit older than I was. But then there was the family, the [Jaegers? 15:45], were in the cattle business. He was a Viehhandler\(^8\). The [Hertzes], they had a store just like we did. They also went out in the country and peddled, the two brothers. And the Gold's also had a store. Then there was — this was way before — the [Ansbachers? 15:45]. They were cattle dealers, but I really don't remember. The only ones that I remember is the two old aunts that lived up the hill.

\(^6\)German for ‘training school’.

\(^7\)A celebration of the completion of the annual cycle of Torah-reading during religious services.

\(^8\)German for ‘cattle dealer’.
from us, and they were a little eccentric! And then, of course, Herr Rosenstein and his wife. He was an older man but very, very nice, good-hearted.

One thing that I remember, we went to Hebrew school after school, and there was only four or five kids in the classes. If we didn't want to learn, I would say, ["Herr Lerner, woehne ich bisser shachspielen."] He would say, "Okay." But they didn't get out. They lived right across the street from the synagogue. We had a home for the rabbi. Even in those years, there was a mikveh\(^9\) in the house. But I don't remember if they used it. I think they did use it, some of them. But this is so many years ago, I really don't remember. But I remember there was a mikveh in the house, but that no longer is there. The house isn't there any more, and neither is the synagogue. They burned it after we left. So there really is nothing there anymore. It was a good life, until the Hitler time came.

JL: How did the community manage to maintain a rabbi and a synagogue with so few people?
KE: Because there was a law in Germany that the churches and the synagogues were federally funded, so they were really payed by the state.

JL: Even with so small a community?
KE: Oh, sure. Well, like I say, that community was a much larger community, I guess, from what my dad always told us. There was thirty, forty families that lived in Schopfloch when he was growing up, or even when he was a young man. But the community just kept dropping and dropping.

JL: And the synagogue was maintained?
KE: They were maintained until the end.

JL: Did you move anywhere else in Germany before you left for the U.S. or did you leave directly from Schopfloch?
KE: I left directly from Schopfloch.

JL: How often did you go to synagogue?

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\(^9\)Ritual bath.
KE: Regular, regular, on a regular basis. Friday night the men really always went. But Shabbes, everybody went to shul\textsuperscript{10} and the store was closed. Everybody of course kept a kosher home, until the end, when it was very hard to get kosher meat. Then we had to get the meat from Nuremberg or someplace.

JL: Not kosher?

KE: My folks, they used to have the kosher meat shipped in. But some of the other people, I think they started to eat the other, the treyfe\textsuperscript{11} meat. They didn't eat any khazer.\textsuperscript{12} They kept the tradition as much as they possibly could. Most of them were, like I say, they were all not really schwartz\textsuperscript{13}, like we say, but they were all very observant. I mean everybody there. None of them really ate anything that they shouldn't. And as far as keeping the holidays, observing everything, they did. It was, I would say, a Conservative congregation in our standard of living today.

JL: So it wasn't strictly Orthodox because there were forbidden things done on the Sabbath — for example, people smoked?

KE: I don't remember if they smoked. I don't think that anybody smoked.

JL: Why do you call it Conservative, what made it Conservative?

KE: Well, I think that the way we are living here, too, as far as that goes. Maybe it should be really called Orthodox because they did observe everything and they did keep — though the [Hertzes], they weren't that religious. I mean nobody rode — you didn't have no cars in those days. Everything was close. So, maybe in today's standards, you would say it was Orthodox. In our time, now we have relatives in [Vert/Fert] that were very, very strict. I mean what we really called schwartz. But we never considered ourselves that religious.

JL: Can you pinpoint why?

\textsuperscript{10}Yiddish for ‘synagogue’.
\textsuperscript{11}Non-kosher.
\textsuperscript{12}Pork.
\textsuperscript{13}German for ‘black’, with the colloquial meaning of very religious.
KE: I don't know, that's what my folks always said. [“Die Heinemanns in Vert/Fert sind so frum,”] but we weren't. We were observant. But I still can't really pinpoint why, but that's the way I always felt, that we were not really that Orthodox, maybe in our way of thinking. Though we say the prayers before the meals. You never came to the table without making a [barach] before we start to eat. At night before we went to bed we said our prayers and my mother, till the day she died, she never went to bed before she says her [Nachbtete]. My sister today still does, but I never was that religious.

JL: Did your father pray daily?

KE: No, I don't think so.

JL: Maybe that was it

KE: He didn't. He would go in the country in the morning but he didn't lay [tefillen] everyday. Once in awhile he did but he didn't lay tefillen everyday or anything like that. And my mother didn't wear a shaydl.¹⁴

JL: These little things.

KE: These little things. Like I said, my relatives in Nuremburg and [Vert/Fert], the women all wore shaydls and they went to the mikveh I'm sure, and all these things, where my parents never did that.

JL: Could you describe the synagogue a little bit?

KE: It was a very nice synagogue. Of course, it was the men sat downstairs and the women upstairs. It was really well maintained. My dad was the chazan¹⁵ and the shammes¹⁶ and we had this [Lehrer] Rosenstein who was an older man, was in his seventies I think, sixties or seventies. In those years, what is young today, was an old person then. But I remember him as an older person, so I think he probably was in his sixties or seventies. We'd try and get a minyan,¹⁷ of course, but at the end when

¹⁴Wig worn by Orthodox Jewish women after marriage.
¹⁵Cantor.
¹⁶Caretaker of a synagogue.
¹⁷The total of ten men (and/or women in Conservative or Reform Judaism) required for prayers.
we really didn’t have enough, they still would daven\textsuperscript{18} without a minyan because they wanted to have the services. But it was a well-kept, really nice, nothing real elaborate. But I used to love to go and sit downstairs with my father. The women always had to sit upstairs. But I did, I would get away with it! I would come and sit by my dad every once in a while. But of course, we would go every Shabbes and it was just a nice — it was never full because there wasn’t enough Jews there and the people didn’t come from the other towns because they had their own. Like in [Diensbuhl or Ferstrum? Floistrem? Foistrum?] they had their own synagogue, so it really was a very, very small community.

JL: You said after school was more religious school education?
KE: Yes.
JL: It was not part of the public school education?
KE: No.
JL: How many times a week did you go?
KE: Two or three times a week, and then on Sunday we would go by the rabbi’s house. They had the school really in the rabbi’s house. They had classrooms in the rabbi’s house.
JL: Was that one classroom, or were you divided?
KE: No, one classroom. There was only four or five kids because that’s all there was.
JK: Were any members of the family totally non-religious?
KE: No.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

\textsuperscript{18}Yiddish for ‘to pray’.
TAPE 1, SIDE 2

JL:  Before the war, how many years of secular education did you have?

KE:  I went to school in Germany until a year before we came in 1936. I went to regular grade school in Schopfloch. But then in 1936 they decided Jewish kids could longer go to school in Schopfloch, so they started what they called a parochial school in Dinkelsbühl, which was about five, six kilometers from Schopfloch. Dinkelsbühl was a little larger town than Schopfloch. And all the children from the whole surrounding area had to go there to school. We had to take the train in everyday, because it was really too far to walk. So there was a train that we took, and all the Jewish kids from Schopfloch had to go to Dinkelsbühl. They had a woman teacher. We had one classroom, because there wasn't enough children. She was a half-Jew, so she was the teacher there.

JL:  As a half-Jew, was she sympathetic to you?

KE:  Yes, she was fair. But I hated it, because going to school to another town and being really separated completely from the community, because you couldn't go to school anymore. I went that first year. I went only for one year, and I used to come home crying. Then I said to my mother and dad — at the end I wouldn't go back — "Either you send me to Würzburg," which was were my mother's brother lived and they had three children, they had a regular Jewish parochial school in Würzburg, because it was a much larger community, "or you send me to America." Finally they decided that they would write to my dad's brother. My sister, they had written to her. Because she was so much older than I was, they had written for her visa to come already, had asked them to send papers for her. But they didn't think, because I was only eleven years old, that they wanted to send me away from them. But then I told them I wouldn't stay anymore in Germany or in Schopfloch unless they send me to a different school because I hated it.

Like in the winter time, I remember one year, one time there was such a terrible ice storm and the Bahnhoff, the train station, was down the hill. We had to go in the middle of the winter. We couldn't
even walk down the hill. We sat on our tokhes\textsuperscript{19} and slid down to go to school. It was just terrible. Not that I didn't like the kids, but it was just too much of an effort really to go out of town everyday. And there weren't enough children there, either, as far as that goes. If there were twenty kids, that was a lot. I don't even think there was that many. So then my parents wrote to my dad's brothers and asked them if they would also sign papers for me, and thank God, they did. We finally got the papers in June or July. We had to go to Stuttgard. Then we came and we left in August of 1937.

JL: At this school in Schopfloch, what kind of friends did you have?

KE: Mixed. Though the last year, if you would go to school, they would call me die Juden\textsuperscript{20} and made anti-Semitic remarks. But there were some kids that were nice, too. I had a girlfriend who lived across the street from us, Wilma, and she was a really good friend, a true friend. But of course there were a lot of kids that were very anti-Semitic because they had it from home and they would make remarks or they try to beat you up. And of course you'd run away because being — I was a little, tiny girl and not strong enough really. I wasn't that much of a fighter. I would fight back with names and then I would run away and run home and I would cry to my parents.

JL: How did your parents react when you came home crying?

KE: There wasn't much they could do. They'd say, “That's the way it is. Just try to ignore it and do the best you can.” There wasn't really much you could do about it. I mean, the rishes\textsuperscript{21} was there and the Jews were hated. There were some very good people. Now, we had neighbors on the other side of us. These people they had a tavern. In fact, I still keep in contact with this woman. At night she would bring over stuff to my folks, the back way of course. But there were some very good people there, but there was plenty of rishes in Schopfloch and people were afraid really to show their true feelings. But

\textsuperscript{19}Yiddish for ‘buttocks’.

\textsuperscript{20}German for the ‘Jewess’.

\textsuperscript{21}Yiddish for ill-will.
as a child you remember certain things. Like I said, I remember this Wilma, this girlfriend of mine that lived across the street. She was always very good to us and the people on the other side.

Our immediate neighbors really were not Nazis. A few doors away, they were. But our immediate people, they all were really good friends, and they never would do anything to hurt us. In fact, the one neighbor on the other side of our house, when my parents moved to Nurenberg, the daughter lived in Nurenberg, and she used to come and bring my folks food, and she did my folk’s laundry because they just had a one-room apartment that whole year they were in Nurenberg. She was marvelous to my parents and I have seen her when I have gone back to visit. So there were some good people there as well as the Nazis. But of course, I wanted to get away. I just said I couldn’t stay there anymore and my parents realized that that was no place to bring up a child. There was no future there for us.

JL: What kinds of subjects did you have in regular school?

KE: The regular reading and writing and arithmetic, geography and history. The regular subjects. I tell you, it’s so long ago, I don’t remember it, but it was the same like in the United States.

JL: Were there cultural activities associated with the school?

KE: No.

JL: What political and cultural clubs did you and your family belong to in Germany?

KE: None.

JL: B’nai B’rith?

KE: No.

JL: To which group did you feel you owed allegiance? Did your family feel that you were Germans or did you feel that you were Jewish or German Jews?

KE: That we were Jewish. More Jewish than I think we were German. I mean we didn’t know any different. We were German but we certainly did not lose our identity as Jews. I mean we were proud to be Jews, never denied it. So as far as that goes, I think we felt our Jewishness at all times. We were never ashamed of it or anything like that. So I really think we were more Jewish all the time. German —
that was our home, so we still spoke only German in the house. Still today I speak a lot of German. So really I'm German in one way, but I'm still a Jew at heart. So that's about it.

JL: You started telling me that there were good people in the community who were not Nazis. Generally, before everything began, what kind of relationship did you have with the non-Jewish community?

KE: An excellent relationship. We had a store and people would come and visit. My dad played cards with some of the Gentile people. Like I told you, on Saturday night, we would patronize different [Lokals] or what you would call a tavern here but they would serve like sandwiches. Really, there was a good relationship before with the people in town. And then a lot of times we would go — my dad had a lot of friends in the country. Like I said, on Shabbes afternoon we would take a walk. Then we would go and visit these — they really were farmers. My dad was known in the whole surrounded area. He would make [shidish] for, if he would go to a farm in this little village and they had a daughter they would say, “Siegfried, don’t you know anybody for my daughter?” He would say, “Ja, I know this one, I know that one,” and he would make the [shidish] and would introduce them. In one way, he had a motive, too, because he would get the business from the dowry. They would buy all the linens if something did materialize. He would get all the business from the bride-to-be or from the parents of the bride. But it was a good relationship and there were really were some very good people.

KE: Of course, the Nazis, you stayed away from them. You had nothing to do with them anymore. Until really in 1935, 1936. That's when really they would write on the store windows, Juden. They would say, “Don't patronize the stores,” but we still had a pretty good following because my dad was born and raised there, and my grandparents were there, and everybody knew them. The people that weren't Nazis, they really stuck to us until my folks left, I would say.

JL: Do you remember any specific incidents of anti-Semitism?

KE: I don't know. I really don't know. Like I say, I was only eleven years old. I remember that they would march down the streets, the kids with the brown uniform and the swastika on the arm. They would have like protests — “Don't patronize the Jews.” But they never came. Nobody ever broke our
windows or anything like that. But it was — you could feel it all around you, that you were no longer wanted really, as far as that goes. That’s why I said at the time, what made me really decide not to stay there any longer and why I was so insistent was really the schooling. Now, I don’t think my sister felt it as much, because she was in a bigger city. She was in Nördlingen. She went to the cloister, which was a convent but they still had a lot of Jewish kids there, and she ate her meals with a brother of my mother that lived in this little town.

**JL:** So she could keep kosher?

**KE:** Yes. But really the biggest thing was when the thing came up at the school, that I said I no longer want to stay there and be antagonized. You would walk down the street, the kids would call names to you, and all that kind of stuff. But other than that, I’m sure that my parents really felt it moreso in the business, but like I say, I really was too young.

**JL:** Do you have any specific memories of reactions by your family and the small community to the growing anti-Semitic attacks?

**KE:** Not really

**JL:** I know you were born in 1925, but did you ever hear them talk about the assassination of [Arthur Adenauer? /Radnau 15:45]?

**KE:** No.

**JL:** Do you remember any attacks by roving Nazi gangs in your town?

**KE:** No.

**JL:** What did you know about the book burnings in Berlin in May 1933?

**KE:** I didn’t know the date.

**JL:** You don’t recall hearing about it?

**KE:** [No.]

**JL:** What about when the Nuremberg Laws were passed in September 1935?
KE: That's when the changes really came, because we were only eighty kilometer from Nuremberg, see. That's when things really started to get worse. They didn't want you to buy in the Jewish stores, patronize the Jewish merchants. Like I say, it was either 1935 or 1936 that they started, that they had to have their own parochial schools, that the kids couldn't go to school anymore. That was the time things really started to get really unrealistic. I mean that you could feel it more. I'm sure there was [anti-Semitism] even in 1933, when Hitler first came into power. But in the big cities you noticed it more. These small towns, I don't think you did until, like I say, when the Nuremburg Laws came out that's when you really started to feel it more.

JL: Being in Bavaria, which was full of political activity there, do you have any memories of your parents feeling that it was more dangerous in that part of Germany than in other parts?

