

EI-1026

WERNER W. SCHUMANN

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INTERVIEWER: STACEY WATERS

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GERMANY, 1927

AGE 3

PASSAGE ON THE "STUTTGART"

WATERS: Okay. Good afternoon. This is Stacey Waters and I am an intern at Rutgers University and I am currently working for the National Park Service and this is my second interview. Today is November 9, 1998 and I am here at the Ellis Island Recording Studio with Werner Schumann, who came from in Germany in 1923, when he was aÆ

SCHUMANN: No, I was born in 1923.

WATERS: You were born in, you came in 1927.

SCHUMANN: Yes.

WATERS: When you were three going on four years of age.

SCHUMANN: I was close to four, yes.

WATERS: Okay. Can you start by giving me your full name?

SCHUMANN: Well, my full name, I was born under the name Werner Willie Schumann, now that's Werner Willie Schumann however, the Willie got changed to William.

WATERS: Okay. Could you just spell your name out slowly for the tape, for us?

SCHUMANN: All right, Werner, W-E-R-N-E-R, "W", and then Schumann, S-C-H-U-M-A-N-N.

WATERS: Can you please state your date of birth for us?

SCHUMANN: June 8th, 1923

WATERS: And can you tell us where you were born?

SCHUMANN: I was born in Glauchau, Saxony, Germany. Want the address? 11A Wehrstasse.

WATERS: Okay. Could you spell the name of the town for

us?

SCHUMANN: Glauchau, G-L-A-U-C-H-A-U.

WATERS: And can you spell us the name of the street also?

SCHUMANN: Wehrstasse, W-E-H-R-S-T-A-S-S-E.

WATERS: Okay. And you lived there for those first three years of your life before coming to America?

SCHUMANN: Yes.

WATERS: Do you have any recollection of what the town looked like?

SCHUMANN: Yes, I do and used to take a particular walk and it was from our house to the grandparents house, my father's parents. And the town really comes in two parts, it's called upper, and lower, and middle, Glachau and we lived in lower Glachau and we used to walk up to middle Glachau. I didn't know there was an upper Glachau until I visited there years later and my cousin told me

about it.

WATERS: Do you remember what the town looked like at all? Could you, maybe describe some of it to me?

SCHUMANN: Yes, I would compare it to an industrial city in New Jersey like Patterson or New, what is it Newark. It's a very tough industrial kind of little town and as a child, I was very, I was always very impressed by the tall chimneys and because they burnt this brown coal and what they would do is, these chimneys that would take the coal, I mean the smoke and drive it, down, downwind to the next town, which is kind of awful thing to do. This is not unusual, this is what these chimneys were made to do. (he laughs)

WATERS: And where was this located in compared to the rest of Germany?

SCHUMANN: Saxony.

WATERS: It was in Saxony.

SCHUMANN: In Saxony. Saxony is across the northern boundary of Czechoslovakia and Glauchau is

located on a little river called the Mulde and it is more like an open trench in a way this river but it's very prominent. You will find it on most maps and it flows into the Elbe River finally up north.

WATERS: Describe your home to me?

SCHUMANN: Well, the, the home was in an apartment like an apartment house. My grandfather, my father's, my mother's father or parents owned it. I don't think they really owned it, they had a mortgage, that they, through which they owned it. And we lived on the third floor and on the first floor my grandfather had weaving looms, it was either two or three of them and this is what this area is know for, the, the textile industry. And well, they had the looms on the first floor, we lived on the third floor and my grandparents lived on the second floor and the building is still there and I visited there, there this past spring and there is nobody living on the first floor where the machines were but, on the second and third floor they are well occupied. I wanted to go in but I never had the nerve to ask and go in. You know how as a child things seem

big and as you grow up, I mean, the buildings don't look as big anymore.

WATERS: Right. Who lived in the home with you?

SCHUMANN: WellÆ

WATERS: Was it just yourÆ

SCHUMANN: My father and mother and before my father came to America there were three, three of us kids. and my grandmother and grandfather lived on the other floor, until my uncle left he lived there with them and that's about it, they didn't rent to anybody else.

WATERS: What was your father's name?

SCHUMANN: Well, it was Willie to start with but, I will tell you an interesting thing. When he came, came here on the ship's manifest it said Willie but when we came the following year he had become William. See, his name shows up on our manifest as a sponsor so, it had already changed. Curiously I would like to add that he also ended up with a new middle name, not really name, it was just an initial, it was a "G", it

became, his middle name was Georg, which is George in English and somebody asked him what's your middle name, middle initial, he said "G" [gay], which is the way you pronounce "G" in German and somehow it became a "J", "G" became a "J". And this kind of things happened quite often. People I understand, when they came through immigration here, they were rebaptise, rebaptised is the way the joke runs and here is an example of it. Oh, by the way I noticed on the, on my ship manifest, ship's manifest that I came over on that we ended up coming to Huntington, New Jersey, it had NJ instead of NY, it's just how things change. (he laughs)

WATERS: Things change.

SCHUMANN: And you, if you go into family research, I mean you run into this kind of stuff all the time.

WATERS: Could you just spell Georg for me, so?

SCHUMANN: Well it's the same as George, only there is no "E" on the end, G-E-O-R-G.

WATERS: Describe your personality, your father's personality for me?

