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ANN LUBRECHT

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LEVINE: Today is January 12th, the year 2001. And I'm here in Randolph, New Jersey with Ann Lubrecht, who came with her family on the George Washington ship in 1922 when she was 10 years of age. She and her family traveled second class and left from Breverhaven. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and let's begin. If you would say your full name and your birth date.

LUBRECHT: I was born Johanna Marie Ficke—F-I-C-K-E. And my mother was Gesine Meyerhoff. G-E-S-I-N-E. And the Meyerhoff has two Fs. Meyerhoff is a very popular name in the Solomon [PH] County.

LEVINE: In which County?

LUBRECHT: Solomon County. But the religion is of the Jewish religion and we were Protestants.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: I once called someone and they said no. [laughs] [unclear]. But she was widowed in 1915 when my father, who was in the German Army—he was an officer in the German Army—he was killed in France. And she was widowed for eight years when she—when my stepfather came from the U.S.A., who had been a United States citizen. And he came over. He was the brother of my mother's sister's husband. His name was August Ehlers. Ehlers, like the coffee. And his father had been a schoolmaster. And another brother of his was already over here, Ed—Edward. And we don't know when he came before my stepfather. But in 1921, he came back to Germany when he was a citizen to visit his mother. And her name was J—Johanna Ehlers also. And he came to visit with, of course, a lot of groceries, canned goods, which nobody had been able to get after the war. '21 was so close now to 1918 and the war years were still there. Of course, that was very exciting to see this big steamer trunk with all the—pineapple was one of—cans of pineapple, which we loved. Of course, then you could have pineapple with whipped cream; that was a treat. And—and then he met my mother, of course, and wooed my mother. It was carnival time, what we called Kramer Markt—K-R-A-M-E-R and then Markt, M-A-R-K-T. It was at the big marketplace where they had the—the regular—we called them bath und—bath und tile bahn [PH], which is the merry-go-round, but it went up and down with horses and all. You know, things you remember at the time. And they had a lot of organ grinders along. So he wooed Mother with the organ grinder in front of the house.

LEVINE: You mean he had the organ grinder—

LUBRECHT: Come to the house—

LEVINE: To the house.

LUBRECHT: —and play music. He loved music anyway. We were introduced to the classics, because he said the phonograph wouldn't play any records other than classics. So Caruso and Shumenhank [PH] and all those nice musicians, we were introduced to as children. And—

LEVINE: Do you remember your first impression of him when he came?

LUBRECHT: Well, I have a picture of him here. Peter gave me an envelope for Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Do you want me to tur—turn this off? Because you're hooked up.

LUBRECHT: Oh, I'm hooked up. I think it's right under the coffee table.

LEVINE: I'll tell you what [clears throat]—

LUBRECHT: We'll look at it later.

LEVINE: I'll have you describe it in words [unclear].

LUBRECHT: Well, he was tall, dark and handsome with beautiful blue eyes, wore one of these tweed pepper and salt suits. And, of course, we were very much impressed. He was a handsome man. Not only handsome, but he was very good to us. And he bought a locket for my—gave me a locket. And, well, of course when the engagement was announced after that, and I think he bought us silk dresses this Christmas before we left. So anyway, well, we never had a silk dress before, because after the war most of our—all our clothes were handmade by a dressmaker or hand [unclear], made over. Hand me downs, which were made over to fit us. And I even had a coat made out of my father's uniform, a coat. It was a beautiful gray wool, of course. Good quality. But the dressmaker came to the house and made our dresses.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Why don't you say where you were living in Germany?

LUBRECHT: We were living in Oldenburg. And we were living in what they called Dobbenfeld [PH], the quarter of—that part of the town was the Dobben. There was a lake there, like our—almost like the Central Park Lake, which was divided by a bridge. You could skate under the bridge.

LEVINE: It's called Dobben?

LUBRECHT: Dobben—D-O-B-B-E-N. Because Dobben, I think, had been a general somewhere down the line. All that area where we lived was General Malka [PH], Bismarckstrasse [PH], Habastrasse [PH], and Tichstrasse [PH] was where my great aunt lived, the one—Leopold Vidiking [PH], his name was. And we lived Dobbenstrasse [PH], which was almost the elongation of Tichstrasse. It all went to Gartenstrasse [PH]. Those were the names of the streets nearby. Unte den Linden [PH]. Lind—Linden Alle [PH], it was, not Unte den Lind—Linden Alle. And next to our street was Talmanstrasse [PH].