KE: I don't think so because my parents, that's the only place that they ever lived and that's where their home was. Well, my mother had lived in another little town, [in Schaffein wafenauer], which was closer to [Wurtzberg]. But still she lived in Schopfloch since 1920. So she really just knew — I really don't think there was that much going on.

JL: What did your family know of GreulNachrichten? They were reports about atrocities against German Jews which had leaked out to the United States?

KE: I don't know of anything.

JL: How did your family and the community feel when Hitler finally did come to power?

KE: They didn't think too much of it at first. I think, from what little I remember, that they thought, oh, it would pass over. My father enlisted in the German army. He had a stiff arm from it. He was getting a pension. He was wounded several times. They never thought he would live, so he said, “How can anything like that happen? I fought in the German army. I defended Germany. How can they throw me out? I practically gave my life for Germany. How can that happen?” They really thought that things would pass over, that it wouldn't get as bad as it did. And they used to say, [“Wie kan so wos in die Zwansische Jahrundert passiert?”] Really, you think it would get better all the time, so if people
thought that it was going to get as bad as it did, I'm sure many of them would have left earlier. But they always felt that it was going to get better. They really didn't think it could happen, especially people like my dad, like I said, that volunteered in the German army and really gave his life for Germany. So that's really the big thing — that they never thought it could get as bad as it did.

JL: This rabbi there in your town, what role did he have in dealing with the people's fears or belief that it couldn't happen?

KE: He was really too old of a person. Like I told you before, he was an old man. He had his ritual. He was not really what you call a rabbi here. He was a Lehrer; he was a teacher, a melamed. 22 Sure, he conducted the services, but like I told you, my dad was the khazen. He didn't preach like the rabbis here. He didn't have the training that a rabbi has in this country. So I think he was just a teacher more than he was a rabbi. Because I remember if any special occasions, that they would have a rabbi come from [Ansbach], Rabbi [Cohen? 22:00]. Like he married my mother and dad. They went to [Ansbach]. So actually, I don't think that he was a full-fledged rabbi.

JL: You called him Lehrer?

KE: Yes, so he originally was a teacher. Lehrer [Rosenstein? 2:15], yes.

JL: Do you remember the 1936 Olympics?

KE: I was still there. Very slightly.

JL: Do you remember what your family's reaction was when, during the Olympics, all of the anti-Semitic notices were removed. Do you remember that?

KE: No.

JL: What knowledge did your family have of early concentration camps?

KE: I don't think they really did, because there were people that were sent to Dachau from other cities. That I think that they did know. But really, that's the only one that I know of that they were sent to in the 1930s.

22 Yiddish for ‘a teacher’, especially one who teaches religious subjects to children.
JL: The early 1930s?

KE: Maybe 1935, 1936. See, the Kristallnacht came in 1938, so we were gone already. But my folks I remember said that there were Jews that were sent to Dachau just for a week or two or a month. In fact, my mother had a nephew that lived in [Werstadt? 24:05], and he was put in a concentration — I don't know if he was sent to Dachau or just to a jail near there, and he didn't do anything. He was a bachelor, a little thimble of a guy, but he was sent away. I remember that. But none of my other family was ever put, that I know of. He was the only one, and I really don't know why they took him away. But they lived so far away from us. Now his dad was killed in the war, in the first world war. But for some reason, I don't know what the reason was, they did take him away. Now how long he was, I don't remember. And he never got out. He did get killed by the Nazis. My aunt did come out, but he was killed.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2
JL: How did you feel about leaving Germany?

KE: I was happy to go and always really felt that everybody in America was rich and that it would be a wonderful life, but found out different as soon as I came here. Things were not as rosy as they were described to us, as we thought that they were. I mean, it was not easy, believe me, and I was very excited to go, but when it really came right down to it, my dad went with us to Cherbourg and we said goodbye. . . by train. And we stopped in Paris first and then went on to Cherbourg and when I said good-bye to him, and, of course, to my mother at home, I was crying and then when I saw the boat — I never had seen a big boat in my life and I got scared. I didn't want to go. But we went and thank God everything turned out all right.

JL: When did you leave?

KE: August 18, 1937, we left on the boat, and we arrived in New York on the 23rd of August. My dad had a sister that also came and her husband were on the same boat with us at the same time. Their son lived in the United States, in Chicago, and he picked us up in New York. Then we drove from New York to Chicago.

JL: You did drive by car?

KE: Yes.

JL: How did you get a visa?

KE: My dad's brother sent the visa.

JL: And you were able to finance it yourself?

KE: My parents paid the passage, oh sure.

JL: How was the trip?

KE: Beautiful. After I got on the boat, I was okay. There were of course lots and lots of other kids our age traveling. Some were traveling alone, some were traveling with their parents. It was like a big happy family, and the trip was just beautiful. It was the Queen Mary, and we really had a wonderful time.
Neither Sophie or I got sick and most of the other kids — as soon as we started to go out into the ocean, we were standing on top of the deck and some of the kids they just vomited all over. But neither one of us did. And they had a swimming pool on the deck and they had movies. They really kept us entertained all the time, and the food was excellent. Even in those days, it was a beautiful trip. We really had a good time on the boat. We met a lot of people. Like I say, there were a lot of kids. Afterwards we saw some of them in Chicago. In fact, they come from the same town that the Newberger kids come from. Ruth Neuman and her sister, they were alone. There was two girls. They travelled with cousins of theirs. This one family, they came also from the same town. But now Ruth and her sister, their parents never got out. So we really had a good time on the boat. There were some other people from Poland — they weren't all German Jews because they really came from all over that were on the boat.

JL: Was this a totally Jewish boat then?

KE: No.

JL: Were there people just there on an excursion?

KE: I don't know. That I don't remember, but I know we were always together with only Jewish people.

JL: So there was no problem there with anti-Semitism?

KE: No, no. I think it probably was, if I remember right, probably 90 percent Jewish. They were all people that wanted to get out.

JL: What were your feelings upon seeing the Statue of Liberty?

KE: Oh, it was great. It was really exciting. But when we got off the boat I had never seen colored people before, and there were the porters and all the workers when we got into the harbor and we got off the boat. That was something — a new experience for me because I had never seen a colored person before.

JL: What did you think?
KE: I had heard about it but had never seen anyone and it just seemed so different from Germany that it was really an unusual feeling. But I felt that they're the same people like we are. They're no different than we are.

JL: What were your first impressions of New York?

KE: We were only there for a day. My cousin's sister and her husband, they came and met us two, and then they showed us around a little bit. We went up to the Empire State Building, I remember that. But, like I said, we only were there for a day or two, and then we went on. My uncle had a sister in Pittsburgh, so we stopped there, stayed over night in Pittsburgh, and then came on to Chicago.

JL: What were your first impressions of Chicago?

KE: Well, of course, at first I didn't know my aunt and uncle or any of my relatives and when my uncle — my dad's brother looked very much like my dad, he was a little short man — when I saw him, when we finally arrived, I got very homesick and cried. But everybody was there. Like I said, my dad's sister and her husband were on the same boat, and he had a big family, all brothers and sisters in Chicago, so it was a little like a big family reunion. They all were by my aunt and uncle and his brother, my uncle Moritz Ullman's family. They were all there, and my dad's other sister, Martha, and my cousins. They really tried to give us a warm reception, but like I said, I really did get very homesick when I saw my uncle because it reminded me of my dad, and I cried. Chicago was a big city, though they lived out on the South Side. The first few months were very hard, especially since I couldn't talk in English. I only spoke German. Sophie had four, five years of English in school, so she was able to understand, even though her English was more the English, not the American English. But she was able to understand, where I only spoke German. So it was really very hard for me, much more so than for Sophie. But then school was supposed to start in September, right after Labor Day, but there was a polio epidemic at that time, so the schools in Chicago were closed for a whole month. So then after I was there a few days, my cousin lived a few blocks away from my aunt and uncle, and I was visiting there. They lived in a big apartment complex, and there I met a girl that was my age. Of course, she
couldn't speak any German, but her aunt was a teacher who was retired, and she spoke German. So then she started to be the interpreter and she gave me private lessons because the school didn't start. So I really had some help from her and then we would talk in sign language with this little girl. Her name was Eleanor. But we became friends for many years. I haven't had any contact with her today. They were not Jewish, but they were very nice to us. And her husband was a — ah, I can't remember.

JL: That's all right — tape isn't expensive.

KE: He was a doctor. Not a regular doctor, but he cracked the ribs. What do they call them?

JL: Chiropractor?

KE: Not a chiropractor. Anyway, he was a doctor and they were just wonderful people. They were Gentile people but they were so good to us. After that, even years later, whenever something was wrong with us, we didn't have any money, even after my parents came, instead of going to a regular doctor, whatever was wrong, go see Dr. [Geddy? 11:05] and he would. He was an osteopath. They really were very, very nice to us. So I would play with their niece and then I would have lessons once a day for maybe a half an hour or an hour. As a child, you really pick up the language much faster.

KE: When finally school did start, I went to school, and I think I was the only refugee in the school, the first refugee because most of the other German Jews all lived in Hyde Park. My aunt and uncle lived in South Shore and, like I say, I was the first refugee to go to school there, and of course couldn't speak any English. The kids all made fun of me, and I came home crying again. I says, “I’m not going back to that school.” My cousin said, “You will learn. You better go back,” and I did, of course. I got along fine after a few months. After about six months, I learned the language. You know, not perfect, but — . One thing though, I never did read is the funnies. Everybody would say, “Read the funnies,” but I had a hard enough time to read the right way, and to read the funnies, that just didn't make any sense to me! And still today, I never read the funnies.

JL: How would you compare the school in Chicago with the school in Germany?
KE: About the same. Of course, I was so much younger, and that last year that I had to go to Dinkelsbühl, that it was really very rough. I think they were stricter in Germany as far as discipline and things than they are in this country. But as far as the education goes, I think it's pretty much equal.

JL: Did you find any anti-Semitism in school?

KE: No... Everybody accepted me; everybody was very nice. Like I say, there weren't hardly any Jewish people that lived in that area, so I really was not only a refugee, but I don't think there were hardly any other Jewish people, maybe one or two families, that lived in that area. So I really had a good relationship with friends. I became a Girl Scout afterwards. I really had a lot of friends.

JL: What other problems of a new immigrant did you have as a child?

KE: Plenty!

JL: What kinds of things?

KE: Well, like I told you, my aunt and uncle are the ones that signed the papers, and they lived together with their daughter and son-in-law. They had one child at the time when we first came who was four years old. My aunt and uncle and their son-in-law and daughter, they had two meat markets and the men worked and the women worked. So I was really considered that I had to be the baby-sitter, I had to be the maid.

JL: What about Sophie?

KE: Sophie started to go to school. She went to high school, [Hirsch? 15:20] High. She only went for about a month because we needed really some money, too, because we had no money. So then my aunt and uncle, they gave her a job as a cashier in one of the butcher shops. But she was making $2 a week. From that $2 a week, if we wanted to have a pair of shoes soled, she had to pay out of that. If we wanted to go on the streetcar to go to visit somebody, we had to pay that out of that. I was the maid and the baby-sitter and I had to scrub floors. I was twelve years old at the time and it was not easy, believe me. And I never was so happy when my parents finally did come that we could be on our own, even though I had to work just as hard, but at least I was not used. Like I said before, I thought
that everybody in America was rich, but when I think back now, I think they really had to struggle. It
was shortly after the Depression. I guess they had lost the store or had lost a lot during the
Depression, so my relatives really were struggling, too. But if we would sit down at dinner time and if
I wanted an extra piece of meat or something, my sister would give me a kick under the table — “You
had enough.” It was not easy. They took advantage of us, no matter what way. They were good. Sure,
they brought us out and we’re thankful that they saved our lives, but they had every advantage from
us as well. They took advantage of us in every respect that they could. I’ll never forget, when my
parents finally did come, my cousin — I had to scrub the floors and the porch. They had an outside
porch. They lived on the second floor. Then on a Shabbos morning, my cousin said, “You have to
scrub the porch down.” And I said, “Not today. Not on Shabbos,” because my parents really were still
religious. Even though my relatives weren’t religious. My cousin kicked me out of the house and I
walked for about three miles to where my mother and dad were staying. That was the time I said,
“Never again will I go back there.” But then, we had no choice until my parents’ furniture came. My
folks made me go back, but it was terrible. I hope and pray that my children or grandchildren will
never have to go through anything like that, because it’s not easy to go and leave your parents and live
with, even though they’re relatives, but that somebody takes you in that you have to pay for
everything. Maybe not monetary things, but in real life you really pay for it. Everything that they did
for us, they were paid tenfold. So it was not an easy life.

JL: In contrast to that, can you tell me of any special acts of kindness or good things that you
experienced?

KE: Good things, yes. My cousin’s in-laws, in fact they’re the ones that signed the papers for my parents,
and they were really, really good people.

JL: What cousin’s in-laws?

KE: Their name was Goldstein. Lillian and Mort Goldstein. He was a policeman. I don't know where they
originally came from. Though Lillian came from Cincinnati, and she was a very, very kind person.
JL: They were American?

KE: They were Americans and they're the ones that signed the papers for my parents, because my aunt and uncle, they had signed for too many people, so they didn't have enough, because you had to have so much money to bring people over. Even though we were no burden to them, but they still had to be responsible. But, like I told you, I came in August and my birthday was in September, and she was the only one that gave me a present. I'll never forget it. She gave me a silk slip and panties to match. My aunt and uncle they didn't give us, or my cousins didn't give me nothing. But Mort and Lillian, she bought me, and I'll never forget that, a beautiful slip and panties to match. I was so proud. They were really good to us. They used to take us out. Like on weekends, they would take us out for dinner, and they were really kind people. Then there was a family by the name of [Rochel/Rochil 20:40]. They were also refugees. Sophie met Helga at [Hirsch] High School. They lived about a mile-and-a-half, two miles away from where my aunt and uncle lived. They had two children, this Helga and her brother Henry. Helga was about Sophie's age and Henry was quite a bit older, but they had their own apartment. They lived together. Sunday afternoon we would go to the [Rochil's]. We would walk there and then have supper with them on Sunday night. And there we would go and we would cry our heart out and they would hear our stories, during the week what had transpired one way or the other, good and bad. But they were our saviors, because we were able to speak freely anything that we had on our heart. They were understanding and they had compassion.

JL: You just couldn't do that at your uncle's house?

KE: No, because the things that they did all through the week aggravate you, and take advantage of you in every way, then we would go to the [Rochils] either on Shabbes afternoon — no, not on Shabbes because Sophie worked on Shabbes — on Sunday we would go over there and we would spend Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening, and then we would walk back at night or they would walk us back. But those were really our true friends, because we could open up our hearts and speak and say
what we want to. In fact, I saw Helga just last week in Chicago when I was there. It was not easy. It was a year of hell as far as I'm concerned, when I look back today.

**KE:** Then when my parents came, thank God, things really did turn around. But then we worked day and night. My father was afraid to — he worked for a few days or a few weeks for my uncle in the butcher shop, but that was not his trade. Then my cousin got him a job at Walgreen's. That only lasted for a short while.