SCHUMANN: My father's personality, well if you ask my wife she would say was a workaholic. My father like most kids at the time went as far as the eighth grade and then they had to have a trade. I don't know how my father got the trade but there are stories that often the fathers, the father would negotiate with some craftsmen in town to take their son, the son on as an apprentice. Now, I don't know how my father got the, his apprenticeship but he became an upholster and I would add interior decorator because he was more than just a guy that would drive, drive nails into furniture or something. (he laughs) Misconception, he was quite talented. He served along a four year apprenticeship to become an upholsterer, it was really the Old World yet. He came here and he could make a good living in New York for instance he got hired in Manhattan redoing peoples furniture on 5th Avenue and Park Avenue and so on. His, his talents were in demand. What can I say he was just hard working. I wish he had spent more time with, with his kids but this is where, where his time went.

WATERS: And he came to America before you did?

SCHUMANN: Yes, he came. We arrived her on April 20, 1927.
He arrived here August 26th, 1920, 1926.

WATERS: And why did he come early than everyone else?

SCHUMANN: Well, it was a typical thing that the
breadwinner would have to earn passage and set
up, set up the situation in the New World. He,
he kind of broke the path. Is that the right
term? Break, path, made a path for us to come
to the New World.

WATERS: What was your mother's name?

SCHUMANN: My mother's name was Helena Frieda Karch. Spell
the last name?

WATERS: Yes, please.

SCHUMANN: K-A-R-C-H. It's not an unknown name. I have
seen it quite often. There was a famous
Canadian photographer with that name. I can't
tie it down any further than that.

WATERS: Describe her personality for me?

SCHUMANN: My mother's personality, I think my, my mother really was a very intelligent person whose talents were never adequately. What's the right word? Not developed, they were there but she could have gone much further, it was just that women or I guess women still feel that way, that they don't have the opportunities they should have. She would have like to go to medical school, it just wasn't there. Her brother was much more favored and he was much younger too. She just became a housewife.

WATERS: So she never worked at all?

SCHUMANN: She, she never in work world, no, no. She was allowed to stay home and wash dishes and so on, do the cooking.

WATERS: Okay. You said you had brothers and sisters. Could you tell me how many you had and their names?

SCHUMANN: Well, I am the oldest and there was my brother Hans, who became, his name became, he changed

his name to John, who was a year younger. And a
and a year younger than that was my sister
Lieselotte whose name changed curiously. In
German they often reduce the name Lieselotte to
Lelo. I think anybody who hears what I am
saying, know German, knows what I am talking
about. Curiously, her friends changed her name
to Lee and she married a World War II veteran
named Jones and it's kind of curious, Lee Jones
where her name ended up. (he laughs)

WATERS: Could you spell Lieselotte for me?

SCHUMANN: Yes, L-I-E-S-E-L-O-T-T-E. It's really a
Combination name Lisa and Lotte. Okay?

WATERS: Okay. And they were both born in Germany?

SCHUMANN: Yes, they, we were all one year apart
approximately. There were three other children
that were born in here in the states.

WATERS: Is there anything else about Germany that you
remember as a child?

SCHUMANN: Well, I remember the river there, the apartment

house. Behind the apartment house there was a big field it's called, well know it's called the Hammerwiese, means the hammer meadow. We were there curiously, it was always an open field in my life, but visiting this past year it's full of campers. I mean they got all these camping Vehicles in there, call them RV and what not and trailers and so on and curiously all the license plates seem to be all from France. Which I couldn't understand at all but, I can see the town which had been part of East Germany they, are trying going into financial recovery, and they are just invite everybody in for a fee to cover their expenses, that's what it look like. It's, it's really not a pleasant site when the place gets filled up with campers because behind the meadow there, there is a town park, not a park, yes a park, it's there is a little pond, like a lake, which is very nice, and being redone and on foot you see peoples trash being left all around the place, which is disconcerting to me, because I have such an idealistic image of the place.

WATERS: Could you spell Hammerwiese for me?

SCHUMANN: Well hammer, H-A-M-M-E-R, wiese, W-I-E-S-E.

WATERS: And you played in this field as a child?

SCHUMANN: No, I didn't really play in it, it was just a big open area. It was very pleasant to look that way towards the park and beyond the park I could see the town's castle up on the hill.

WATERS: Do you remember any games that you played when you were in Germany?

SCHUMANN: No, no I mean I know it would be something like hide-and-go-seek and I know kids hide on each other and then you find them and you try to spook each other, things like that. And I remember there was something called a playhouse in the yard, it wasn't really a playhouse, it was a lemonade booth, limonade bute. My grandfather apparently got it because after World War I these things went out of business and you could purchase one if these and he apparently bought one and it was in the yard like a playhouse. And behind the playhouse there was an old umbrella it was just kind of stuck in the ground and it was kind of open in the way and the breeze would catch it and it would flutter and somebody said that's a turkey. And from my child's mind it became

very real and frightening (he laughs) I'd run away from it.

WATERS: Okay. Could you tell me why you and your mother and your other siblings decided to come to America?

SCHUMANN: We came because my father went and he was the breadwinner and I thought about that and it's very crucial. If something happened to my father this family would have been in deep trouble. There was no where, no where to turn. I have thought about that it's like walking out on a rope and to me. When I think, it just boggles my mind what kind of disaster could have happened.

WATERS: Okay. Did you have any other family in America besides you father?