LEVINE: Wow. Do you remember your grandparents from Germany?

LUBRECHT: Very much.

LEVINE: What—tell me about each—each side.

LUBRECHT: Well—

LEVINE: Your mother—

LUBRECHT: C—Carl probably told you about my grandfather in Idafehn. Grandfather Meyerhoff. But Grandfather Ficke h—oh, and that's another one. He was on Garstrasse [PH] 6—6. He had [speaking in German]. And it was Hoflieferlan [PH]. He delivered the fish to the archduke. Hof [PH] means the—well, archdukes—I can't think of it now but it'll come later.

LEVINE: Yeah, sure. If you think of it.

LUBRECHT: And I think Carl took it off the wall, the sign. You know, they had signs up. And—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: —he—I think he climbed it. One time, he got up there and—after he visit—when he was visiting.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: But that was a big fish store, all tiled with tanks in the window where the carp were swimming. Carp was a very popular fish, a sweet water fish. And it was also in the schlussgarten [PH] they had ein karpfentai [PH] where you could—and my grandfather used to walk with us to there. We could feed the fish, you know. But—

LEVINE: So it was his shop?

LUBRECHT: It was—it was not a shop. It was a great big fish store, wholesale and—and retail. And of course my grandmother and my grandfather had lost four sons. Two came to America and never came back and two were killed in the war. And the one who was supposed to re—carry on with the fish market was killed also, Wilhelm, Uncle Willie. My grand—my father was a teacher. And then he—

LEVINE: What did he teach?

LUBRECHT: Oh, you know, little school with—

LEVINE: You mean, like, elementary school? All classes?

LUBRECHT: Well, the schools—well the volkschul—volkschule [PH] only went to class where they're 14 years old. And they then, like here, you could get—go to trade school or become an apprentice. In those days, they didn't have trade schools. They became apprentices in ever—whatever they chose to be. And we all attended—well, Carl didn't get that far. He only got to the third grade. But I was—there were two years difference between us. And we were—my sister and I went to the fuhrer trichte schule [PH], which was a [unclear] for young ladies. And it was the one school where in 1922 they decided that the girls should go on to higher education at Latin and Greek. And you had to have a—what they called abitua [PH], which is a very, very rough test—testing for your graduation. Like we have the regions here, which is not at all like that because they have verbal and written exams. And many of them really don't make it because of their fear of not making it. And that's still being done.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So it changed while you were—

LUBRECHT: Well—

LEVINE: —in school.

LUBRECHT: We—were already—when we were leaving in 1922 because that school just celebrated its anniversary. And I was there when they celebrated but missed it like that because we had to get back to Berman [PH] for the—for the play. And—but we were—we went to school to the third grade, three years. We had three years of preschool. That preschool, the vorschule [PH], is now the Oldenburg University.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: They took the buildings over and made it into a university. And—

LEVINE: What was the preschool? What did the preschool consist of?

LUBRECHT: Vorschule. When you were six years old, we—Mother took us—I still remember that. She took me to the school to introduce me to the director, Herr Hertzl [PH]. Herr Hertzl gave us a piece of chocolate and made us comfortable. And in the hall she found my sister's jacket, which she had forgotten. [laughs] I remember that because they had hooks in the hall for the jackets along the hall when they went to school. And we had to be, of course, registered and all that. And what I want to bring out that we have this problem of inoculations—of the smallpox inoculation. We were given that in the—we all had to line up in the gym and got our arms vaccinated.

We had our vaccination. When we went to school we all got—we were all vaccinated before we went to school. That was a must.

LEVINE: And was the vorschule—was it—was it different—

LUBRECHT: Well, you had the same teacher all for three years.

LEVINE: And was it more—what do I want to say—

LUBRECHT: No, you—

LEVINE: Studious? Was it—was it—

LUBRECHT: Oh, no. It wasn't like kindergarten.

LEVINE: No.

LUBRECHT: You had your gym. You had, of course, torn—tornen [PH] was a very must, also. Physical education. That went with it because right next door was a tornhale [PH], which—where they had exhibit, gym and all that sort of thing, and ropes. We had to climb ropes. And of course, the—the horses and, you know, what they call—

LEVINE: You mean you had to ride?