**JL:** Was he selling?

**KE:** No, in the warehouse. But that only lasted for a short while, and then finally when the lift came, our furniture, then we said we would go on our own. My dad and my sister, they thought — well, my folks lived with the Goldsteins, with the people that signed for them, and we still lived with my aunt and uncle and cousins. My dad said, “No, wait till I get a good job and that I can earn some money.” We said, no, we were going to rent an apartment. “If we have to work day and night,” my mother and I, “if we have to work day and night we will go on our own,” because after that incident that my cousin had kicked me out, I said, “I will never stay there again.” But I had no choice. I had to go back.

**JL:** Did your parents feel that, even though they treated you this way, you owed them something because they brought you out?

**KE:** I guess so, because my parents did try to be as nice, like on holidays. We were always nice to them. We tried to show our appreciation in every way we possibly could. On the holidays, we would have them over for dinner. We really did appreciate it in one way. But I still can never forget the way we were — in one way they were good to us, that they brought us out, that they saved our lives, but they did take advantage of us, too. That's the thing that I resent today. I resented it at the time, but I don't think I was aware of it as much as I am today, because I have help in the house today, and I don't think I treat my help they way they treated me, and as a child, and even I was really my uncle's niece. I would never treat a child that way. I don't think they realized though what they really did. I mean they just felt that I was obligated to them and had to do whatever they wanted to. My little cousin,
today she's a grown woman, she was four years old at the time when I came. She wouldn't go to bed. Somebody had to go and lay down with her at night. So I was the one that had to go to bed at seven or eight o'clock. I had to lay down with her until she went to sleep. I'd never heard of anything like that. Like I say, both my cousin and my aunt went to work, and I had to get supper ready. They didn't have no cleaning woman.

JL: Even when you were in school you had to do all of that?

KE: Oh, sure, I did the housework, sure. Sure, I had to do all the housework and get things ready and take care of Fern. It wasn't easy.

JL: Were you able to keep up with your school work?

KE: Yes, it wasn't that hard, but I mean, it wasn't easy. It was a rough, rough year. But then we got our own apartment. We rented an apartment. It was $40 a month.

JL: Where was it?

KE: It was just a block away from my aunt and uncle.

JL: Do you remember the address?

KE: Sure, 7316 South Blackstone. Then my dad was working at Walgreen's, and then he lost the job. That only lasted a few months, too, I guess. Then we decided that he was going to sell eggs. He sold eggs and my mother made homemade noodles and I went to school. At the time they were building a new school and they had portables, so we only had to go to school a half a day.

JL: What is a portable?

KE: Portable schools. Instead of the new school, they tore that down so they just had so many like huts. So I would go to school just half days. Then either if I went in the morning, I would go out and sell eggs in the afternoon, or if I went in the afternoon, I would go in the morning and take my bike. I had a basket in the front and a basket in the back. I was thirteen years old, and I would go sell eggs from house to house. My mother made homemade noodles. At night we had to help. We had a big dining room table. We had noodles all over the house drying and we would help package the noodles. At
night we worked till 10:00, 11:00 o’clock at night. We would sell the eggs and noodles. On Sundays, I would go have special customers further away and I had to take the streetcar because I couldn't go on my bike. It was too far away. Really, we went into South Shore where a lot of Jewish people lived.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1
Tell me about traveling to sell your noodles.

The noodles and the eggs we would sell. We got customers, mostly in South Shore where more Jewish people lived. I don't know how we found — well, we knew that there was a Jewish community and we would go from house to house and we would have our regular customers. My dad would go and I would go. Then on Sunday, I'll never forget, I found these people. In fact, the girl there was my maid of honor. She also was a refugee. They were on 49th near Cottage Grove. I had to take the streetcar there. And one time I got off, I had a whole case of eggs in one hand and the other hand the noodles, and I tripped off when I got off to change on 47th and Cottage Grove, and fell and broke all the eggs. I fell off. I'll never forget that. [Laughs] I went back home then and got another case of eggs.

What did they say?

What could they say? There was nothing they could say! But that's how we made a living. My dad did that for about four or five years, and then finally he got a job with a dress manufacturer. That was more his line, of course. But then after I did that, and I got a job. I lied about my age. My cousin had relatives that were connected with Walgreen's, and I got a job as a waitress when I was fourteen or fifteen.

Did you quit school?

No, no, I went to school, but after school. No, I went to high school.

You finished high school?

I finished high school. I worked as a soda jerk at Walgreen's after school and on weekends. I did that for a couple of years and then I got a job as a clerk in a grocery store for National Tea, as a check-out. So I've worked since I've been eleven, twelve years old. I've worked all my life. And Sophie worked. She got a job then. She worked for my aunt and uncle and my cousins for a couple of years, and then she got a job as a cashier in a grocery store. She quit school. She only went to school for a month or two, because we needed the money. But we enjoyed being together as a family again. That was the
most important thing in our life, that my parents did get out — that we were together as a family. We didn’t care how hard we worked. I never minded the work, working for my parents and working as a family, as I did of course that first year that I was in this country.

JL: Did you feel different from the other children at school.

KE: No. Like I said, when I went to high school, then it was a new school, South Shore High. That was in practically an all Jewish neighborhood, so then I really started to associate more with the Jewish kids. My relatives were not religious. They weren’t even affiliated with any synagogue. They were really Reform, and the first year I did go to South Shore Temple, which was a Reform temple, and I made friends there. But then, after my parents came, we belonged to the conservative [Southside Hebrew Congregation] and there I went to Sunday school. I didn’t go to Hebrew school in this country, just to Sunday school. I was confirmed at Southside Hebrew Congregation when I was fifteen. There I made a lot of friends through Sunday school. Then going to South Shore High School, which was — I wouldn’t say predominantly Jewish, but a good percentage of the kids were all Jewish.

SL: How did they react to you as a refugee?

KE: Well, by the time that I started high school, I spoke pretty good English, and there really wasn’t that much difference. Of course, we couldn’t do the things that the other kids did because we didn’t have the money. We were struggling, and the kids in South Shore, most of them, came from middle-class to upper-class families, so I couldn’t partake in a lot of things that the other kids did. But by that time my dad did work for Rich Dress Company, and I could get clothes wholesale, and that helped. But on the whole, everybody was very nice.

When I got a little bit older, because there was such a difference between Sophie and me, she was no longer going to school. She started to go with a lot of the German refugees. Eventually I got involved when I was sixteen, when I started to go with a lot of the German kids, too, which 90 percent of them lived in Hyde Park. We lived in South Shore, so I always had to take the bus or the streetcar to Hyde Park. Like on Tuesday, there was the Center Sports Club. They had a clubhouse on 55th Street.
Tuesday night we would go there to play ping-pong and some of the fellows played cards. And on Sundays, on weekends, we would go to the Point.

JL: All together as a group?

KE: As a group, yes.

JL: What was the club called?

KE: The Center Sports Club.

JL: The group was called that, too?

KE: Yes, yes. It was all German-Jewish kids. But like I say, I didn't really start to go with them till I was about sixteen, seventeen years old. That's when I started to, because we felt really more that we had something in common. Even though the American kids all were nice to us, but we all worked after school, we all had the same background, we all came as kids, and we spoke a lot of German. There was a bond that could not be disconnected. You had that bond that you didn't have — you felt that even though the American kids were nice to us, but we couldn't keep up with them, their social life and their social standards. But the German kids, we all struggled the same way. We all had to help our parents, if we did have parents here. We all helped. Some sold candies, everybody did something. Nobody just went to school. We all had to work.

JL: Did you have a chance to spend time with your uncle Emil's friends? How did they react to you?

KE: They were all much older people. Really with that first year, like we would go on picnics and things like on a Sunday, that they would do. My aunt had a tremendous family. There was nine or ten kids, and so they would get together on her side of the family and, of course, we were included in that. But as far as their friends really, after we made our own, we didn't have that much to do with them.

JL: Besides these people, then, did you have contact with any other relatives in the United States?

KE: My dad's sister, she was a widow. And my uncle Julius only lived a couple of years. He was a widower.

JL: Were they in Chicago?
KE: They lived in Chicago, too. Other than that, we really didn't have any other family.

JL: Did any official Jewish organization help you when you came alone or afterwards when your parents came?

KE: No. None.

JL: When were you naturalized?

KE: In 1947, after I was married.

JL: Where?

KE: In Green Bay.

JL: How did you feel at that time?

KE: I felt great. It was a good feeling that I'd finally became an American citizen. I felt like I was an American for many years, but I had to be twenty-one before I became a naturalized citizen, so I really didn't get naturalized until 1947.

JL: While you were here, having come as a child, what news were you getting from Germany?

KE: Very little. My parents got letters, I imagine, until 1940 or 1941. My mother had three brothers that did not get out. My dad had one brother that lived in Munchen. He was a Lehrer, and his wife got out. She went to Israel because my cousins were in Israel. But my mother's family, no one got out.

JL: Were they all in concentration camps?

KE: They must have. Yes, sure.

JL: Do you know what happened to them officially?

KE: My dad's brother, he died in Munchen. My aunt got out, and she went to Israel to the kids, but my uncle passed away, not in a concentration camp. He had an operation and he got pneumonia and he passed away. But my mother's brothers, only one brother really had children and none of them got out. Her other two brothers didn't get out. No one got out. My dad had another sister that came in 1939. She got out. My aunt and uncle sent the papers in for them, too. They came in 1939. But she had no children.
But my mother's family, no one got out. She had one sister and she did come. She lived in [Glen Falls], but she didn't come until 1940. She went through Spain on the train, that's the one who's son was killed in the concentration camp, and she had two boys living in Glen Falls, New York. But she didn't want to leave. She always said it couldn't happen, it wasn't going to get that bad. But then finally she came through. She had to take the train through Spain, I believe, and she came on one of the last boats. But the rest of the family, nobody got out.

JL: Do you know which concentration camps they died in?
KE: I have no idea.

JL: What kinds of things were they writing in letters while they could still write?
KE: I don't remember.

JL: About the war?
KE: I don't think they wrote anything, because if I remember right, those letters all were censored. I think they didn't write anything, they couldn't write anything, about what was going on.

JL: Do you remember what news you had of the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939?
KE: No. I remember 1941!

JL: What news did you have of the Kristallnacht?
KE: We heard that afterwards.

JL: When did you hear about it?
KE: Can't remember. I think we heard it through my aunt and uncle, my dad's sister. They came after the Kristallnacht.

JL: Do you remember what they told about it?
KE: That everybody was taken to jail, that they were dragged out at night, and that it was a horrible, horrible experience. I remember my uncle was taken in the concentration camp. I don't remember about my mother's brothers. I really don't remember. But I remember when my aunt and uncle came,
they came right shortly after the Kristallnacht, maybe a month or two later, and they told us how bad it was. But other than that, I really don't remember.

JL: So you heard from them personally. Do you remember hearing anything on radio or seeing anything in the newspapers about it?

KE: That I don't remember.

JL: What do you remember of news about German aggression and Germany going into Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland?

KE: I remember reading it in the paper, hearing about it. You wouldn't know that, but there was a song that they sang already when I was a little girl, [“Heute Hier in Deutschland, Morgen in Ganze Welt,”] and that was the thing that was — when they did go into Poland, into Czechoslovakia, we felt that they were trying to conquer the world. That was Hitler's idea and his goal, anyway. Of course, thank God, it never happened.

JL: Do you recall the reaction of the American relatives to all of this war news and aggression?

KE: They were upset, too. I mean, it was not easy. I don't think anyone that had any family, even though my mother had no family here, but my dad's family, they finally had gotten most of them out. [Telephone interrupts] Our relatives here, the Americans, they thought it was bad, too, but I don't think people realized how bad it really was. I don't think after 1940 or 1941, you didn't hear nothing from anybody anymore, so you really didn't know. They tried to hush it up here. We knew that, like my mother's family, nobody got out. We knew that where they had gone to, where they landed, nobody knows. We tried to get papers signed for them. In fact, my mother's, the one aunt, there was some distant relation between the Warburgs in New York, and we tried. But of course, the numbers that they had were so high, they never got out. There was no way that they could get out.

JL: So they did have numbers, they did have affidavits from people?

KE: No, but my one aunt and uncle, the other brother in Nördlingen, Uncle Herman, she had a brother and they did have a number. I guess they did sign papers for them, but the number was so high that
they never got out. I know that we were trying, we were writing back and forth, my parents, with the Warburgs in New York. But there was no way that they ever got out. There was three kids, and they were all my age. We were just all a few years apart. Where they perished, we don't know. So I really have no idea if they were sent to Auschwitz or to where. Nobody knows. At least we never found out.

JL: What do you remember of the United States entering into the war?

KE: 1941, I was working. I was very surprised. We kind of expected it, but when — it was on a Sunday. Wasn't it Sunday? I don't remember where I was, but it was a shock to everybody, in one way, when they bombed Pearl Harbor. Everybody was really in one way surprised and on the other hand expecting something to happen. Of course, there were no boys in our family, so we weren't that concerned as far as going to the Army. My parents weren't worried that we had to go into Service. But I know that, of course, all the boys that I knew, they all were called in, and whether they were refugees or not they all went to the Service. That had to, most of them. A few of them enlisted, but most of them were drafted.

JL: What was the immediate reaction of your friends and neighbors to the news?

KE: It was a shock. It really was a shock.

JL: Your parents arrived in 1938, correct?

KE: Yes.

JL: We've talked about Chicago. Why did you finally move to Green Bay?

KE: My sister got married first.

JL: How did she get to Green Bay?

KE: That was a shidish [arranged marriage], too, because my brother-in-law also came from Germany, and he lived in Green Bay, and he wanted to marry a German-Jewish girl. So my in-laws, who later became my in-laws, they had relatives, cousins, in Chicago and they wrote to them and asked if they don't know of a nice German-Jewish girl. My aunt was a friend of [Rich Abrager?] and that's how they introduced Sophie and Herbie. They were married in March 1946. Herbie came to Chicago
and within a month to six weeks my sister and Herbie were married. Then I went to Green Bay to visit my sister. The first time that I went there was with her when they got engaged and helped her buy some furniture. I went with her to buy furniture. At that time, Sophie and I stayed with the Frankenthalers at their home, because they were very good friends. My brother-in-law was good friends. I met my husband at that time, already, of course. At that time, I was only twenty years old. I wasn’t interested in — but then in the summer of 1946, I went to Green Bay. I was going to go to New York on a vacation, and my sister was pregnant right away, so she wrote, "Come to Green Bay. Come and visit. Stay with us, it won’t cost you anything. Why do you want to spend money?" We still were conservative. "You'll have a nice time in Green Bay." And instead of going to New York, I went to Green Bay and I became reacquainted with my husband-to-be. We started to court and September 15, we were married. Three months later, we were married, too, and that’s how I came to Green Bay.

JL: When was that?

KE: In September 1946. And lived there ever since, until I moved to Madison.

JL: Where did you live in Green Bay at first?

KE: At first we bought a little house after we were engaged, but there were renters in there. In those years, there was a shortage of housing, and we couldn't get the renters out right away, so we lived with my in-laws from September until Thanksgiving. Then at that time, the people moved out of the house, and we moved into a little two-bedroom house, 339 South Webster, which cost $7,600. We had some money, and my in-laws borrowed us the rest. My father-in-law, I think they were supposed to charge us 2 or 3 percent interest, and every time that I paid the interest, my father-in-law would give me the money back. "Buy something for the house." They felt that we had to pay the interest but they really helped us.