SCHUMANN: Well, my, my uncle had preceded my father by one year. He came, he landed here on the 23rd of December 1924, I think 1924, December 1924. He was gonna, he was kind of the doted on son and he was gonna go around the world and I don't know on what. He flunked out of college and out

of university, he could speak French and he could speak English, basic. Anyway he got as far as New York and it all just all peter out out and he just never went any further. And I think this is what, where my father go the cue to come here. The reason he basically left who know 1923 inflation hit there and everything went bust. I would like to add when the new money came out there was a lot of squabbling as who owed what with the new money and you could loose a lot of friends that way.

WATERS: Okay. Do you know if your family had any special forms or any special process that they had to go through before coming to America?

SCHUMANN: Not particularly, I just noticed that you had to apply and apparently you had to go to American Consulate, Consulate and we, all the papers that I see went to Berlin from our area. I see on manifests and other places, they went to places like Cologne or Munich and I think Hamburg was another one that's all I know. I was too young to really get into that.

WATERS: Too young for this.

SCHUMANN: That's only something I picked looking at manifest and other papers, passports and so on.

WATERS: Do you remember your mother packing to come to America?

SCHUMANN: Not, not really but, but I know, she like apparently, like a lot of European immigrant they found things like, their bedding very important, feather beds and so on. I can see downstairs here that they have these wicker baskets, we had wicker baskets like that and I know you see the Europeans prized having goose down, and goose down is nice and warm on cold days and this is what, what (he laughs) the focus was on I think that's the biggest thing I remember. I had a little wooden rocking horse that came to America and I had a teddy bear and my brother had a teddy bear; I had a big teddy bear and he had a smaller teddy bear and they came along to America.

WATERS: Do you remember how your family felt about leaving Germany?

SCHUMANN: My father was rather adventurous, he was able to move. He was kind of worldly in a way he had gone through World War I as an infantry man, he had seen four years of it in Russia and he had seen it on the Western Front. He ended up as a prisoner with the Scottish and he learned some basic English. I've always wondered what kind of English he had learned from a Scotsman but anyway he was very adventurous in that way. And my mother didn't didn't want to go, she didn't go in fact, she was very nervous and very on edge about the the whole thing she was, my father had left a year earlier and earned passage and what not in America. She was very insecure about the whole thing and it took her a lot longer to learn English too, in fact she was very dependent upon me because I went to school and I learned English and, she used me. (he laughs)

WATERS: In your recollection do you remember leaving Germany. Did you understand where you were going?

SCHUMANN: Not really, no I met just, just, just another pack animal moving along with, with the family.

and I remember the rushing at the trains and so on and I remember on the boat a bit and there was a storm and I remember vomit (he laughs) pretty, pretty bad, we went steerage. It was kind of mix up thing.

WATERS: Okay.

SCHUMANN: We got here. It was a curious thing the boat made a stop I believe this is what I remember very striking at Southampton, England, and a boat came out I remember it at that but I can't find it on the manifest but this is a memory that I have. This is at Southampton and a lorry came out with some passengers and they came on board and we continued. And than we there was a storm and than we finally ended up, one sunny day and people pointing out saying that's Southampton, that was Southampton Long Island and my said my God we are back where we started from. (they laugh)

WATERS: Who actually went on the ship with you? Was it just your mother and yourÆ

SCHUMANN: My mother, my brother and sister, my grandparents that's my mother's mother,

mother and father.

WATERS: Could you tell me your grandparents name?

SCHUMANN: Karch, We talked about it earlier.

WATERS: What were their first names though?

SCHUMANN: Oh, my grandfather's first name and middle name is Max Court and my grandmother's name was Marie, Mary, Maria, Ida, Ida.

WATERS: Where did you get on the ship?

SCHUMANN: We boarded at a Bremerhaven or Bremen.

WATERS: Do you remember how you got to the ship from your home?

SCHUMANN: By railroad, from Glauchau got off the train there and I, I don't know what kind of changes and so on but we went all the way by railroad to Bremen.

WATERS: Is there any special memories that you remember about that train ride?

SCHUMANN: No, just, just a lot of rushing train tracks.

WATERS: Okay. What was the name of the ship?

SCHUMANN: Oh yeah, the Stuttgart yes, and you guys gave me a run down, you got copies of it here and it had a very curious history. See at the end of World War I Germany lost most of it's ships as a, what do they call that, war imdementies? or whatever and the ship finally ended up in World War II, in the harbor of, 1943 if I remember. It ended up in the harbor of Danzig, and it was a hospital ship and it got bombed and it got burned, they dragged it out into the Baltic and sunk it. (he laughs)

WATERS: Okay. You already said you made one stop in Southampton, England. Is that the only stop that you remember?

SCHUMANN: Yes, I mean that's what I remember but if I look at the ship manifest somewhere there other, another stop which didn't make sense to me, I can't recall what that was all about. in fact since I got this other information I am a little bit confused on what actually went on.

WATERS: Okay. Do you remember how long the actual trip was?

SCHUMANN: Yeah, we left on March 30th and we landed on April, April 10th so, I think it's eleven days.

WATERS: And you said you traveled on steerage?

SCHUMANN: Yes.