LUBRECHT: No, no. But they—the one where—

LEVINE: Oh—

LUBRECHT: It's like a sawhorse but it had the two arms, you see—

LEVINE: Seesaw?

LUBRECHT: —the gymnasts—

LEVINE: No.

LUBRECHT: No, no. Where they did their exercise.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: They called that a horse.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. Yeah, I know what you mean.

LUBRECHT: A—and so—and of course, we had the dumbbells where they did really beautiful exercise with the dumbbells. And they were lined up against the wall, different sizes.

LEVINE: So it was really a lot of physical—

LUBRECHT: A lot of physical education went with it. We belonged to that and you went there after school. But in the school they had a gym also. I know we had to climb the ropes and that was tough. And they had sawdust underneath the ropes. So that we had our—the first three years you had your grammar, your arithmetic. Of course, you always had a religious class before.

LEVINE: Was it Lutheran?

LUBRECHT: No, they just call it religion [PH]. Protestant. Didn't have to be Lutheran. And if—later on, I had a girl who was Jewish in my class and she went to—she didn't attend that class. She went to her own—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: —class, wherever she—you know, where they worshipped. And the Catholics—yeah, well, we had a lot of Catholics in that area. So it wasn't just Protestant. It was called religion. You just had religious history, Bible history, so to speak. And—but that was the first class when you came to school, usually. But I don't remember having that in the preschool so much. No, we didn't. That came—

LEVINE: The religion?

LUBRECHT: That came in the upper classes. But we—I do know we had the grammar and math—and of course, the times table. That was drilled in to us, which I still think is important, and the regular old math, you know. Subtraction, addition. And I think we—I do remember there the language more.

LEVINE: You must have had to learn to read, right?

LUBRECHT: Well, the reading, writing—reading, writing, arithmetic.

LEVINE: Arithmetic.

LUBRECHT: Okay. That was taught in the—

LEVINE: Vorschule.

LUBRECHT: —vorschule.

LEVINE: And that was, like, age six to, roughly, nine? Is that—

LUBRECHT: Yes, it had to be.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: Well, I was nine. I was 10, yes, when I came because I had two—I had a whole year and part of the second year in the higher—heuer [PH] trichte schule. But we were all examined. We all had to take a test before we were entered into the higher education classes. The boys went to the gymnasium and the girls to the lyceum [PH].

LEVINE: So if somebody didn't pass the test they stayed there?

LUBRECHT: They had to go into the—the volkschule.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: See, then they were weeded out and those that weren't able to achieve the higher education, they went to the volkschule, where they had a good education till age 14.

LEVINE: I see. And how did the volkschule differ from the lyceum and the—and the—

LUBRECHT: Because they had one master and assistant master. And the—the lyceum, we changed classes. And the—one of the first subjects they—and of course, our examination was in the—you have to hold the top.

LEVINE: Okay.

LUBRECHT: And I have more water on.

LEVINE: Okay.

LUBRECHT: If it's too strong.

LEVINE: This is great.

LUBRECHT: I just—[unclear].

LEVINE: [unclear]?

LUBRECHT: No, I still have—

LEVINE: Okay.

LUBRECHT: And the—

LEVINE: I'm sorry.

LUBRECHT: Yeah, well, we had different—we had different teachers for each subject but the exam was done in the music room, which faced out. You know, the windows were there and all our sisters would be outside waiting to see if we passed. But we were seated separately, or just like you have for your Regent's exam; you know, one seat in between. And we had to take the exam. I don't remember what it was but we p—I passed. And because it was tradition for the lady—for the girls from the upper middle class to be educated, and many of them became laboratory workers or governesses and they went on to higher education. Teachers were very popular, of course, and whatever.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: But then, later on they had the Latin. But we were taught French in the—in the sec—second year. First—oh, we had nature study. We had botany immediately in one of our classes. We had to draw—I remember having to draw the primroses, the stamen and everything, you know, what went the—with the plant. The roots. And that was—and of course, you had [unclear] drawing was one of our classes, art. You had your art and you had your—your botany.

LEVINE: You had botany before you had biology, I guess? Botany came first?

LUBRECHT: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, interesting. Yeah.