So we moved in 1946 around Thanksgiving, and we lived there until 1954. We had three children there, and then we moved after my father-in-law passed away in 1951 and his mother was still living. So she was ninety-five-and-a-half when she passed away. She didn't pass away until 1954, so my
mother-in-law didn’t want to uproot her from the house. So she stayed in the house that they lived in, that they purchased when they came to Green Bay in 1937. After that, after Oma’s passing away, then she bought an apartment building. She moved into one of the apartments and we remodeled the original house, 120 South Quincy. We moved in there because we had three kids. Our house was really too small and this was a four-bedroom house. We lived there from 1954 until 1959, and we build our own ranch-type house. We lived on Debra Lane, 1841 Debra Lane, until after my husband passed away. Until August of 1977, we lived there. Then from there, I moved into a condominium, bought a condominium. Lived there until I moved to Madison a year ago last August.

JL: How were you received by the Green Bay community as a refugee?

KE: We were always the German Jews, for many, many years. There was really about five or six German Jewish families and we more or less — my sister and brother-in-law and then there was the Rosenthal family and then my husband had a cousin, Art Lichtenstein, so we really were very close mostly with the Germans. The men used to play [Scat?], they loved the German card game. We became very good friends with Bernie and Leah Berk after we were there. He was an attorney and still is an attorney in Green Bay today. But as far as the rest of the community, we became friends, but still we were always considered the refugees — not today anymore, but for many years we still were all the Germans and the Germans stuck together, even in Green Bay, which was a small community.

JL: Did the Green Bay community help to resettle you at all?

KE: No, no.

JL: Did the community play any role in resettling you out at that time in Green Bay?

KE: No, no. Well, my in-laws came to Green Bay in 1937. Actually they came to Cincinnati. From Cincinnati they went to Hancock, Michigan. From Hancock, Michigan, they went to Iron River, Michigan, and finally my father-in-law met Sam Cantor, whose daughter lived in Iron River and he said, “Adolf, if you ever want a job — ” [tape runs out]
JL: How did your in-laws come to live in Cincinnati?

KE: My in-laws came to Cincinnati. There was my late husband and his mother and dad. They came to Cincinnati because my father-in-law had a cousin and uncle that lived there. There he worked for A. J. [Kahn? 0:55] as a sausage maker. They came in June of 1936. In September of 1936, they got a letter from my mother-in-law's brother who lived in Hancock, Michigan, which was way up in the copper country. He wrote that there was a job in the sausage factory available and it would be good for him if he wanted to come up there. So they didn't know what to do. They talked to some other people and their relatives, and one of the gentleman that they spoke to, they told them, "Here in Cincinnati, you're just a little fish. You have a chance to go to the country, go to the country."

So they decided to go to the copper country. But when they went on the train — now this is just a story that I have heard over and over again. They were on the train all night long, and the next morning when daylight broke, and it was way up in the woods, and my father-in-law looked out the window and he said, ["Ella, wen ist dem balst Erd/b, hier ist der richtet."] So he made up his mind that he wasn't going to live there forever because it was just in the wilderness too much. But that job lasted, I guess, through the winter. Of course, he didn't speak the language, either.

So when that job didn't pan out anymore, [Mayer? 2:35] from Iron River, they were looking for a sausage maker. So then they moved to Iron River and there they met that spring Sam Kanter, who was an American Jew that lived in Green Bay. He told him if he ever wanted to move away — Iron River was a little tiny community as well as Hancock, and Green Bay at that time had, I guess, about one hundred, 150 Jewish families. There was a nice Jewish community. He told him that he could probably find him a job there. Well, he went to Green Bay, and Sam Kanter went with him from butcher shop to butcher shop, but my father-in-law was forty-two years old at the time, and the story that they gave him was, he was too old, he was not qualified.
So Sam Kanter was a cattle dealer, and my father-in-law, even though he trained as a sausage maker and butcher, in Germany he really was a cattle dealer. So he decided to go with Sam Kanter out in the country and watched him buy cattle. In the meantime, he had brought his family down. They rented the house first, 120 South Quincy. When he came home that night, he said to his wife, "Ella, was[t] er weis, hab ich lang vergessen." He knew more about the cattle business than the man ever will know. Sam Kanter was an old man already at the time. But my father-in-law was quite a shrewd businessman, so he decided he could do just as well or even better.

KE: So they decided to buy a truck, but they had no money. My mother-in-law had a very rich uncle that lived in [Wopaton], North Dakota. So they wrote to Uncle Aaron that they needed $300 to buy a truck to go into business. So they wrote to this very millionaire of an uncle they should borrow them $300. They wrote back a letter. "We don't want you on the books, but I will send you $150 as a gift." That's how they got started and they were able. They bought the truck and borrowed the rest of the money, evidently, and that's how they started in the cattle business. They bought an old police truck, and they started to go in the country.

Then a few months later, they had signed the papers for the grandparents to come. Somehow, the grandparents came and they all lived together. A year later, they brought Arthur [Lichtenstein? 5:40] over. They brought as many as they could. Then Ilse came, another niece came; and a nephew from my mother-in-law came, and they all lived together. Then my mother-in-law had roomers even, and they worked day and night, too. They really struggled. But everybody pitched in, and they all shared and at that time he was fourteen. Then when he was fifteen, my husband quit school. He used to go in the country and he, too, forged his — he had to be sixteen to get a driver's license, but before he went to school and after school he would go in the country, because he spoke English already. My father-in-law went to a lot of Belgian community in Sugar Bush, and then in the Montpelier area, which was a German community. So he was able to make a living and that's where they got their start in the cattle business, all around Green Bay. Then my husband went in the Service, of course, when
the war broke out. Then when he came back in 1945, they went into partnership in the cattle business.

JL: Who went into partnership?

KE: My father-in-law and my husband. But then my father-in-law passed away. He was quite sick already even after the time that we got married. He was a diabetic and then he developed a very bad heart condition. He passed away in December of 1951. But we kept the business, and then we expanded into the real estate business, mostly farm real estate. And we were in the cattle business and real estate until 1960, and that was when we built the packing plant.

JL: When did you get into meat packing?

KE: In 1959, we started to make plans to go into the packing business. Even when my father-in-law was still living, years and years ago he used to say, "The cattle business is no business, "because you were on the road all the time, through bad weather. So we were always looking for something to do other than the cattle business. But that's the only thing that my husband really knew, was the cattle, so we were in the cattle business and in the real estate business. We'd been in the real estate in 1950, 1951, until his license. He was in the real estate until he passed away. So we did acquire land, too, over the years. Bought farms and real estate and had some land of our own over the years. When we decided to go in the packing business, of course we had to dispose of all the extra land that we had purchased over the years, because we needed the capital.

My husband and I started the business from scratch. We built a building and we built it from the bottom up. We worked day and night. The first eight months we lost everything that we really had in it. We didn't know whether we were going to live or die. We were in Chicago at the meat convention, and we were at the Palmer House. My husband looked out — on the 22nd floor — and he says, "Karola, do you see $100,000 down on the street?" And I said, "No." He says, "Then it's no use for me to jump out." So we after that, that October, then things started to turn around, and thank God,
we became very successful. He was a very ambitious, very brilliant man, and built a business from
scratch to a big empire.

JL: Where did you have the meat packing plant?

KE: In Green Bay.

JL: Didn't you mention to me that you had another one?

KE: We first started with Packerland Packing. We started out, we thought we would kill 250 cattle a day. At the end, when the time we sold it, we killed 1,200 cattle a day, just at Green Bay. Then in 1972, we bought a plant in Chippewa Falls, which was the Peterson Plant. We remodeled that and started there. In 1973, we bought the Liebman Packing Company, which was the biggest meat packer in Green Bay, and made that into a processing plant. We took out all the equipment for the killing operation, and just killed at Chippewa Falls. The original Packerland Plant, it was a cold storage and processing plant. Then in 1974, we bought another plant in Texas, a small plant where our son Howard went, and he ran that plant. So by the time we ended up, we had four plants running and we had 1,700 employees at the time that my husband passed away. But we worked day and night. I ran the office and he did the procurement and selling. Of course we had employees, but we started small and just kept growing.

JL: Did you run the office the whole time?

KE: No, I ran it until 1966. Then I started to get back problems, and I had to quit working.

JL: So from 1959 to 1966 you worked?

KE: Yes, but I did all the bookwork. Always worked very closely with my husband in whatever he did. I kept the books from the time that we got married, because I was a bookkeeper. When we were in the real estate business, I did all the advertising, wrote all the ads, did all the leg work for him. So we really worked very closely all through our married life together.

JL: Where did you learn bookkeeping skills?

KE: In Chicago, when I went to high school.
JL: You didn't go to business school afterwards?

KE: I went to high school for two years at South Shore High, and then I went to Jones Commercial, which was a business school. I took all business courses there. That's where I completed high school, so I was a trained bookkeeper. When I was going to school, I worked for [Brunswick-Balke?] after school. Then worked there for two years, and then after that, I worked for the American Jewish Congress as a head bookkeeper for two years in Chicago before I got married. So I had a lot of bookkeeping experience.

JL: Now the business is sold?

KE: The business is sold. We sold it. The final deal went through in March of 1977.

JL: Is your son still in that one in Texas?

KE: No, no, no. Everything was sold all the whole. But my oldest son, Sheldon, he still works at Packerland. He's just a worker. Howard is in the meat brokerage business in Green Bay, and Betty is in the real estate business in Green Bay, and Stuart, my youngest, he goes to law school at the University of Louisville. His first year law school.

JL: What kind of comparison can you make between Green Bay and Chicago in terms of lifestyle and Jewish community and physical setup?

KE: Well, being single and being married are two different things. The lifestyle in Chicago, like I told you, as I was growing up as a student going to high school, you didn't have the worries or nothing. I mean, after we were established. I was very active in Hadassah when I was in high school, when I was fourteen or fifteen. At that time, they had a Hadassah deb school, which was all high school kids. Somehow someone asked me. They only had one chapter in the whole city of Chicago, which met downtown at their main office once a month on Sunday. Someone asked me to join and I did. But at that time most of the girls were all from the west side of Chicago. That's where the biggest Jewish community was. But I somehow got interested, and I became membership chairman and I recruited, from my high school alone, sixty new members that year. So Hadassah really has been very close to
me for all those years. Then, of course, I went into Junior Hadassah and have been active in
Hadassah all through my married life as well. I'm a life member. But as far as the rest of the life in
Chicago, you can't compare it really to Green Bay, because it's so different. When you're single, you
go out. After you're married, you start to raise a family. We had a family just two years after we were
married. But your lifestyle is so different as a single individual. Like I told you before, most of my
friends after high school were practically 90 percent German Jews because we all stuck together. We
all had the same backgrounds. There was a common bond. We dated practically only German Jewish
boys, and they dated the German Jewish girls. There was very few out of all my friends that married
American boys or vice versa. We all intermarried, didn't make any difference what part of Germany we
came from. But it still was a bond that we had. I don't think you'll ever lose that. Even when I came
to Green Bay, I had my sister there and Siggie's cousin, Art, we were all the same age, and the
Newburgers — we were always friends. But as far as the social life, we raised our families together. It
was really a different kind of life in Chicago than it was in Green Bay. And my parents lived in
Chicago until 1951, and then they — because there was just the two of us — and then they moved to
Green Bay, too. So it was more of a family life in Green Bay than in Chicago where you — I don't
know — you had different interests, really. My parents had their own friends and then they had
relatives. My dad's sisters, another cousin of my mother's came to this country, we became friendly
with them. But it was an entirely different life in Green Bay compared to Chicago.

**JL:** How did you feel about the difference in the sizes of Chicago and Green Bay?

**KE:** I prefer the small town to Chicago because you knew everybody, the distance wasn't that great.
Chicago was a hustle and a bustle all the time. If you wanted to go someplace it took you a half an
hour to go from one place to the other, where Green Bay within five, ten minutes, you were there. It
was a different life really in the small city. I go back to Chicago today — it's alright for a visit for a
day or two, but still Green Bay or Madison — even Madison, which is larger than Green Bay, is still
better than the city of Chicago. I wouldn't want to live in the big cities. It's all right to visit for a couple of days, but that's it.

JL: Did you encounter any anti-Semitism in your and your husband's business?

KE: Not really. There was a lot of anti-Semitism when we started the business in Green Bay, when we started to build the packing plant. And my children felt it tremendously in school, especially Betty, because she was older, of course. Of course, our competitors didn't want us to build and they tried to — they were German, they weren't Jewish, of course. They were Germans, and the Jew was the aggressor, and so there was quite a bit of anti-Semitism in those early years, in 1960, before we started and even after we started to build the plant.

JL: Can you give me some examples?

KE: One good example as far as Betty was concerned, she was always an honor student and she went to Preble High School. I think she was one of the first Jewish kids that went to the school, and when the time came they had the Honor Society and one of her teachers recommended her to be on the Honor Society and they didn't accept her, and she finally went to the principal and said, "Why wasn't I accepted?" And he said, "Well, you're too aggressive." Didn't really come right out to say, "Because you're Jewish," but your traits are. It was really an anti-Semitic thing, as far as we were concerned. So those are the things that really were — the Jew this and the Jew that. There was some anti-Semitism definitely, but after that it really wasn't that bad. I mean, after all the hurdles and they realized that we were there to stay, everything worked out fine.

JL: Did you encounter any negative attitudes related to the fact that you were refugees rather than specifically to your religion?

KE: Years ago I think they respected us more and felt that starting from nothing, that we were a success, they respected us more, that we were refugees and started with nothing. They couldn't say anything bad, you know what I'm saying? They had to say, "Well, here Siggie Frankenthal had one year high school education, made a success of himself, and really built something that was not only good for
himself but also for the whole Green Bay community and surrounding community." So they really couldn’t say anything, even though they said bad things and they resented it when we started, but they had to respect us at the end.

**JL:** Before you started meatpacking, when you were still in the cattle business and the real estate, was there any of this overt feeling against you that you noticed?

**KE:** From the Jewish community?

**JL:** No, from the general community.

**KE:** No. In fact, we had a wonderful relationship with all the farmers and all the people that we did business with. Still today, we have the best of friends with people that we did business with for years and years. If they had any problems they would even come to us, any family squabbles. Farmers, I will never forget, my husband would [make beshor]. If they would be fighting, between the families, when somebody passed away or something, that this one should get that and that one should get that, they would come to him. “Siggy, what do we do?” or “How do we handle it?” We were the mediator and negotiator in many instances that we helped people. So as far as that goes, as far as the people that we did business with, we had the best relationship that anyone could have, really.

**END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1**
TAPE 3, SIDE 2

JL: What was your first husband's name?

KE: His name was Siegfried Willie Frankenthal. He was born in Frankenberg an der Eder, May 7, 1923. He came to this country as a young boy with his parents in 1936. He was thirteen years old. We got married September 15, 1946. He was in the Army for two years. After his father became very ill, he did get a discharge from the Army because of illness in the family, to support the family. He got out in December of 1945.

JL: Did you meet in Green Bay?

KE: We met in Green Bay. The first time in February of 1946, since my sister married a Green Bay man, too. I spent the summer of 1946 in Green Bay instead of going to New York on a vacation. I spent it with my sister and her husband. Siggie and I became acquainted and starting dating. By September, we were married. It was a very good relationship. We had a wonderful life together. We had four wonderful children. Betty is thirty-two; she was born May 11, 1948. Sheldon was born January 8, 1951. Howard is twenty-seven; he was born June 16, 1952. Our youngest, Stuart, he was born April 5, 1958. He's right now a first-year law school student at the University of Louisville.