WATERS: Yes, okay. Do you remember anything about being on the ship? I know you were young butÆ

SCHUMANN: Yeah, I remember being out on deck and I had a little toy train, it was kind of a push me, pull you kind of thing and the boat, boat titled and the little train, engine was rolling towards the rail and I went after it, and a sailor grabbed me. (he laughs) My mother said she was afraid that I was going to go overboard. I don't know how true that is, my mother was a very nervous person about the whole thing, I know. On the other hand I do remember going into the cabins there and they were like bunks one on top of the other, I think they were only two high and it kind of wooden things and I, I

don't remember what kind of mattress it was, there must have been some kind of mattress. But I know why I remember it, there was vomit on the floor and you had to be very careful you could slide and it would smell. That's about all I remember of the trip outside of seeing Southampton on a sunny morning and the people pointing to it and so on and before I knew it we were in Huntington, in New York Harbor.

WATERS: Do you remember any of the food that you ate on the ship?

SCHUMANN: No

WATERS: Is there any stories maybe, that you mother told you of the ship, or nothing that she ever spoke of?

SCHUMANN: Nothing more than what I said like her filling in about the sailor grabbing me and so on.

WATERS: What do you remember about first reaching America?

SCHUMANN: Well, we ended up in Huntington Station that's in New York state on Long Island. I remember

getting off the train and going down this stairs down to the New York Avenue which is the main drag there and there was a treacle and going under it. There was a whole, store lot of stores there, there no longer there, the whole thing has been undone. There is no Huntington Station shopping area there anymore, it's the whole thing moved it's, it's all happened after World War II. But I remember on a sunny day and we walked, I know we walked a mile, we walked all the way from New York Avenue to Depot Road and all the way to the house my father got, got us. We the little troop we walked, I know my, my little sister must have been carried and.

WATERS: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty at all?

SCHUMANN: I can't say I did, I mean you know, you turn on television and you see it and you see in the the movies and what not so, I don't' what I did see and remember and so on. I'm not clear about that.

WATERS: Okay. Well this is a good point were just going to pause for right now so, Kevin can switch the

tape on the other side for us. Okay?

SCHUMANN: Okay.

(beginning of side two, tape one)

WATERS: Okay, this is Stacey Waters and we're starting tape two, side two of tape one with, with Werner Schumann. We were just, finished discussing when he first came to America. Now, you didn't actually go through Ellis Island, correct? Or you don't' have any memory of that?

SCHUMANN: I, I, I must have because as I understand all steerage came through Ellis Island. I must have, I have no real recall of it, though I am told, I was told and I forget which it was but that my uncle came through to pick us up and he carried my little brother off, off the boat and so on or how you would put it. And so, there must have been a get together and so on because but I have no, no real recall of that.

WATERS: So, your first recollection is getting off the boat and going to Huntington Station then?

SCHUMANN: My first recollection is Huntington Station

because you see I mean I got to see this area for the next, for the rest of my life so, I can always compare it. But then again you know I have such a good memory of things in Germany that's a suddenly to be cut off from it and having seen, seen it a number, for the first three, the last year anyway. I tell you it it was interesting here I was almost four when I left, my brother was almost three and he has no recall of it at all. I look upon it as psychologically as interesting that between three and four one can develop quite a memory but before that it can be lost and that goes for the language to. Like I am the only one that of the, of the siblings that can get really along in German. My brother was a year younger I mean, he has practically lost it all, he didn't follow up on it.

WATERS: Now, what did you do when you first came to America? You said that you, went, went to the home your father had bought for you?

SCHUMANN: Rented.

WATERS: Rented, okay. And where was that?

SCHUMANN: On Depot Road, just, just well, just south of 11th Street on Depot Road. We only stayed there for a year, there was some argument about paying the rest. I mean the next year the rent was supposed to go up and my father found some place else over on 9th Street, on East 9th Street. it was from there that I started kindergarten.

WATERS: Do you remember seeing anything for the first time, when you first came to America?

SCHUMANN: Seeing something?

WATERS: Was thereÆ

SCHUMANN: The Huntington Railroad Station, that's it.

WATERS: (she laughs) Was there anything unusual that you saw?

SCHUMANN: Oh yeah, well there is a story here. Apparently that night there was a fire in the commercial area, the stores and the fire department was called out and the hoses were all over the place and looked like it must have

been serious fire, couldn't tell except there was an awful lot of water, rather the streets were wet and running with water and my mother was very concerned because she. Her is an example of her nervousness, she thought the Indians had raided the town and burned it down, cause she's reading a lot of these western pulp magazines things, magazines and so on, she is into the kind of literature so, I remember that.

WATERS: Do you have any, any memories of, of the ride of going to you new home? Do you remember anything that you were thinking, if were frightened at all?

SCHUMANN: Somewhere, somewhere mean I, I have this picture of I, I cant' quite put it together because it doesn't fit on the railroad line we came out on. But I know there were these huge dumps in the, in the Flushing area the World's Fair is more. You know the fair ground in Flushing, this used to be just a huge garbage dump and there would be fire there and they would be burning day and night and you can smell them. I mean you would be there, I mean you walk away from there and your breath would, would have this terrible odor, I mean

would end up with bad breath because your
were breathing this stuff and I understand it
quite an infestation of rats that lived in this
and there is a little bit of a write up in the
novel, the short novel by Fitzgerald, *The Great
Gatsby*. They talked, talks about the dumps
there. I can't quite put it together again
where these dumps were, but I know they were
there, there when I'm kind of mixed up
because I can't. They are not on the railroad
line that we go to Huntington on, and they are
on the other line that goes to Great Neck anyway
there is a little bit of confusion there, but
I know that I experienced them very early.

WATERS: Do you remember what your new home looked like
at all?