LUBRECHT: Yeah, because, of course, here—I went to school here. I can go back to what we learned in P.S. 3, Sutherland School, where I was graduated in the village.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: And that was interesting experience. But the—and then we had—we had to knit. We had sewing class where they taught us to knit [unclear]. And I remember we had to make socks. But for sewing we had to get the cross-stitching. You know, count the stitches. And we

made little bas—bags, like a—what do you call it? Make a bag, you would call it now but just a little bag.

LEVINE: Do you remember World War I at all?

LUBRECHT: Yes, we can go back to that too. When my father was in the—went to war—

LEVINE: Do you remember your father?

LUBRECHT: No. My sister did because she was five years old. And my brother, of course, didn't remember him. But we lived, as I said, on the Dobbenstrasse, [unclear]. And next landlord was the famous professor, Bernhardt Winter [PH]. He was quite an artist. He was the artist in the city. And they had no children but they had girls come and just stay with them. Punzion [PH], they call it. And that was our landlord. Our house was over a little in front and his was next to us, next door, but with a long walk and the house was more in the back. But we had part of the garden. There was a fence there. Legusto [PH] was one of the hedges. I hated the smell of the legusto. They had the white flowers; they still use them.

LEVINE: Could you describe the house, what it looked like?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. I h—somewhere, I have a picture of it.

LEVINE: Ah.

LUBRECHT: But it's torn down since. I went back to visit. It was a house which also had an entrance with—with tile, with yellow tile edged in black. In the corner there was a—of course, a gate. The houses had gates. But there was like a little alley and it—in the back were big doors where they could drive through if they had to, you know. But next to—the house next door faced the alley. And that was a bigger house where they had some tenants living during the war that I remember. And I think the house belonged to Fraulein Albers. But ours, you had to go in through the fence. There was a little what they called vorgarten [PH]. Everybody had a nice vorgarten where they prided themselves, boxwood fenced in little beds, flowerbeds. And I remember the primulas and the—of course, we—I was always permitted to plant my pansies, which I loved. And Mom had some beautiful dark red roses in front of the windows. And the—and then you walked in and to the right was the entrance to the house, was a separate entrance. And we walked in what they called ein fleur [PH], which was the entrance. You know, the—like a little hall.

LEVINE: Lobby.

LUBRECHT: Lobby hall.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, yeah.

LUBRECHT: And there was another door there because there were stairs going upstairs where Fraulein Dietress [PH] lived. She had an apartment upstairs during the war and I remember Mother crying and talking with her. You know, that's as much as I remember.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And then she—she had been a milliner. I think she made me a hat for my doll. And we had a big apple tree in the backyard and, of course, we'd go run out and get the apples. They were August apples, big red ones. Beautiful apple, though we'd try to get there before she [laughs]—

LEVINE: Yeah. [chuckles] Before she [unclear].

LUBRECHT: And people kept chickens during the war.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: You had a little shed in the back, which was a—well, the shed for tools and stuff. But my grandfather had ein torngeret [PH], the bars and the rings made—put there for us children. That was my Grandfather Ficke, so that we'd have a place to play. It was just like a little fenced-off place where we could exercise.

LEVINE: Now, was it your Grandfather Ficke who was the—selling the fish?

LUBRECHT: Yes.

LEVINE: [unclear]

LUBRECHT: He was the fish—well, it goes with the fish. The—the name Ficke—we went to the library in Oldenburg and researched that. It came from Friedrich.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: You have—you have the Frick Museum in New—in New York. I happen to know the doctor who is running it. And—but they also—they're all Friedrich derivatives, all the Fricks—

LEVINE: Frickes [PH].

LUBRECHT: —and the Fickes and Ficken. All—that all came from Friedrich. So that was the root of the name.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: Of course, now you don't like to use that name so much because it's gotten a little bit [unclear].

LEVINE: Tarnished?

LUBRECHT: Let's put it that way. But anyway, the fish store was very interesting. And they mov—they—when they sold it in 1922 they got nothing for it because it was inflation. The inflation started in 1922 when we left. And they were pasting these big bills into the book. They didn't know what to do with them, millions of marks. It must have been awful. But we left just before that happened.