JL: What do the other three do?

KE: Betty is in the real estate business and investment business, and Howard is a meat broker in Green Bay, and Sheldon still works at the plant as just a common laborer.

JL: Where does Sheldon work?

KE: In Green Bay at the Packerland Packing Company.

JL: Are any of them married?

KE: None of them are married. But I do have a little grand-daughter, Sara Ellen, who was named after her grandfather and her great-grandmother. She's four months old yesterday. She was born June 8, 1980.

JL: When did your first husband pass away.
KE: He passed away September 3, 1976. He had a very severe heart condition for many years. He had open heart surgery in March of 1970. But he was a workaholic, and could not be kept down, and just did not take care of himself the way he should have. It was one of those unfortunate things. Though there was a history of heart condition in his family. His father passed away at the age of fifty-seven in 1951. He knew it, but he just was climbing a mountain and he couldn't stop. He was a very unique man, a wonderful family man. His family was everything and his business was the second. As far as social life was concerned, he couldn't care less. He was content to be with his family. He was an only child, but his family was everything. Of course, the business was the second. We did do a lot of traveling, but it was always a combination of business and pleasure. We traveled all over the world. It was mostly business, but we would take off a day or two. He was on the phone 95 percent of the time. Every chance he had, he was on the phone calling back to Green Bay to see what was going on in the business. I worked with him very closely throughout our married life, and all of our children were very, very involved in the business. They worked from the time they were little. They worked after school. The boys worked in the pens chasing up cattle and you couldn't keep them away. And Betty, from the time she was twelve, thirteen years old, she worked in the office after school and on weekends and, of course, during vacations. She graduated from Boston University. She has her degree in accounting, business major. She was a big help to my husband. I was not too involved in the business anymore after 1966, because I had back surgery a few years later, but after Betty graduated from college, she did come back for a while. She worked first for a public accounting firm in Chicago for a year, and then she went back to graduate school. Then in 1973 we purchased another meat packing plant, and her father called her up while she was on vacation and asked her to come home. She was in Puerto Rico with her grandmother. She was a little bit hesitant at first, but then she said, "Well, it's better to start at the top than at the bottom." So she really managed the University Meats Cold Storage Plant at the time we purchased it. We remodeled the whole plant and
she was in charge of everything. She's a fantastic businesswoman, though she does not like the meat business.

**JL:** Is she still doing it now?

**KE:** No, she's in the real estate end. She takes care of all the investments for her brothers and for me.

**JL:** What is University Meats Cold Storage Plant?

**KE:** That's also part of Packerland. Packerland had four plants.

**JL:** Were they all called Packerland?

**KE:** They were all really subdivisions. The original Packerland Packing was on [Lancolm? Lankum? Lakin? Lincoln? 7:35] Road. Then we purchased the plant in Chippewa Falls, and that was called Packerland of Chippewa Falls. And then we bought Leibman Packing, which was the largest meat packer in Green Bay for many years. They closed the doors, so then we purchased that in 1973. That was called University Meats and Cold Storage, because there was a large capacity of freezer storage space and we did nothing but processing there. A few months later, we bought another plant in Texas. That was called Packerland Packing, Pampa, Texas, and that was managed by Howard.

After my husband passed away, we decided to sell. Someone approached us a month after my husband passed away, a fellow by the name of George Gillette, and he did finally purchase. The deal was consummated in March of 1978. Everything was sold except, of course, the real estate that we had. We have a large farm south of DePere which we have a manager on and partner, and my children and I own that today, which is a dairy farm. Then we have land around the city, near the plant, but it's just raw land. Eventually it will be developed, but that can take years yet. So that's the story.

**JL:** When did you meet Aaron Epstein?

**KE:** I met Aaron in October of 1978, two years ago. Aaron has a brother in Green Bay by the name of Art who we were very good friends with. Aaron lost his wife in August of 1978 and Aaron's sister-in-law, [Roz? 10:10] Epstein, called me one day and asked me if I was interested in going out with Aaron. I said, "Sure, why not? What have I got to lose?" We met a couple of weeks later. He came to Green
Bay, and we went out on a date and saw each other that whole weekend. We both felt very comfortable with each other, and a short time later we decided to get engaged, and got married in August 26, 1979. We are very, very happy. Aaron has three children. Two of the girls are married and his son, Larry, he is in business with Aaron. Aaron is in the air freight business. He owns Madison Air Freight. We built a very nice home, a condominium, in Tamarack Trails and are very happy together.

JL: Where and when was Aaron born?

KE: Aaron was born in Madison, September 5, 1926. He's a year younger than I am, but that doesn't mean anything! But we really are very content, and we have a wonderful life together, and I'm grateful for being alive and being able to tell you the story.

JL: I thank you, but I'm not quite through yet!

KE: Okay.

JL: How were you received in Madison?

KE: Fantastic. I did know quite a few women through Hadassah since I was active in Hadassah. So I had met a number of the women who are very active in Hadassah. And of course Aaron, being a native of Madison, had all his friends and all of his friends have been just great and the people that I have met, I'm busier here than I ever was in Green Bay, since I really was involved more in our business and in family life, where here there's just the two of us. My children are gone and his children are gone, so we really are free to do as we like and the people have just been great in Madison. I really couldn't be happier anyplace, I don't think. And I don't think I would like to live in Chicago again or any other large city because I am basically used to a smaller town and Madison is larger than Green Bay but still there's so much culture here and so much going on all the time that it's really just great. I enjoy the Union Theater and we have joined many plays and things at the Civic Center and of course we belong to Beth Israel Synagogue. I'm very content and very happy here.

JL: As the children were growing up, did you speak English in the home?
KE: Combination. We spoke half English and half German, since both my parents lived for many years, and my husband's grandmother was ninety-five-and-a-half when she passed away, and she did not speak any English. So we had to speak German. In fact, Betty spoke German just as well as she spoke English because the only way she could converse with Oma was by talking German. The boys all speak German. They did take it in school. Sheldon does not speak as well, but he understands every word. If you try to say something and you don't want him to understand, he comes right back at you and he says, so and so. So we really did speak mostly a combination of both English and German.

JL: Can the children speak German?

KE: Oh yes, oh sure. When I talk to them on the phone or if I don't want somebody to understand, we still speak German. Even with Aaron, who does not speak German but understands Yiddish, I use a lot of German phrases. It's just something that I don't think you ever forget. It's part of me and I can't change it.

JL: How much do your children know about your experiences?

KE: They know everything. We have never kept anything from them. I believe Betty is more aware of the situation than the boys simply — when she was a little girl she used to love to go in the country with her father. The boys did, too. And Siggie would tell her all these old stories from Germany and from his experiences. I didn't tell you, his father was very, very badly beaten up in Germany. In fact, he was laying in a ditch. One time, when Betty was with her father, he showed her where Papa was beaten up. So she knew. The boys knew it too, but I think Betty, since she's the oldest, had more feeling and understanding for it. But they all knew the hardship that we went through.

KE: What their father went through, what I went through, we did not hide, because we always felt that you try to protect them in one way, but they really have to know the real truth, and how hard it is, and how we survived, and how hard we had to work, and that nothing came easy. Even to this day, even though my children are comfortable, they still know what a dollar is. And for myself [tape pauses] one thing that I have to say, I have never forgotten my background or my way of life. I like nice things, I
have a nice home, but I still remember what I was when I was a little girl and the hardship I went through and I don't feel any different than the next one whether I have a hundred dollars in my pocket or the next one only has a dollar in his pocket. Everyone is equal as far as I'm concerned. I'm not a showoff or anything like that. Even in our business, when we were in business, we had parties. I would dance the men that swept the floor or whether he was a buyer or what. Both my first husband and I, that was one asset that we had — we kept the same friends that we had when we started out small as when we were big. We never forgot our friends or anything like that. And still today, I can't feel any different today than I did thirty-five years ago.

**JL:** Did your children face any problems in school because of your and your husband's experiences?

**KE:** When Sheldon was born, he was born a month after my father-in-law passed away, and his name was Adolf. My husband and my mother-in-law insisted at the time that Sheldon should be called Adolf, which was against my judgment, but that was their wish and I did not want to go against it. So we consented. But that was the biggest mistake that we ever made because children are vicious and are mean and that child was teased from the time that he was a baby, referring him constantly to Adolf Hitler, and finally when he was about sixteen years old, we decided that was enough. His middle name was Sheldon, so he goes by the name of Sheldon A. now. But that was the biggest mistake that we ever made, was by naming that child Adolf. Because people, the kids, even grown-ups would tease him. "Oh, here comes Adolf Hitler." Of course, that was not the right thing for anyone to say to a child whose parents survived the Hitlerism, and so it was really a big mistake. But the children all were — the only problems that they really faced was through the period of the time when we were building the plant. Our plant was very close to a residential district — in fact, we lived there, a block away from the plant, but there was a lot of animosity. You know, from a packing plant there is some odor and even though other packing plants in Green Bay were just as close to residential areas, but we felt since we were Jews there was always an additional animosity towards us. So the children did suffer through their school years, at least until, I would say, 1964-1965. It took three, four years while we
built, we expanded, built a rendering plant, a hide house, and every time a controversy would come up there was always anti-Semitic remarks to the kids. It was not easy on them, I mean, there was no question about it. Even though maybe they didn't want it to be anti-Semitic, but that's the only way they really could get at the kids.

JL: What kinds of things did they say?

KE: Well, the Jew is the big shot, the Jews have all the money, and all this kind of stuff. I mean there was, really, the Jew is an aggressor; anti-Semitic remarks that were made to the kids.

JL: What did your kids say?

KE: They'd come home and they'd cry and say [that] this one said that and we would say, "Look, ignore it. Don't pay any attention to it, and we live our lives and we do what's right. We've got a business to run and we're doing it the right way and that's all you can do. You just have to ignore it and be strong."

And they were. We all survived. After many years we were the largest packing plant in the city of Green Bay. We employed alone in Green Bay 1100 employees. We were the fifth or sixth largest employer in Green Bay. And we were better to our employees than — if anyone had a problem, they would come to my husband or to me. Or if they needed money, even though it wasn't payday — "Siggie, I need $50 to go through till next payday," and my husband would never refuse anyone unless it was outright that he was a drunkard or something. But if it was a legitimate need, we had accounts receivable of our employees all the time. I would say, "Siggie, it's enough. We don't need anymore headaches. I got enough to do." He'd say, "You needed help? You got it. They need help. We will give it." And we did. And thank God, of all the people that we helped, I don't think we lost $500 in that twenty years, which is really nothing. People appreciated it. Sure, we had some disgruntled employees, but we had some very, very loyal employees, people that still to this day we still have contact with them. I have contact with them, my children have contact with them. We had an excellent relationship with all of our people.

JL: Do you think your family is closer to one another than other American families?
KE: Well, I don't think so. We are very close. Especially after my husband passed away, if I didn't have my children, I think I would have been lost. His mother lived two years after he passed away but she was very ill at the time. I am very close with my children. I talk to them every day, especially Betty. The boys, not that — Sheldon I talk to every day, but Howard and Stuart — of course, Howard is too busy, but we have a very good relationship. Stuart, of course, right now he's busy as can be in first-year law school. It's very rough, but he really is enjoying it. Stuart did go to private prep school, Northfield, Mt. Herman, in Massachusetts for two years, and he has been appointed trustee. He's the youngest trustee at this Northfield Mt. Herman private prep school, that has every been appointed to it. He's twenty-two years old, so he's quite proud to serve on that board.

JL: Is it in Wisconsin?

KE: No, in Massachusetts. He's quite proud of that. He's a good student. He has to work hard but he enjoys school. He's also a very sharp businessman. He's much older in his ways than his years, very mature. All my children are very mature. They look older and they act older than they really are. But they've all gone through the hard knocks. Nothing has come easy to them.

JL: Do you see your children overachieving to make up for what you could never do as a youngster because of the situation in Germany and the difficulties you faced in America?

KE: I wanted them to have everything that I didn't have, there's no question about that. I wanted them to be free, to go to school if they have the opportunity, which I never went to college. I was glad to get through high school because I had to work before and after school and during school. I never had those opportunities. Neither did my husband. My husband, like I told you, was a very bright, young man at the time, but he had to help support the family. There was no way that he could go to school. So we really wanted all of our children to be able to go to school. Betty graduated, Howard was... Sheldon is what they call a borderline retarded. I mean, he's not really retarded. He's able to work everyday; he drives his own car; he's able to fend for himself. In fact, he always lived with us, and after I got remarried, he stayed in the condominium in Green Bay. Just last first of September, he
moved into his own apartment and he's managing very, very nicely. So there was no additional schooling for him, of course. He did go to private schools for several years. But Howard was not a student. He wanted to go to work.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 2
TAPE 4, SIDE 1

KE: Howard was not the studious type. He was very smart, but he'd rather play or buy cattle than go to school. So after he graduated from high school, he said he didn't want to go to school. So his father said, "Well, then you go find yourself a job." He did not help him find a job, but he finally did. Found a job in a meat packing company in Chicago, and he started from the bottom as a butcher cutting meat on the table. Well, that lasted for about two months, and he finally came home around Thanksgiving time and said, "Dad, I think I better go to school." So he did go to school. He quit the job and he looked for a school. He went to a junior college in Danville, Illinois. He did not finish the two years, because we bought the plant in Texas. His father had the opportunity to buy this plant in Texas. So he called up Howard and said, "How would you like to run a business in Texas?" And of course Howard was more than anxious to do that, because like I said earlier, not that he didn't have the capabilities, he was just as smart as the other kids, but he just didn't have the [sitzfleisch] to sit down and study the way you have to in college. So instead of finishing, like I said he went a year-and-a-half to college and then he went to Pampa and ran the plant out in Pampa, Texas until we sold it. Stuart was a studious type. He's very much like Betty, who always was a good student. He started out after graduation. He went two years to Green Bay to high school and then he went to prep school at Northfield Mt. Herman, which is a very fine school. When he graduated from there he went to Washington University in St. Louis, and he was not too happy there. Of course, that was in 1976 when he started, and his father passed away in December. So he did finish out the year, and after that, he started to go back, but we were negotiating with the sale of the business. We really needed him at home, so he dropped out of school for one semester and then transferred to Cornell University in Ithaca. He graduated from there last year, and now he's in law school.

JL: What did he study in college?

KE: He was in the school of labor relations and he did very well at Cornell. And he really liked Cornell. He really likes school, though he does like other activities. He's very active. At Cornell, he was chairman...
of the board of a buying association that was buying all the food and everything for all the sororities
and fraternities and the co-ops in Ithaca. He ran for the board, and one day he calls me up and he
says, "Mom, I'm chairman of the board." I said, "For what?" And he said, "Well, they nominated me."
It was a very good experience. It was a million-dollar business, really, but he was able to run it and
manage it. But having the experience really all through his high school years and during summer
vacations. Like he would be assistant to the plant superintendent, and he had the feeling for
management quite a bit. From the time that he was a little boy, he really loved that type of work. And
of course, any negotiations that were going on with the unions or with the employees, he always had
to sit in on them because that was his field and he really liked it. Now Howard, he was a cattleman
from the time he was a little boy. He loves cows and he still is a trader today. He would go to the
sales before he was able to drive. We would have to hire a driver for him after school, and he would go
to buy cattle. His dad gave him the authority. But he knew cattle and he used to make all the sales in
the afternoon, after school.