SCHUMANN: Yeah, it was a conventional looking two story
building with a, a type of front porch that they
used to put on them, it was wooden building, I,
I can't think.

WATERS: What was the neighborhood like? Do you
remember?

SCHUMANN: Well, the house we had there was three of them in a row, and there was a, a part of a cellar for another one that was never finished and they were gonna, I could remember them starting to dig the cellar. It was before, here it was 1927, 1928, 1927 and it was digging the cellar and they had this guy with horse and he had, had like this bucket that you might find on a wheelbarrow, but it was just a bucket and it got dragged on the ground and it would scoop up a bucket of dirt and it would take it out and dump it and it would come back and dig some more that way. It isn't the way they dig cellars now. Well, outside of that, I mean there wasn't much to the neighborhood really, it was a lower, lower middle, very lower middle class, really.

WATERS: What was it a German area or of all mix?

SCHUMANN: Well, in terms of that I find that interesting. the area, Huntington Station, south of the railroad had a lot of Germans and well from my count anyway, my experience it was, fair, fair, amount of Germans living there and even further south into South Huntington or even more but we, we never associated with them. I don't, I can't, can't quite understand that. You would

think because my mother quite didn't learn English very well, you would think she would have had more German friends, but she didn't. I think she withdrew into herself and a that's where it ended up but there were many more if you go there, now the neighborhood has completely changed. I mean and it became much more Italian and then it went into Spanish. It's now, in fact, it's got a lot of bad, bad neighborhoods in there, I, I can't quite it's got, got a bit of crime and drugs and so on, so.

WATERS: You said

SCHUMANN: I, I wouldn't go there, we all moved out of the area.

WATERS: You said you only lived there for about a year and then you moved?

SCHUMANN: What I said we, that, that was in the one house and then we moved only a few blocks from, 11th Street to 9th Street.

WATERS: So it, so it was pretty much the same type of neighborhood then.

SCHUMANN: Yes, yes, yes, in fact, I think we ended up the second time we ended up in a nicer house, it was, was more residential away off the main street and then we moved again and we back up main street New York Avenue and that's where we ended up. Further on my father ended up buying, buying up a mortgage really, we ended up with a storefront and my father had his own business. He was no longer going to New York City to work for somebody else. He had his own, started his own buisness.

WATERS: He had his own upholstering business is that?

SCHUMANN: Yes, upholstering he and awning and he had a nice sideline and it was doing convertible auto tops and that, that was his pleasure. I mean he could for putting on a new auto top he could make one hundred dollars. He could that in a day and I was always fascinated how he, he was able to do it and what he needed to do it. He would take off the old top and use it as a pattern and I thought that very cleaver. (he laughs) That was all laid out for you, you just needed the old one and if you didn't have the old one it would cost you more.

WATERS: He must had a pretty rich clientele, if he was dealing with.

SCHUMANN: Well, it was a model, the typical car was a Model A Convertible and it had a rumble seat, imagine this anyway. It was kind of, for it's day it was sporty this is where, where, the where the what gonna the big thing gonna. But I tell you one thing is that he would rip these, rip these old roofs, canvases off of the roofs and there would be tacks in the driveway and this would drive you crazy. All these tacks that would come out and you know where those tacks would end up? In your tires and the interesting thing about these tires, these tacks they didn't give you a flat right away because they didn't go in far enough. What happened I they be in there, tire and the heads of the nails, tacks would get worn off and then the rest of nail, tack would work its way into the tube and you would be somewhere else and you would have a flat tire. And the big thing is when this started to happen you would have a rash of flat tires. My father would say get the magnet, the big magnet out and drag the driveway for tacks.

WATERS: What was the name of you father's business?

SCHUMANN: There was a sign up in front of the store that just said William J Schumann Upholstery and Awning.

WATERS: And your mother stayed a housewife she didn't work in America?

SCHUMANN: No, for awhile she started to help my father out at the sewing machine. She mother was quite, mother was quite capable with her hands with sewing, knitting, and mending and she did it for awhile. But my father, the trouble with my mother she ended up diabetic it was really quite a serious case and it dragged on for many years and it hit in a bad way when she had my youngest brother and she was diabetic and he was born and he had a sever case of eczema and the skin on him was just scaly and itchy and so on and it got so bad he would want to scratch himself and then he would bleed; they had to tie him to the crib. So he spent a number of years in a very bad way. And the only thing that was really good for him to have was goat, goats milk

and I got the job of walking every morning about a mile and half out of town to get a quart of goats milk and back and I would get a nickel for that, it was a real nice token, which meant a candy bar. (they laugh)

WATERS: Did your grandparents live with you?

SCHUMANN: No, my grandparents, see my grandfather sold the apartment house and here he came here with a quite a bit of money. And it is right on the manifest, the manifest says he had with four thousand dollars now for an immigrant to come, that's big money back then. He was able to put down this money on a, on a small farm, a two acre farm in South Huntington. Well, that that went to pieces it, it was the depression and couldn't meet the mortgages and he couldn't go as far as Patterson, New Jersey to work and he tried to make the farm a going thing and it just didn't work. I tell at one point he had chickens he had so many eggs he couldn't sell them people wouldn't, couldn't afford to buy the eggs. They were going three dozen for a dollar. And I remember my bother and I for one must have been out there a couple of weekends on Saturdays and Sundays trying to sell the eggs

along the roadside, three dollars, three dozen for a dollar. They had so many eggs they had a bathtub full of eggs and they were underwater like, what do you call those eggs, they put them in water? Lagered, storage eggs and they were finally thrown away and they were behind the chicken coop, in, in this pit and they were all rotting and it was a terrible smell back there (he laughs). Anyway, they lost the farm and they ended up living in a garage, he didn't have any money and he died back there practically. I mean he ended up with a boil on his neck and they it was in March 1937 and they had, there was this dirt, mud road and the ambulance got stuck back there and they brought him out stretcher took him to the hospital and that's where he died. He had a boil on the back of his neck that burst. I didn't realize it but he was diabetic it was stated as such on the death certificate.