LEVINE: Now, do you remember scarcities during World War I?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. You couldn't get sugar. We—I know we went to the—sugar came in what they called ein sukurhut [PH]. It was about yo-high, almost looked like a fire hydrant. You know, about that height. And they were wrapped in blue paper and they had to chop off the sugar.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: I remember seeing it in the back of my—in my grandfather's office, what they call a contour [PH], because the German had a lot of French mixed in with the language at that time. Now, it's English. And that was ein sukurhut. That's the way the sugar came. But I don't think many people got it because it was imported. And the—well, we had rock candy, what they called krunche [PH] in Dutch. It's a Dutch word in the East Friesian area. And that was rock candy, which I have here with me. And they used that for their tea up there.

LEVINE: So you—would you call where you lived East Friesian?

LUBRECHT: No, no. Oldenburg was Oldenburg in Oldenburg, in the province of Oldenburg. But now it is just the city of Oldenburg. Oldenburg is no longer in Oldenburg. Used to put an I-O on the end. And the—well, that had quite a history because it was all Danish at one time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And actually, it's—it's in the western part of Germany, isn't it?

LUBRECHT: Yes, it's on the Dutch—

LEVINE: So it was near—

LUBRECHT: Towards the Dutch border.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: A—a lot Dutch influences there because East Frisia is in the Dutch border.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: And the—and the language too has a lot of England and Dutch mixed in it.

LEVINE: I see. Well, let's see. What about the other side of your grandparents?

LUBRECHT: All right.

LEVINE: Your mother's side.

LUBRECHT: That was Meyerhoff. And the Meyerhoffs—if you need more Kleenexes, they're there. I—I have—I'm working on it too. The—let me erase that. Meyerhoffs, who—he was called a colonist. There was a colony that was formed in the Moors [PH] where they were still digging peat, cutting peat in my time, at wartime. You burned peat. You didn't burn wood; there was no wood. And this—the roads were all sand, like a white sand. You had no stones to worry about. You could go barefoot and really enjoy it.

LEVINE: Were there automobiles? Do you remember?

LUBRECHT: No, we had no automobiles. They had what they called eine kuche [PH]—was—which picked up at the red train station, like the ones they have at the plaza.

LEVINE: Oh, like a horse and carriage.

LUBRECHT: Horse and carriage but they were covered.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: Well, of course they can be covered too if they have to be. And a coach is eine kuche. And they would pick you up at the railroad station if you so wished. But we used to walk it. It was a long walk to the railroad station. And we had to take the train from Oldenburg to Auchald [PH] where we had to change trains. Auchald was a stop at—a train stop. And we had to take the train to what they called Strichlingin [PH], which is now—is no longer a railroad station. But at the time it was. And that's where I'm coming to the—the smallest speech area in Germany, smallest speech island, they call it. And I have it here in my little calendar. It's called Saterland. And that's where my—S-A-T-E-R-L-A-N-D—that's where my grandfather had settled. He came from Ostraudefehnh [PH] and he was instrumental in building the canals that went from Holland to the ocean too.

LEVINE: Now, did—did your—did your grandfather's family—were they always from Germany, as far back as you know? Or were they—did they come from elsewhere?

LUBRECHT: There was—my grandmother's—was a Yonson [PH] and they had relatives in Holland. So it was—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: —very close to the Dutch border. But you see, Christian of Denmark at one time claimed all—

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LUBRECHT: Do you see? Christian of Denmark claimed all that area, Oldenburg included. And that went, I think to 1863 when Margaret and—who followed Christian of the Danish kings. And that reverted back to Germany about 1863. My grandfather was in the war of 1870. I have a picture of him taken at 1868 where he was in his marine uniform. Well, they call them marines, call them sailors. Sailors' uniform. He was skinny as a rail. And he was at—in the war of 1870. And they—and then he was going to be buried at sea because they thought he had died. I don't know of what but it was what they call "seemingly death," Sheintot [PH]. Somebody saw his eyes move and said, "Meyerhoff libt noch." [PH]. And Meyerhoff lived to be over 80. And he came back and he became a gentleman farmer, plus he collected toll for the boats that went under the bridges. There was a bridge that went up and was manually put down again, had to be raised for the ship to go through. S—because the canal was built to—for the

[unclear] to, you know, become a—shipping lanes to go out to the North Sea, and because the North Sea, of course, wasn't too far away. And they did a lot of fishing. They went out at night and did some—the fish boats went out and eels were a great food. And of course, during the war they had to—they killed [unclear] because he had cows and, of course, deer. And then my mother was, of course, being quite a distance. One gentleman walked all the way to bring us butter and meat.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: And—

LEVINE: You mean from your grandfather?