JL: So young, as a teenager?

KE: From the time he was fourteen, fifteen years old, so he knew cattle. He always has been a trader, and
that's what he's doing now. He's a meat broker and some trade on the side, too. He's done very well.
He's very successful. So I really can't complain about my children. I'm very proud of them.

JL: Did you ever see yourself as a more concerned parent than others?

KE: No. I trusted my children implicitly and I never waited up for them at night. I cared about my
children, but I never was the overprotective mother. Well, I was really too busy. I was working, and go
in to work at 7:30 in the morning, and come home. I did have a housekeeper, and we would come
home at night for dinner and she'd have dinner ready. If there was work to be done, I would go back
to the office until 10:00, 11:00 at night. So my children were independent. They always were
independent, and I really never was a protective mother. I mean, they were on their own. They knew
what their responsibilities were. They never were sheltered in that way. They wanted to be part of the
family and our whole make-up really was our family life and the business. That was the biggest portion of our way of life.

JL: What were your greatest concerns for you children?

KE: That they grow up to be good human beings and be successful in their own right, which they all are.

JL: What activities and forms of behavior would you forbid your children from engaging in?

KE: Really, most of the time they had friends within the neighborhood. Betty and Stuart were very active in BBYO. They all of course went to Sunday school and Hebrew school, and though we never really lived in a Jewish neighborhood so to speak in Green Bay, they would meet their Jewish friends at the synagogue and activities. But on the whole, they really didn't have that much time, either. Like I told you, when they really became old enough to be able to work, we made them all work.

I remember Betty wanted to go to Camp Ramah the year that she was Bas Mitzvah, and that was in 1961. Of course, that was the year, 1960, when we started the business, and we had a terrible year. We couldn't afford it, and we said, "No way. You have to stay home and you work," and she did. She worked at the office instead of going to camp. The rabbi at Ramah wanted to see that she get a scholarship, and my husband said, "That is a luxury thing, and if we couldn't go to camp, we had to work, they're old enough to work, she can work, too." She resented it at first, but I don't think she's ever been sorry that she had the experience that she did have by working and being part of a family [9:20]. The boys, they had their own friends. Like I say, Howard really was more a loner most of the time. He was more interested in the business. Sure, he would go out and he had his friends, but if he could go to a sale, that was just as good for him as anything else.

JL: Do you feel that your children's sense of family responsibility is greater than that of other children's?

KE: Yes.

JL: In what way?

KE: I think they feel that we have accomplished something and it has to be protected. They're not fly-by-nights. They're very responsible individuals, every one of them, except Sheldon, of course. Sheldon
doesn't know. But the other three are conservative, aware of things, what's going on around them. They feel they've got responsibilities that you just don't throw away. If you have to take care of the things that you do have, you continue to grow and not stand still.

JL: Did you ever object to any of your children's friends?

KE: Not really. If there was someone that I didn't think that was the right person — my mother, [ol veh shalom? Oi veh shaom?], always used to say, ["Mit wim du verkier, sagt mir wer du bist, und weiss ich bin was du verkierst."]). Or, "Whoever you associate with, that's who you represent." So if I didn't like someone that they were associating with, I would tell them, "That's not the right person for you." But on the whole, they all had pretty good judgment. Of course, I would like to see if they found the right mate and of course would be happy if they were all Jewish! But those are things that only time will tell. Because we are all very Jewish-minded.

JL: What contacts do you have now with other surviving family members around the country or in Chicago?

KE: I keep in touch with my family, my first husband's family, friends, people that came from the same town, more for my first husband's friends. There's an old couple, Leo and Selma Stern, that live in New York. They're really contemporaries of his parents. They're high in their eighties, and on Rosh Hashonah I correspond with them. There's another family by the name of Oppenheimer, Arthur Oppenheimer and [Gertie? 12:50], that my father-in-law was a childhood friend with him. They are also very up in years, but we really keep in contact with them. They all came from Germany. Of course, we have a lot of cousins, so we do keep in touch with.

JL: By letter?

KE: Oh sure, letter or I call. Then I have relatives in Israel. I had two cousins. One passed away, first cousin, and her husband is still alive and her children and my other cousin. I keep in touch with her all the time by writing. From my first husband, there are some cousins which we keep in touch with
all the time. But usually, most of the ones that I keep in touch with, at least once a year on Rosh Hashonah that we write back and forth. At least that way you keep in touch.

JL: Where do the Sterns and Oppenheimers live?

KE: The Sterns are in New York City and the Oppenheimers live in Hartford, Connecticut.

JL: Both here in Madison and in Green Bay, who are your close friends? Are they Jewish or non-Jewish? How many are survivors?

KE: In Green Bay our closest friends were Leah and Bernie Berk. Then, of course, my sister and brother-in-law live in Green Bay and we're close with them. As far as survivors go, I know all the people in Green Bay of course, living there for that many years, but that we really were that close with any of them in the last twenty years, I can't say that we were. We're friends and still have contact with them, but not that close. Here in Madison, we have lots of friends. I am very friendly, or should say they really enjoy our company as much as we enjoy theirs, are the Leysers. And, of course, the Deutschkrons. Bella especially loves it when I talk German to her. It makes it kind of nice for them. Even with Martin and Eva when we get together, there's always a German word here or there that comes out, which is a natural thing!

JL: How does Aaron feel about your friendships with Germans?

KE: He has no objections. They're his friends, too. In fact, Martin and Eva were very good friends of theirs, with his first wife, as well. Leysers he did not know, but he thinks Bella and Fred are just great people, and I do, too. We enjoy their company. They come here or we go there and just really drop in on them. It's not a bosom friendship, but we really — she, especially Bella, loves it when I talk German. It's such a [mechaieh/bechaieh? 16:30] to talk to somebody the same way that I do.

JL: Does she speak the same dialect as you?

KE: 24Bella and Fred Layser.

25Eva and Martin Deutschkron. Eva Deutschkron was also interviewed for the Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust oral history project.
**KE:** No, she comes from Hamburg, but I believe her grandparents came from Bayern. My first husband always used to say, “Du kenst kein Deutsch sprechen. Du sprechst Bayerisch.” My children still today, they always tease me. They say, “Du sprechst kein Deutsch. Du sprechst Bayerisch.” I just ignore it and laugh at them.

**JL:** Do you have any non-Jewish friends?

**KE:** In Green Bay, most of our friends were really non-Jewish. It was, of course, through the business. But here, I would say 90 percent of the people that we do associate with are Jewish. I do belong to a bridge group here in Tamarack. I think I’m the only Jewish person, or Betty Williams. There’s only two of us. We did join a bowling group from Tamarack because we really want to get involved with the people as well here that we live with. Not that I have any objections to non-Jews. In fact, I like to be diversified. I don’t think it’s good to be completely segregated from your Gentile friends. I really think it’s a good relationship to have with everyone.

**JL:** There’s been a traditional animosity between eastern and western European Jews. Have you ever felt it?

**KE:** No. I heard about it, but I personally have never felt it. I felt that we’re all Jews, we’re all one and I just could never visualize. Like I told you earlier, most of my friends in my earlier childhood or when I became a teenager, they were mostly all German Jews. But that was really for the simple reason — it was an economic reason. It was not any other. It wasn’t a social reason. Well, in a way it was a social reason, because we could not afford the same thing that our American friends could afford. We all had to work. We all were the same background. We all had to quit school, so to speak; couldn’t go on to college. But most of the American kids all had the opportunity to go on to school. They really could afford things a lot better than we could. So, therefore, I think our association was not because we felt any different towards the American or East European Jews, but because of our economic situation

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26 German for ‘Bavaria’.  
27 German for “You can’t speak German. You speak Bavarian.”
was really the biggest thing. But I never felt any different. Aaron's parents came from Russia, I believe, his dad. His mother, of course, was born in Green Bay. But I have no different feeling towards anyone that is not of German decent. I mean that's ridiculous.

JL: Do you belong to any organizations of survivors or to a landsmannschaft?  
KE: No.

JL: Do you have much contact with American-born Jews?  
KE: Oh, sure. Our friends now are practically all American-born. Even our friends in Green Bay were all American-born.

JL: Do you think they understand what you went through?  
KE: I really don't talk about it too much. Once in a while, if you get into a discussion, I will say something. In fact, yesterday someone called and asked me to serve on the board of Madison Jewish Council, and I don't think the party knew that I was a survivor of the Holocaust. I've always been a very strong supporter of UJA, and I said whatever I could do I would do. The reason I really feel as strongly as I do about it is because I went through it myself. I've always said, "You can never say that it isn't going to happen here, because it can happen here just as well as it did in Germany." And those are the things that are very important to me. So I really feel that you can't forget, and you have to continue to help, and work to help our fellow Jews no matter where they are.

JL: What kind of reaction did this person have when you said that you were a survivor?  
KE: She said, "I didn't know."

JL: That's it?  
KE: That was it. I didn't go into any detail. I don't talk about it unless, like I said, someone specifically comes and asks you, "Where did you come from?" I tell them I came from Germany and I was born there, but I don't go into any details.

28Association of immigrants from a particular town or area.

29The United Jewish Appeal, which raises funds for Jewish causes.
JL:  What do you think are the feelings of American-born Jews towards the Holocaust in general?

KE:  I don't think people realize what we all went through. They were comfortable here. They had their own lives to lead, and I suppose maybe if we were in the position, maybe we would have done the same thing. I don't know. But I really think that people didn't realize what was going on until it was too late. If they would have known, there would have been a lot more people that would have gotten out, that would have come to the United States or to other countries. But people were just sitting back and didn't do what they really could have done. Though it was a hard time as well in the United States. Like I told you earlier, when I was a little girl I always thought everyone in America is very rich. Well, that was not the case, because it was shortly after the Depression. There was a lot of unemployment. As the years passed on, I realize that it was a hard time for some people. But then there were others that could have really done a lot more but didn't, and that's the sad part of it. That's why six million Jews were killed.

JL:  Now that it's history, though, what feelings do you think American-born Jews have about it?

KE:  Well, they realize now that it was true and that it really did happen. I don't know if any of them have a guilt feeling or feel they should have done more. That I don't know. I can't speak for other people's feelings, really. Some feel that they did their share. I think, a lot of people today that are very active in UJA or other organizations to help the Jews, I think they realize, because when you really stop to think of the money that is raised for UJA today, or other organizations to help our fellow Jews, I think they realize today that they didn't do enough at the time when the Holocaust was going on, and that's why they are doing what they are doing today. So I think in one way it was bad for us, but it's good for the Jews and for Israel today that people are concerned and are giving, maybe not as much of themselves, but if they can do, they give their money and help in every way they possibly can.

END OF TAPE 4, SIDE 1
JL: What do you think most non-Jews feel about the television program *Holocaust*?

KE: I think it was an excellent idea. It really happened that when the picture *Holocaust* was shown a couple of years ago, when it first came out, I really think it awakened a lot of people that never thought that it really did happen. Even though you did try to tell your friends, but some were receptive and some understood, but I think the greatest percentage of non-Jews did not believe that all the atrocities had happened until they really saw the picture of the *Holocaust*.

JL: Did you yourself watch it?

KE: Yes, I did. It was very trying, very hard, but I did watch it, because I felt I wanted my children to watch it, which they did, and I felt that it was necessary for me to watch it. I thought maybe by chance I would see someone of my family, my cousins or somebody, but of course I didn't. I know it was a movie, but maybe on some of the pictures, but that was not the case. But I did watch. It was very trying, very hard and very emotional, but I did watch the whole thing. I think it was a good thing that it was finally told and shown to the public, that it was the truth. Even though some of them did say it was a put-up job, I think the greatest percentage of people did believe it.

JL: Did people become more interested in your personal experiences as a result?

KE: No. They did call my sister, the *Press-Gazette*, the local paper. And there were other German-Jewish survivors. Like I believe they interviewed Mr. [Friehoff 3:50] and I think Sam [Neiger? 2:55] at the time. And they too, of course, verified everything. My sister was not able to watch it as much as she should have. But she's a very high-strung and emotional person, so it did bother her. And my brother-in-law's parents were also killed by the Nazis, so it was hard for him as well to watch the complete thing. They did watch part of it, but they didn't watch all of it.

JL: Did you happen to watch *Playing for Time* last week?

KE: No. I heard about it. I did not watch it.

JL: What did you hear about it?
KE: I had read the articles before, the adverse remarks that the actress, Vanessa Redgrave, who is a supporter of the PLO, that she should partake in that type of movie. And the remarks that were afterwards, the people that I do know that did watch it, they said that, as far as her acting, was excellent. But they, too, felt that she should not have had the part. Of course, I did read in the paper the next evening that there was quite a bit of protest going on throughout the whole United States, though no one in Madison did do anything about it. But I really think it was a big farce, as far as I'm concerned. Not that the picture was shown, but I think that there are enough actresses available in this country that they don't have to pick someone that is a supporter of the PLO to show that type of a movie.

JL: Is the reason that you didn't see it that you were you boycotting it?

KE: No, we were busy that evening.

JL: You said that you don't talk too much about your experience. Have you had a chance to tell non-Jews anything about your experiences?

KE: Not in recent years. Oh, some of our friends in Green Bay did know. When we talked about hard times, how we got started, and if you would reminisce, it always came up that both Siggie and I had a tough life as children. I shouldn't say tough, but we've always worked and really didn't have a childhood like the other German children have. And so if people would make remarks, "Oh, you've done so well," and so forth, of course both of us would go into a discussion, and then reveal our past, and say, "It wasn't all gravy. It all came the hard way. Nothing for nothing."

JL: What did people say to that?

KE: Well, they admired us. I mean, they respected us and they said, "Well, it's good to know you don't start from — nobody gets anything for nothing. You have to start from the bottom," which is the truth.

JL: How would you feel if your children married non-Jews?

KE: I would not like it, but I would not disown my children. I would make the best of it. And if either party would convert to Judaism I can accept that very well, because if they're willing to sacrifice or to give
up their religion and actually practice Judaism and, if they have a family, raise the children Jewish, I think you have to really accept it. Of course, if they married, I would be very much against them converting to another religion, but I don’t think that really would happen with my children because they’re too Jewish-minded and they’ve been brought up — we’re not Orthodox, but we have never hidden our Jewishness, we’ve always been very proud of it, and are very involved in Jewish organizations and the synagogue and everything like that. But I would never want to lose a child. And actually, if you do antagonize them that much, you lose your child, and that I would never do.

JL: Besides the anti-Semitic remarks when you opened the meat packing plant, have you had any other unpleasant experiences with non-Jews?

KE: No, not that I can remember.

JL: What political and social clubs do you belong to?

KE: Political, none. Would you consider the organizations social? All right, I’m a life member of Hadassah; I’m a life member of B’nai B’rith Women; I’m a life member of [Technion?]. Of course, I’m affiliated with the synagogue, and I belong to the synagogue at Green Bay yet. I support that, also I support the synagogue here, which Aaron is a member of.

JL: Which one is that?

KE: Beth Israel. I have been appointed to the board of Hillel[^30] but I wasn’t able to go to the annual meeting. Then we have our small poker club of six couples, which has been in existence for, I guess, about fifteen years with Aaron and his first wife. Since we are married I have stepped in, and we’re very good friends. Then we belong to the Tamarack Bridge Club and bowling league, so we’re kept busy.