WATERS: Was your, what practice, excuse me. What religion did your family practice?

SCHUMAN: Well, practiced, (he laughs) we were sent off to a Lutheran Sunday School in Huntington

Station I think, when I look back I think it was relief for my parents to have time to themselves, that's why were shipped off but this was my opinion today.

WATERS: Well, you basically grew up in America so, when you practiced holidays were there any special German traditions?

SCHUMANN: Well, we did the Christmas tree. (they laugh)
No, not really I mean at this point what I like what I am fond of I send, I like Christmas stollen that's the cake. And interesting you can go into different bakeries, German bakeries, you can go into almost any commercial and get stollen but and you think there is only way to make stollen but there isn't I mean everybody makes a different kind of stollen, what they call stollen. And it's gotten so commercialized you, you can but it in July and it's commercialism does undoes the whole idea of tradition, in my way of thinking. I happen to like the stuff, I send to Germany for stollen, I send to Glachau and my cousin there it's about due that I write him, and it's beat the Christmas rush because if it arrives after Christmas it's no fun. Stollen is my thing, yes

that's about it and the Christmas tree. This year I don't think I am going to doing a Christmas tree because my wife and I have got tickets to got to Iceland during the Christmas season. Can you imagine going to the country of Iceland in the winter. I mean I think we won't see the sun.

WATERS: You said that you started kindergarten in America, obviously.

SCHUMANN: Yes

WATERS: You already had spoken German, did you know any English at that time?

SCHUMANN: I, I it's amazing I think I was picking it up, picking it up fast. It's interesting it's another psychological thing. how kids can pick up language much quicker than grown-ups. And kids learn it; I learned it from other kids in the neighborhood, I mean you just get with it, you know, yeah, I could do it.

WATERS: How did you parents learn to speak English?

SCHUMANN: Well, I think my father started to learn it being in that Scottish prison camp and then he was out in the business world, you just had to get with it, it he just pragmatically learned it that's all I can say. It's not that his language was the greatest but I mean he speak in short sentences, managed quite well. My mother is something else, I mean she picked it up from us kids, whatever she learned, yes mainly and the *Daily News* and the *American Journal* in the evening. I mean because papers, newspapers like that kept fairly much to a simple English. They say, saying to read the *Daily News* all you need is a third grade education, of course, that was a put down for the *Daily News* but I think there is a lot of truth there. (he laughs)

WATERS: Did you family belong to any social clubs or organizations? Do you remember?

SCHUMANN: Not along time, no they kind of stayed isolate, and it wasn't until the late 1930's that they struck up a friendship with an organization called the German American War Veterans and they were quite, quite heavily socializing there and

it was more of a social club, old timers getting together. Went over to a town called Lindenhurst and there was a particular place, they guy had a beer garden at one point, it wasn't much of a beer garden anymore by the time I knew it called Bologna John's in Lindenhurst and that was quite a hang out. I know my parents had their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary there. The thing kind of fell apart with the next generation, nothing ever came of it.

WATERS: What do you remember about going to school in America?

SCHUMANN: Well, I have a funny story, started kindergarten. Starting kindergarten my mother took me and my new aunt that married my Uncle Hans, Katie because she had learned, she knew a fair amount of German and she could parlay it in a sense but she spoke English and my mother and I we went to Lincoln, Lincoln Elementary school and we got to the kindergarten teacher. I remember her name was McManus, Miss McManus wonderful gal and all the kids were sitting in a circle and it's little chairs and they wanted me to sit, Oh they said where would I

like to sit and of course and I wanted to sit next to this kid I knew in the neighborhood, that he either Herman Morra who was a friend of mine from the neighborhood or Helen Thorn and she is. But they say wouldn't you like to sit next to that little boy over there, he was a little colored boy and I said no. They said, "What's the matter?", and I said it in German [states it in German], he didn't wash himself. I mean I never seen a black person before.

WATERS: Right.

SCHUMANN: Oh, I mean his name was George Brown and I will always remember George Brown, that was George Brown. I don't what he some kind of a problem he got left back and I don't know he seemed to have some other kind of mental problems, I never got that, he just disappeared. His brother Harry was around for a long time, he was kind of a swift character but not, not George. Anyway I remember that and I found kindergarten a very nice experience and when we went into the first grade we first assembled in the kindergarten and we were marched into the first grade room and I'll tell

you, the ball game had changed. I'll tell you marched in there was Miss Baret and she was a disciplinarian that's all it took, we got in the room and everybody was told where to sit and she slammed the door. That slamming the door was a message, I'll tell you, you felt captured (they laugh) I did anyway, trapped from there on. And we learned to read quite well in the first grade but you know I forgot how to read by the second grade and it wasn't till I go to the third grade, that I begged, oh what was her name, Miss Baxter I said please teach me how to read (he laughs) you know it happened a couple of times, I mean I am practically on bended knee and I'm crying teach me to read, I got to have to know how to read.