JL: You belong to Beth Israel?

KE: Right.

JL: What kind of attendance do you have?

[^30]: A center that serves Jewish students at a college or university campus.
KE: Not the best. I was much more of a synagogue-goer in Green Bay, I'll be very honest. We had a wonderful rabbi, Rabbi [Rannewald? 10:20], in Green Bay. He was in Green Bay for twenty years. I truly enjoyed his services on Shabbos morning. And there were very few Saturdays that I did miss. But I don't go here because I really don't care too much for the service. They have excellent chazans. The chazan is very good, but then they have the old men davn and it just goes against me. I don't know these people, but I feel they have other very capable people, especially to read out of the Torah because I enjoyed following the services. But instead of having younger people, either the rabbi or the chazan or even lay people that are very capable of reading out of the Torah, they have these old men read, and I just don't care for it, so I do not go. We belong, and if there's a social function we go, or any Jewish cultural things that come, if we are available I do like to go. But then, of course, I observe all the holidays. I don't keep a kosher home, but I don't have any [khazer] in the house. I don't eat it out either, and we don't eat any shellfish of any kind. I do get very upset — I have been here to a few parties that were given by Jewish people, and when they do serve a shellfish dish or pork, when it's a 100 percent Jewish crowd, I think it's very wrong. I think it's in very poor taste. When we had big parties in Green Bay, we would serve shrimp as part of the appetizer, but we had a variety that people that did not eat it, like myself or other people, that they had fish or cheese or whatever, that they could eat. But I think it's in very poor taste to do anything like that. But that's everyone's opinion. I mean, I'm not, like I say, a religious person, but there's certain things that are traditional and that I observe.

JL: Do you light Shabbos candles?

KE: Not too often. I did when my children were small. I do on the holidays. I light my Shabbos lamp on the yontef.31

JL: Do you keep it on all day?

KE: No, a few hours, until we're through with dinner.

31Yiddish for ‘holidays’. 
JL: Can you tell me something about the lamp?

KE: I really don't know too much about this one. This one my in-laws brought from Germany and, of course, after my mother-in-law gave up the house she gave it to us, and we've had it in the house ever since. We've always made a place for it. We had it in our den in Green Bay and then when I bought the condominium in Green Bay I had a special place made for it that it didn't have to have a plug in that it just could be mounted right onto the — had a special outlet made and I did the same thing here. So it's really a beautiful piece that I would not part with. Though one time a gentile friend came to the condominium in Green Bay, and she looked at it and she said — she didn't even say it to me — my cleaning lady was there and she says, "How can she have that old piece of thing there when she has all this other nice furniture?" [laughs] And my lady says, "This has special meaning. It's a Sabbath light," and so then she apologized. But to I think a stranger or to a non-Jew it doesn't really mean anything where it does to anyone that is Jewish that does see it. I think it's a pretty, a very nice piece, and I will cherish it as long as I live. My sister has the one that my parents brought and she has it on all the time — I mean, she uses it in the same way, in her living room.

JL: Could you tell me about your children's religious school education?

KE: They all went to Hebrew school. They all were Bas or Bar Mitzvahed. In fact, my nephew was Bar Mitzvahed a couple of years before Howard, and my father was still living at the time when he was studying for his Bar Mitzvah. Henry said the whole [sidrif] for that whole Shabbes, as well as the haftorah. And even though Howard was not that much of a student, but he said, "If Henry can do it, I will do it." So he, too, learned the whole portion for the Shabbes that he was Bar Mitzvahed. Unfortunately, my dad did not live to hear him say the whole. He would have been very, very proud of him. When Stuart became Bar Mitzvahed, he too learned the whole [Sidrif] for the day and the haftorah. In fact, Stuart just said the haftorah when we had the naming of the baby this past summer, and I was very proud that he was able to still say a haftorah. Even though it was not his haftorah that he said. But about a year ago, when they did not have a rabbi in Green Bay, he came home one
weekend, and all lay people were conducting the services, and my brother-in-law said to him, Art said, "Stuart, why don't you say the haftorah tomorrow?" Stuart said, "I haven't said a haftorah for so many years. How can I say it?" He says, "You can do it," and Betty encouraged him, and sure enough he did. Betty called me up. I was living in Madison already and she said, "Stuart did a super job." So they have not forgotten. On a yontef we will say the kiddush and bentsch and, of course, they still all know the melodies that their grandfather used. My dad was a chazan and he had a beautiful voice. But especially when we bentsch we sing [shir ha malos] in the German way. So when we have other guests they really think it's a little bit far out. But that's the way that we do it and it's a nice feeling. The children come. Either I've gone to Green Bay or they come here for yontef. I think the holidays are very important, especially Pesach, Rosh Hashanah. The traditional things are very important too, to the children and to myself.

JL: Could you tell me a little about how you celebrated Passover and Rosh Hashanah last time?

KE: They all were here, except Stuart. Stuart went to New York because he was in school. But Howard and Betty and Sheldon, they all came down here. And, of course, my father-in-law was here. Aaron's mother's in a nursing home, so she couldn't be here. And then we had four students, children from Green Bay, and Aaron's nephew from Green Bay, and Aaron's aunt and uncle and their son, her sister. So we had sixteen people for Pesach. And we all partook of the service, which was very nice. Some of it was in Hebrew and some of it was in English, but we went around the table, and read a portion. We did the whole seder, and of course had a good meal, which is important! [laughs] But it was very nice. Though we've always only had one seder. It's a nice atmosphere and it's a good feeling, and I do try to have if there are children here, or even guests. I always had guests in Green Bay, too. We could have someone that didn't have a place to go; our house was always open. Not only for holidays, but

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32 Hebrew for ‘Passover’.

33 Passover meal.
our house was like a restaurant all the time. We always had people over. My husband would call up and say, "This one is here. Put an extra plate on the table," and I did.

**JL:** How have your feelings about your religion changed since your German experience?

**KE:** None. I think I feel that I'm more Jewish. I just can't forget that I'm a Jew. I never denied it, never hid it, and I'm proud to be a Jew. So having been of German descent, I still am a Jew first, as far as that goes. I can't deny it. Even with my face, how can anybody deny that I'm a Jew? But I'm very proud to be a Jew.

**JL:** What are your hobbies or special interests?

**KE:** Oh, I enjoy bridge. I like to dance. Now my first husband never danced, and Aaron and I both like to dance, so that's our hobbies. Like I said, we have a poker club and we like to keep going. I'm not the type of person that sits still. I'm always active, doing something. I can't sit still. I enjoy cooking and baking. I'm a domestic person in a sense, but I still like to keep going. I don't get bored with myself. I find something to do all the time.

**JL:** What type of interaction do you have with your neighbors?

**KE:** Not too much. In the summertime, I spend quite a bit of time at the pool. And of course, there you saw all your neighbors, people from the area, and we played bridge around the pool and swam. Like I said, I do play bridge with a few of the neighbors around here. But other than that, I really don't see them too much. It's a very private life here really. If you want to be active you can. We run a recreation committee of the complex. But really everyone is for themselves. It's just like living in your own home. I see my neighbor once in a while. She drives out. We're very friendly. And my neighbor across the way, who's also a survivor even though she's not Jewish, I have become very friendly with her. She's a very fine person. She comes from Holland and she worked in the underground. She has told me her experiences working with the Jewish people. In fact, she was in the concentration camp and she did have a number on her arm she had taken off just a short while ago. So I feel very close to her. Since we have something in common. We do talk about past experiences and she has told me
some of what she has gone through. But she's lived in this country since the late 1940s. After the
war, she came to this country. She's married to an American man who's retired now, but she went
through hell. But for a non-Jew, what she did, she was fourteen years old when she started. She stood
in line and forged papers and got food for the Jewish people in Amsterdam. I think it was Amsterdam
that she comes from. But other than that, I really don't have that much contact with my neighbors,
except the Deutschkrons, the Leysers, people that we've known before.

JL: How did you celebrate last July 4th?

KE: We went to Webster, Wisconsin. That's where Aaron's daughter Nancy lives, up in the country in the
nowhere land, but they had from — I think it was the Rotary Club — they were playing bingo. The
night before they had a dance, which we went to, and it was hot as can be and for the next day,
outside right near the town hall or something, they were playing bingo and the money went to, I think
it was the Rotary Club. And then they had a barbecue chicken dinner. So we spent the Fourth of July
weekend with Aaron's daughter from Chicago and her husband drove up with us to Webster. So that's
where we spent last Fourth of July.

END OF TAPE 4, SIDE 2
JL: What do you enjoy doing the most?

KE: [Laughs] Play bridge!

JL: What kinds of things do you like to read?

KE: Oh, I don't read that much. I read the paper everyday. I read different magazines. I enjoy a good novel, once in a while. But I do have trouble with my eyes, so I can't really read for any great length of time, so it takes me too long really to read a complete book. I enjoy a good novel, that I do enjoy. I read quite a few Jewish history books. Well, they're not really history books, but to do with Jewish culture or from Europe. Like I read The Chosen

34 By Chaim Potok.

35 By Stephen Birmingham.

Our Crowd, that was a history of the German-Jews when they came here in the 1800s. I read a number of books of the Holocaust, that type of thing. I don't read as much as I maybe should, that I will say.

JL: When you do read, what languages do you read?

KE: English.

JL: What magazines and newspapers do you receive?

KE: We get the Capital Times every day, and of course the Sunday paper. We get the Reader's Digest, get that Us magazine, and the other Jewish monthlies that come. So I do read those articles.

JL: Do you mean the National Jewish Monthly?

KE: I read the articles in the National Jewish Monthly from B’nai B’rith. I read the Hadassah. Usually they have excellent articles in the Hadassah magazines. And then the magazines that come from the state, from Wisconsin, that comes with those articles, or from Madison, which is also a monthly magazine that we get. And the Reader's Digest.

JL: Which books on the Holocaust have you read?

KE: I read Exodus. It's so long ago.

34 By Chaim Potok.

35 By Stephen Birmingham.
JL: Do you recall your reaction to what you read?

KE: I would read and I would cry in between. On the situation, just — it was an emotional thing. You knew that it happened and it was a tragic situation. So I do get emotional when I read things of that nature.

JL: Where have you traveled in Wisconsin?

KE: All over the state, really. Northern Wisconsin, southern Wisconsin, Milwaukee — really I've seen practically the whole state. Our business, a lot of times I would go with my husband. If he would go to a sale, I would go, too, to the different sales with him then. As I told you, we had the plant in Chippewa Falls, which was Wisconsin. So we'd go to the western part of the state. Now that I'm in Madison, even before I was married, we would come and buy cattle from farmers around Madison, from big feeders. I would come with him on a weekend, I would come down here to Madison. Of course going to Milwaukee. So I've really traveled quite a bit of the state.

JL: Mostly business related?

KE: Most of the time.

JL: What parts have you liked most?

KE: I think Madison, the area around here, is really one of the nicest parts. You got all the lakes. Door County is beautiful, there especially when the cherry blossoms are, and the apple blossoms, that is very pretty around the Door County area. I really enjoyed that. We would go up there, too. A lot of times they had plays. We'd go up over the weekend to Peninsula Players. We would go up there for a play on a Friday night or Saturday night and then maybe spend the night up there or drive back to Green Bay. I think Wisconsin is a very pretty state and there really are some beautiful spots. We went to Wisconsin Dells on our honeymoon the first time, in 1946. We were supposed to stay a week, but my husband got sick and we went back to Green Bay after two days. When Aaron and I got married last year, we went to Fontana to the Abbey for a couple of days, and that was our honeymoon. So I
still like Wisconsin. No matter it was thirty-five years ago or thirty-four years ago, I like it just as well today as I did then. It's a great state.

JL: How much does it remind you of the area in which you lived around Schopfloch?

KE: The countryside is very similar, of course. Houses are entirely different, and the farms in Europe are on a much smaller scale. I mean you can't compare the American farm to a European farm, especially in Germany, or I don't think anywhere in Europe. But the country life I think is about the same. I mean, people are people, and you make it what is best for you.

JL: You said earlier that you were pleased with the cultural offerings in Madison?

KE: Yes, I really enjoy being able to go to a concert or to a play. We saw dancing last week, and we have tickets for some of the series. I do enjoy plays more than — I like popular music, but I don't care that much for the symphonies, that type of music, classical. But I do like the more modern things, and I do love the theater. That I enjoy immensely. So we did get tickets for that, at the Union, to see Elephant Man, Tavern and a couple other plays that are there. If there is something coming to town, we try to get tickets.

JL: Do you think that there are more or less cultural offerings here than you would have had in Germany?

KE: Oh, there's more here. I can't compare Germany, so to speak, because I lived in a small town. There's a big difference living in a village of 5,000 people than living in a city of 200,000. You can't compare one to the other. It's just like comparing apples to oranges. So you really can't compare. I'm sure in those big cities in Germany they have the culture today, too. They have plays, they have the opera, they have everything that they have in the states.

JL: How much happier do you think you would have been living in an area of greater Jewish population?

KE: I don't think it made that much difference to me because I do love the Jewish environment and the activities, but I think the small towns today are just as involved as the big cities and you do what you feel that you want to do. Sure, if we go to Miami — you don't have the kosher restaurants here that you do in the big cities. But I think you can have just as much Jewish life in a smaller community and
I think you've got a closer relationship with your fellow Jews than you do in the big cities. Because in
the big cities, unless you seek it out, you're lost in the shuffle. I know my relatives in Chicago, they
never belonged to a synagogue. Well, if you live in a community like Green Bay or Madison — okay,
Madison you can get lost easier. And I suppose you can get lost in Green Bay, too, if no one knows
you, if no one knows you, if you come cold into a city. But if you come into a smaller community you
don't belong to, and you are Jewish and you don't belong to the synagogue or don't seek out any other
Jewish affiliations, you stand out as a sore thumb. And even though people, they don't want to be
identified as Jews, they still are Jews when it really comes right down to it. So I really think that you
can be just as Jewish in a smaller community, or in fact, I think moreso than in the large city.
Because if you don't want to belong to anything, you just don't, which I think is terrible. I mean, not
only as far as the synagogue goes, but as far as charity goes. A large portion of your people, they
aren't contacted — because they're not affiliated with anything — for UJA or for other organizations,
because they don't want to be identified with Jewish causes. Where I think in the smaller community,
you partake, and I think everyone is very important.

JL: You told me in the preinterview that we had that you're very involved in UJA. Why is that?

KE: I told you, because I feel if we don't help our fellow people, no one else will, and we can't say it is not
going to happen here. It could happen here just as well as it did in Germany or Poland or wherever,
Europe. The only way that we can survive is if we are helpful to each other. And if you have the
means, whether it's in time or money, I think it's very very important to give of yourself and to support
those organizations. To help your fellow people.

JL: Would you consider yourself to be a Midwesterner?

KE: Yes.

JL: You say that so emphatically. How?

KE: Because that's where I've lived practically all of my life, in the Midwest. And I have met people from
New York, from the West Coast, from all over the United States, and I think the Midwestern people
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www.wisconsinhistory.org/HolocaustSurvivors/Epstein.asp

are more conservative. They aren't as pushy. I think our way of life is not as aggressive or as dramatic as it is in the larger cities or, as far as I'm concerned, on either coast. I think people in the Midwest are easier-going, they're more hospitable. I just feel that it's great to live in the Midwest.

JL: How do you feel about living in Wisconsin with its high percentage of ethnic German?

KE: It doesn't bother me.

JL: If you had an opportunity to leave Wisconsin, where would you go?

KE: I'd like to spend the winters in Florida and the summers in Madison. That's the way I feel. I do like to travel, but I don't think Madison or Wisconsin can be beat in the summertime, as far as climate, as far as everything goes. I think it's just a nice place to live. I don't like the winters, but that's another story.

JL: What effort have you made to acquaint yourself with Wisconsin history?

KE: Not that much.

JL: How do you feel you've contributed to the Wisconsin community?

KE: I think starting out as a young bride with nothing, building a business to the size that we did — I'm speaking of my first husband and myself — helping people and helping the economy as a whole, and also helping not only the people of Wisconsin but helping the education facilities. We are great supporters of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We have a fund there which we gave a number of years ago for the animal science department, and they are benefiting from that every year. That was given in memory of my father-in-law and mother-in-law. We also support the University of Wisconsin in Green Bay. We just established a scholarship chair, and I believe we support all the hospitals in Green Bay, other charitable organizations, Jewish as well as non-Jewish. I think we've made a great contribution to the state of Wisconsin by growing from nothing to a big business, which we no longer own, but we have formed a family foundation, which we support which is for charitable purposes. We do support many things in the state of Wisconsin.
A school, St. Norbert College, which is a small Catholic school in DePere, just south of Green Bay — we gave a large donation there. We have a reading room and a library which is also named after my in-laws, Ella and Adolf Frankenthal. The hospitals, St. Vincent's Hospital [at Bellum/Belen? 18:35], [Security? 18:40] Workshop, which is for handicapped. We have supported all these facilities and felt to do that, not only to give to Jewish causes, but to give to the causes in Green Bay and the state, because the state and the community of Green Bay has been good to us. That's where we made our livelihood. So even though we've benefited from being a resident of Wisconsin, I think Wisconsin has benefited as well, that we did come to Green Bay and did make a successful business in those twenty years. Packerland was started twenty years ago. So I really think everyone has benefited all the way around. One thing that my husband was very modest about was that he never wanted any publicity on anything that we gave. Everything was done in a quiet, simple way that there was no adverse publicity and it was always done. If I can't give it without all the publicity than it's not given from the heart. The meaning of the gift is to give it because you want to do it and that's the most important thing. If you do it for publicity reasons, it's not a way of charity, it's not a way of giving. We've given a tremendous amount of money to the YMCA, and really all the organizations. My daughter Betty handles all the business transactions out of Green Bay. So we do try to be helpful to other people and the people that are in need. I think it's a great feeling to be able to do it. But we don't want any special thanks for any of it. It's done because we want to do it and that was the way Siggie was and that's the way I am. I don't give out of publicity reasons. I give because that's the feeling that I have and I want it to continue that way. And that's it.

JL: What are the names of the funds that you have at the Green Bay and Madison University of Wisconsin campuses?

KE: We just established an endowed professorship, the first for the UW-GB in Green Bay, and it's known as the Frankenthal Professorship. That will be benefited by a professor at the discretion of the family as well as of the university chancellor, whoever chancellor is. It's an annual grant of $10,000, which
is drawn from the fund, to be used for the professorship. The other one, which is here in Madison, it's not a professorship, but it's done for research in the animal science department at the University of Wisconsin in Madison here.

**JL:** And the name of the family foundation?

**KE:** The Frankenthal Family Foundation.

**JL:** Do you feel an obligation to Green Bay for giving you an opportunity to start a new life?

**KE:** No, because we've been paying our obligations for the last twenty years, so I don't feel any obligation. I do support the synagogue in Green Bay. I still am a full member of the synagogue, because I feel that's where I started, and every synagogue needs money and the community is getting smaller and quite a few people have passed away. Some have moved away, and I think the younger people that are coming into Green Bay are more transient type of people, so I think they do need the support of old-timers. And thank goodness I'm in a position to support it to my fullest, and I do. Even though my children are all members of [Kenesses? 24:00] Israel, and they are very generous too. But I still personally give. This is not from the foundation; this is my own personal money that I do give.

**JL:** What was your reaction when the American Nazi Party planned to march in Milwaukee?

**KE:** It was scary. I think they got more advertising and more publicity on it by all the rabble-rousers and the organizations, the Anti-Defamation League and all the others, I think if they would not have played it up as much as they do, I think it would have — I think the Nazis got more advantage out of it than we did. I really don't think that's the way to approach it. I don't think that the way Rabbi Kahane,\(^{36}\) I don't like the way he operates. One wrong does not make a right or whatever the saying is. I just don't believe in that type of operations.

**JL:** How satisfactory do you find the American system of government to be?

**KE:** Fine. Except right now I wish we had a better candidate for president. I don't think Carter has done anything, I don't like Reagan, I think he's too old a man! And Anderson, if you're going to vote for

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\(^{36}\)Rabbi Meir Kahane, leader of the Jewish Defense League.
Anderson, you're giving Reagan a vote, or vice versa. It's very hard, but it's wonderful to live in a democracy. We do have a choice, even though sometimes it's not the best, but we still have a democracy which is very important. Not a dictatorship.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 1
TAPE 5, SIDE 2

JL: How do you feel about the prominence of Jews in American society in the arts, politics, and other areas?

KE: I think it's great. I mean, our people are known to be very artistic. In the Bible, they say we're the chosen people. I think it's wonderful that we do have so many people that are either in theater, in art. I think we can be very proud.

JL: What do you see as the most important issues facing America today?

KE: That we can survive and that the Russians don't get control over the world. That's the thing that's a little scary. With the oil situation and the Arab situation in the Middle East, it's frightening, and you really don't know what's going to happen. It's a little bit scary. A dollar isn't worth anything anymore. Though when you go to Europe or any other country, the inflation is just as bad or even worse. But years ago, you could go to Europe and you could buy anything you wanted, and the dollar bought something. Today it doesn't. I mean we were in Sweden last summer, a year ago. The hotel room: $140 a night, which is ridiculous. And it was a Sheraton. It was just an ordinary hotel, and that was only the room. So our dollar is really not worth anything today, and with business the way it is, it is really frightening. You just don't know what's going to happen.

JL: How do you feel about the influx of refugees into the United States?

KE: Which refugees?

JL: The Cubans, the Southeast Asians.

KE: The Cuban situation, I think we got a lot of riff-raff, a lot of people that really were not desirables to begin with. I think they should have been screened a little bit more than what they were. I don't think they were screened at all. I know at the time that I came to this country, it was entirely different. You had to be healthy, you had to have no criminal record, you had to go before an American council. And I think we really don't need anymore problems. We have enough problems in our own country. I don't think we should not help people. That I am definitely not saying. I'm saying I think the people from
Southeast Asia, the Laotians, people like that, I think there has been less problem with those than with the last influx of Cuban refugees that we've had. I think the crime, the whole atmosphere and the whole the way they were, all the problems they had in Camp McCoy and all over, I think were very, very bad. I think to help people is one thing, but to bring them in in thousands and thousands, and not knowing what they are or who they are, I think is kind of ridiculous.

JL: To what extent do you believe there is anti-Semitism in the United States?

KE: There is anti-Semitism no matter where you go, whether it's in the United States or whether it's Europe. The only place you don't have any anti-Semitism is in Israel, and there you have it, too! Not in the same form. But you have the anti-Semitism there, the Israelis resent the Russian Jews coming in because they say that “They get free housing; we can't get it.” So you have anti-Semitism no matter where you go. In the United States, I personally, in the last few years, have not felt any anti-Semitism at all. But being in the business there's always some remark — the Jews this, the Jews that. It always cropped up somewhere. There's no way you can get away from it. There are still people that hate the Jews no matter which way you look at it. And why? We're no different. We don't have any horns or anything like it, but it still is there.

JL: In France recently there has been a very real outburst of anti-Semitism. How do you react to that?

KE: I think it's tragic. It's frightening. And what we can do about it, I don't know. But the burning of the — the bombings and the explosions, it is very, very frightening, and it can happen here. This is why I feel so strongly that if we don't help ourselves, nobody is going to help us. We have to fight those things. We have to be aware of what's going on in the world, here and as well as abroad. To have that type of situation coming is really scary, and what they can do, I don't know.

JL: You have said now several times that it could happen here. How secure do you feel as a Jew in America?

KE: I feel secure, but it's always in the back of my mind that it can happen again. I don't think I will ever forget that, because it was so dramatic and it came on so fast in Europe. An people always said — my
parents, everyone around us — always said, 'It cannot happen in this country. How can anything like
that happen in the twentieth century?' And it did, and this is what I'm afraid of. I hope it never will
come, but the persecution comes sometimes out of nowhere. I think as long as I will live, I will never
forget that it can happen in other parts of the world as well as it did in Europe, in Germany. And I try
to instill that into my kids.

**JL:** What are your feelings about Germany and present day Germans?

**KE:** Like I told you earlier, we have some very good friends. My son does business over there. I have gone
back to Germany many times. There were plenty of Nazis. I'm sure there are still some today. You
can't forget, but you have to forgive. You can't go on hating people for the rest of your life. We had a
wonderful relationship with some of the people that we have reacquainted ourselves with and that
we've done business with. They couldn't be nicer in every way. There's a large company that we did a
lot of business with, and my son does business with them today. Just a month before Siggie passed
way, we were together with them in Florida, and they knew that Siggie was very sick. The buyer said
to me, "Karola, even if something happens to Siggie, I will always be your friend. I will always do
whatever I can for you." That's friendship, and that means something. So just because he's a German,
I can't hate that person. In fact, I feel very close to him.

I have gone there to visit. They've been more than [békovet]. Their hospitality was just unreal and
everyone in, the people in the whole firm, that we have done business. It's not a small company. It's
like Proctor and Gamble of Europe. The relationship that we have built up with these people is just
unreal. When he said to me, "I will do whatever I can for you as long as you have the business. And
even after the business, I will be your friend and I will do whatever I can." How can you hate
somebody like that? You can't. And my neighbor that I correspond with from Schopfloch. She brought
food to us at night. How can I hate somebody like that? She saved a girl that was — she didn't know
it until after the war — she saved a Jewish girl who was living with her in her home. So there were
good people and there are still good people and you can't forget those things.
JL: Have you ever returned to Schopfloch?

KE: Sure, many times. The main reason that I do go is that I do go to the cemetery. My grandparents were buried there, and I go back there and I do visit this one particular neighbor who I just spoke of. She has been here to visit us. I stay there only for a few hours. At the most, I spend there a day, because it's just a small little village. I go to the cemetery and visit with this neighbor and her family and then I have seen some other people on the street. Our house that I was born in was sold and resold. I did go back once into the house, but it was a very funny feeling. They had changed the whole inside. But I've gone back. At least ten times, I've been back to Schopfloch.

JL: How do you feel about being in the city in which you were born and had to leave?

KE: I'm not sorry that I left. It's just a memory of my childhood really. That's all it is. Like I say, the first time that we went there was in 1965. That was really first to go to the cemetery, because my dad was still living at the time, and he wanted me to go visit his parents' grave. The cemetery in Schopfloch is in terrible, terrible, terrible shape, and I complained. We did have the stones from my grandparents redone. And I did write to the government or the Jewish agency in Munchen after I got home, and they said, well, they have tried to keep it clean, but it really is not taken care of the way it should be. It's full of weeds and some of the stones were turned over. Now, the cemetery where my mother-in-law's parents were buried in [Alndorf? Adendorf? Arndorf? 14:25] was in excellent shape. [telephone interrupts]

JL: Have you visited Israel?

KE: Sure, five times.

JL: What were your reactions to Israel?

KE: Fantastic. First time that I went there in 1964 it was like coming home. At that time I was only there for four days. I saw my relatives which I hadn't seen since I was a child, and I hired a car who drove me around from one place to the other, and it was a wonderful experience. Was there again in 1968 with my husband, and again in 1971 with Stuart, and in 1972 we were on a UJA mission. The last
I was alone, in October of 1978. And, God willing, we will go and visit next year with Aaron. I plan to go next October. I don't think I would like to live there, but I think you've got to really give the people of Israel a tremendous amount of credit for what they have done to the land. I mean, from 1964 to 1976, the changes that have transpired — every time that I went there have just been fantastic.

JL: Did you receive restitution?

KE: Yes. The only thing, for schooling. I received twice, 5,000 marks, and so did my husband.

JL: How did you feel about accepting it?

KE: Anything I could get from the Germans was [reakh? 16:30].

JL: Do you think it's easier now for you to talk about your experiences than it would have been closer to the time that they happened?

KE: Oh, sure.

JL: Why do you think that is?

KE: Well, lots of things have transpired. I think I've become a much more mature person. Years ago, when I was a child, you tried to not think about the hardships. Now, thank God, I can talk about it and say, "I made it. I'm free. I've done everything I wanted to do." I became a success, both health-wise, financial-wise, everything. And I'm happy. That's the most important thing.

JL: How do you feel about the increasing awareness in America concerning the Holocaust?

KE: I think people should be aware and they should be kept abreast of it all the time, even the younger generation as they grow up. The movie was shown three, four years ago, or longer, the first time. They're going to have it again now. All right, a child that was ten didn't understand it. They're going to show it now on Channel 21. The child is fourteen or fifteen, whatever. I think a child of ten does not have the same capacity as a child of fifteen, and I think it should be kept in the light as time goes on, that it should never be forgotten.

JL: Part of our funding comes from the federal government. How do you feel about this fact?
KE: I think it's good. At least they're trying to keep this thing alive and let from one generation to the other know what has transpired. I think it's good. And after I received that letter from Barbara Kaiser, I showed the letter to Betty. She was here that weekend. I said, "She asked us for some funds," and I told, and Betty said, "Yes, definitely, we will contribute," and I felt the same way. So we did make a commitment to her. But now the funding did not go through. But when you do need some money, we will be still able to. We will be able to give you some, and because we both feel that it's something that should be kept up and it shouldn't be forgotten. So we are willing to help you.

JL: We appreciate that. But now the fact that the money comes from the American government, how do you feel about that?

KE: Well, where else is it going to come from? There's so much money wasted in other things that I think this is very important. I mean, our tax dollars are used for so many foolish things and I think this is a worthwhile cause. So I really don't feel that it's taking away from anybody else.

JL: Why do you as an individual feel that it's important to participate in this oral history project on the Holocaust?

KE: To keep the thing alive and to let from one generation to the next know what really transpired. Because if it isn't kept alive, how are our children or grandchildren going to know? We're not going to live forever. We can't tell them. Some record should be kept of it somewhere. Like I told you, I have kept my children abreast, and maybe by the time that Sara gets old enough, Betty will tell her. I'm sure she will tell her the stories of her grandparents and her great-grandparents, but how many people do? Now we have a cousin here, second cousin of my first husband. Well, his father passed away; his grandmother passed away; his mother was an American. He remembers a few stories, but that's it. He can't tell his children anything, because he doesn't know. No one really to keep the thing going. So I think it's very important that you keep people aware of what had transpired.

JL: Do you have any additional comments you'd like to make?

KE: No, not really. It was nice having you here, and I hope that I was of some service to you.
JL: You certainly were, and I thank you very much.

KE: You're very welcome.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE 2

END OF TRANSCRIPT