WATERS: Was it difficult for you growing up having immigrant parent? Was there any conflict for you?

SCHUMANN: Yeah, there was a cultural disjunction, whatever you call it, noise dis, dissonance, I don't know how to put it. Really you know the speech, I said to my brother the other day, I said hey look you don't speak

German, mom didn't speak English very well she didn't speak English. How did you guys communicate? Well I could do just a little bit of German I mean I do whatever German I could do and whatever word I didn't know and if I couldn't know the word I would throw an English word in. I said yeah right some more some less, I know I ended up doing that to, you mean it is a little bit like the Pennsylvania Dutch isn't it, let me throw this in for the audience here, he said you mean they talk like this ["cow hat over the fence gutjumper and let the cabbages get damaged"] did you get the message?

WATERS: Yes (she laughs)

SCHUMANN: All right, but you end up with you get all English words with German endings on the words or prefixes and suffixes. Anyway there we go, you get the message. (he laughs).

WATERS: Was there any conflict between maybe your ideals as growing up as an American and their ideals of growing up as a German?

SCHUMANN: No, no I didn't feel anything. There was a conflict there but I didn't feel it in fact, it's naive on my part when I look back at it. I remember a remark, remark that particularly stands out, it was kids say dumb things, they say hurtful things unwittingly and you don't know what they are mouthing. I remember in the yearbook they say what it most offensive. You know in the yearbook they do things like what do you find the most offensive. And they said, they put down that I spoke German, and I said how did they know I spoke German. And it finally came to me in when I went to college and I was taking speech course, and I found out I had parts of a German accent. I don't know if you think I have one now?

WATERS: No, not really

SCHUMANN: No, there is something there, yeah isn't there?

WATERS: Yeah, maybe a little bit.

SCHUMANN: And I found out that it was making certain sounds. Like the word "the" became "da", the "TH" became; the hard "TH" became a "D", the soft "TH" sound became a "T", the "S"

sometimes was a "Z" sound and sometimes "Z" sound was a "S" sound. Like work is, I-S we, make an "I-Z" sound "IZ" and that's really close to the German word ist. Anyway I started, what happened in speech class they made little records, and I said oh my god that's me, that's that German accent. Anyway I tell you it didn't take to, you see, I spotted it right away, you know hearing from like somebody else doing it, you know the record. I picked it up right away what was wrong. I think that's what they were hearing in high school, my, my leftover German accent. In fact, I, I am quite aware of German accents, there is a southern German accent and a Northern German accent so, I don't want to go into it but I, I tell you I am quite aware of what's going on. You know they have these people that can hear accents, they can tell you what part of the country you are from? I'm, I'm kind of tuned in that way, not as good as they are but I know, I am quite aware of that, all right.

WATERS: Was there anything that your parents or your grandparents did to maintain their German culture?

SCHUMANN: Nothing except some of the food that my mother cooked us, she like the old country cooking. I would say the cooking was some of the biggest thing, some for the old menus. Rouladen, it's a a steak rolled up, I don't know if you ever have you ever had it? Sauerbraten was the other one, not sauerbraten, rouladen well, there were a couple of other dishes, they don't come to mind right now. Some of her potato pancakes have a goose for Christmas, things like. Oh and potato balls (word in German) and there would be green ones and there would be regular ones and yellow ones.

WATERS: And why would you have green ones?

SCHUMANN: Green ones means raw potatoes, they were made with raw potatoes.

WATERS: Okay.

SCHUMANN: Not all raw it's just partially raw, and partly what do you call it, not mashed, what do you mesh, riced potatoes. But the green gives the whole thing a different taste.

WATERS: Okay. We will stop here because we have to start a new tape so, this is a good time for us.

SCHUMANN: All right.

(beginning of side one, tape two)

WATERS: Okay. This is Stacey Waters and I'm here as an intern at Rutgers University as part, for, working for the National Park Service. and today is Monday November 9 and we are just starting our second tape with Werner Schumann you came over to America in 1927 at the age of three almost four. And we just finished discussing his early school years in America. Is there anything else that you remember about being a child in America, when you first came here?

SCHUMANN: Hmmmm,

WATERS: Any special memory that sticks out in your mind?

SCHUMANN: Well, I, I belonged to the Boy Scouts, I also delivered the *Brooklyn Eagle* but let's separate

the two. As a Boy Scout I got into in late, the Lutheran Church, St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Huntington Station, let's get the year, I was fourteen and did the arithmetic on that, fourteen and twenty-three, thirty-seven, okay somewhere around 1937 the church started up a Boy Scout troop and I was already fourteen, you know boy, boys can join the Boy Scouts when they are twelve and I, I was kind of a late comer to it, age wise. And I achieved Star Scout and I never quite made life, I had trouble passing the athletic end, I just couldn't run that fifty yard dash fast enough, I was always a second short and the coach really held me to it and anyway I became the senior patrol leader which is the top rank that the scouts can obtain, obtain and as a leader in the troops and we had a very nice Scoutmaster, he was a nurse and he got TB and he moved to Arizona for a cure, he took the family with him and we were left without a Scoutmaster but they had me. And I as a senior patrol leader ran the troop although, unofficially there was another person that did, Mr. Thompson but he didn't know beans about Scouting but he kind of we needed an adult there to head the organization. And we did quite well as a troop, we did very well and

we even got our pictures in the *Brooklyn Eagle* at camp, Camp Baiting Hollow for outstanding performance and when jamborees we always did first or second in the, in the contests and so on it's because. I think that my personality had a lot to do with it, that I felt that these things were important to run a good troop and so on. There were other troops, like Troop 77, which they were a bunch of characters they just enjoyed raising hell, they didn't go out, act like a bunch of rookies they go out on camping, I mean they be up all night running around and the woods and so on. But that's, that wasn't are style, we, we always acted in a very disciplined fashion. I was always very proud of our performance. It, it came apart after I left, there was nobody there to take my place but anyway that was that. And I delivered the *Brooklyn Eagle* like for years and my brother Hans had his route too for awhile and this became they way we made our spending money.

WATERS: I wondered if we could just talk a little bit about you being in World War II, since youE

SCHUMANN: World War II.

WATERS: Yes.

SCHUMANN: Well, let's see I graduated from high school in 1940, June 1941 and we got into the war by December 7th of that year. I got out and the prospect of the job were kind of slim and I took with a friend and we all took sheet metal, aircraft sheet metal courses and we all ended up with jobs at Grumman Aircraft and I ended up working in the windshield department. and when the war started, before the war started and after the war started I was there until 1943, February 1943. I was drafted into the service and I ended up in the airforce and I was trained as an armorer and we ended up, I ended up with B-17's in England, that mean the main job was taking care of the guns, and the machine guns, and the bombs. We load with the 447th heavy bombardment group, 710th squadron in England and we, the group completed two hundred fifty nine missions. And I have very mixed feelings about the whole thing, in fact I have very negative feelings. I just think bombing cities is wrong, I mean it doesn't win wars it just kills people, anyway.

WATERS: How did you feel having a German background.
was there?

SCHUMANN: It didn't really get to me because, I was thinking more in terms of my own survival. I was going to come out of that war alive that's what I was concerned about. Now I was not combatant, my brother Hans was he was a lower ball gunner on the a B-17 he was the 95th heavy bombardment group and he flew thirty-four missions, he didn't do the thirty-five because he had trouble with his teeth. With these high altitude flying if you had fillings you could loose your fillings, in the high flying you could end up with terrible tooth problems. Anyway, anyway it took a toll on him personality wise, I mean he had to have recovery and so on coming back. I, I still feel that he still isn't quite right, anyway so that's that.

WATERS: Was it a hard thing for, for a relationship between you and your father, being that your father had fought previously in World War I on the German side? Was there any ever conflict there?

SCHUMANN: No, no. I, I think that there are a lot of veterans, I don't care what you were in, I think you end up feeling having been used. doesn't make, that's it. I mean there are a lot of different feelings and a lot of, you can run into but I am going to stay away from it.

WATERS: Okay. Would you just like to tell us how you met your wife?

SCHUMANN: Yeah, I ended up going to Queens College as a veteran and taking the Long Island Railroad from Huntington. For awhile I was living at the Jamaica YMCA, and that was an on again off again deal. I am a little bit confused about that whole thing. I was a psyche major. And she had lived in Oyster Bay and she took the Long Island Railroad so, we met by way of the Long Island Railroad you might say, and yeah.

WATERS: And you could you just tell us her name for the tape, please?

SCHUMANN: Her name is Rosemary Collery, Collery and the Collery's lived in Oyster Bay.

WATERS: Could you spell that for me?

SCHUMANN: C-O-L-L-E-R-Y.

WATERS: And did you ever have any children?

SCHUMANN: No, we didn't' have children, we adopted two times. We have Lisa Emily, she is now works for Pete Morwick, she just, they just had a little baby, sixteen months now, Emily, Emily Elizabeth and she is quite a great little kid, I mean very precocious, gets into everything. And my son got my name, my namesake and he is out in Oregon, he is working for Japanese Importers of American Grain, everything from hay, wheat, and oats and so on. Seems to be doing all right, finally got his life straightened out.

WATERS: Okay. I would jut like to ask you one more question. How do you think being an immigrant to America has effected your life?

SCHUMANN: Well, definitely effected my life. How, how would I have been different? Well if I hadn't come I would have ended up probably dead in Russia. I have a cousin that died in

Sevastopol, Russia, the Crimea and another somewhere that died in the retreat in Poland, somewhere, I don't know, somewhere near Warsaw.

I probably would have been dead too. So, I am here in a way I feel that I am survivor. I think that is the biggest thing looking back on it. I wish I had done more playing the violin but that's kind of here nor there now.

WATERS: Do you think that being an immigrant ever effected the way you thought about certain things or?

SCHUMANN: Oh, the way I thought about things, yes, yes, I think it's I am kind of a loner I guess. I think that there is lying going on, when I read the newspaper, I read it in a very skeptical way, I say let's see what kind of lies are being spread today. Not that, you know I open it up and I say there are all the lies but I think is the news is well salted with lies and lies can be leaving things out. Oh, I don't know, it's I, I really start out with a very skeptical attitude, that's little bit like the saying you know I am from Missouri, you gotta prove it. I mean that's it.

WATERS: Okay, unless there is anything that you would like to add.

SCHUMANN: What I would like to add? (laughs) I am gonna say, hi mom I will be home for supper.

WATERS: Okay. Then, this is Stacey Waters signing off on Monday November 9, 1998 with Werner Schumann at the Ellis Island Recording Studio. And I would just like to thank you.

SCHUMANN: Your welcome.