LUBRECHT: From my grandfather at the time during the war. He would deliver the peat to us, which we burned in what they call a kamine [PH], which is the tiled stove. You know, the—oh, it has a name. Escapes me at the moment. Like a [unclear]. It was tile. But they have them and you see them a lot. They're beautiful.

LEVINE: Oh, they—

LUBRECHT: All tile. And they were in the war. And that was our heating. And a stove at that little dining room—in the breakfast room was a stove, like a potbelly stove. But they had marien [PH] glass, which is mica, in front of it.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: You could see the fire through mica. You didn't have glass there. But they called it marien glass at the time. And there was a great big tin box for the peat. I used to love to sit on that next to the stove. It was warm.

LEVINE: What—what did your mother cook on?

LUBRECHT: Peat. They used peat.

LEVINE: In a—in a—

LUBRECHT: In a—well, these stoves. Yes.

LEVINE: Oh, like a black iron stove with a—

LUBRECHT: The cast iron stoves.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: Regular cast iron stove. It was a very nice stove with a—I think some enamel on it. And it was in a small kitchen, which was off the hall. And then of course—and you had a soapstone sink. And they called it ein kostenstein [PH] where you poured the kosten [PH]. You know, like pouring lead.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: Stein, which was soapstone. But they called it kostenstein and they used it for sinks. And of course, you had a pump. You didn't have any flowing—you had no, what we call sanitation. [clears throat]

LEVINE: Did you have an—did you—how—what did you do? Did you have an outhouse?

LUBRECHT: We had a wash kitchen, went a few steps down from the kitchen into a wash kitchen where they had the big trough and you—you—the washwoman came every couple of weeks. People used to wash every six weeks sometimes. All the linens were boiled in a big kettle, which was fed with peat again. And they boiled the wash. And then it came into the trough for rinsing. And the—right—the trough was here and then there was a little outhouse—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: —enclosed in the house.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And they used to—you had—a man came every week and emptied what they called a kuble [PH]. Kuble is a—like a garbage can, about that size but was heavy iron thing with, like your pressure cooker had one of these handles on it that—

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: —closed up. And they would come in a wagon and pick it up and change it.

LEVINE: Oh, and give you another one back.

LUBRECHT: And give us another one, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: So that's the—was the sanitation at the time.

LEVINE: Wow.

LUBRECHT: You didn't have outhouses as such in the city. But my grandmother lived in a house where they had flowing, a toilet, regular. They had the sanita—

LEVINE: A flush toilet.

LUBRECHT: Flush toilet, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And a bathtub with water, running water.

LEVINE: And—but this was the country?

LUBRECHT: No, this was the city but this little house was—well, we were renting it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, but I mean your grandmother. She also lived in—

LUBRECHT: No, my grandmother—the fish—Ficke—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: Juliana [PH] Ficke, she lived Gusstrasse [PH], which was just outside. The city had been walled and they called this am wall [PH]. There was a wall around the city before that. And the Gusstrasse came from the wall.

LEVINE: And she's the one that had the running water. She—

LUBRECHT: She had running water and a flush toilet. They had that but in the city, see. Outside the wall where we lived way out there they didn't have a flush toilet.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: And I think that's why they tore down Professor Winter's house too, because it didn't have any, you know, toilets and wa—wash facilities that you would like.

LEVINE: So they had city water as—as a way that—

LUBRECHT: Oh, they had a big—

LEVINE: —they do in cities—

LUBRECHT: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Interesting.

LUBRECHT: Oh, they had a water system and everything in the city.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: And the hunte [PH] was the water.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And the—the boats that went to Hegeland [PH] to the island came right into what they call am stau [PH]. And there was regular opening here where the ships would come in and go right out to sea—

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: —from there. And that was—that's no longer there. That was there in my time and you had to go past the stau to get to the railroad station. And the railroad—of course, the Oldenburg Railroad was—I think it was destroyed af—during World War I and rebuilt.

LEVINE: Wow.

LUBRECHT: But I don't remember it being destroyed. I just remember the soldiers coming through.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And during the war, and we would go and wave to them, you know. Kids.

LEVINE: These are German soldiers you waved to?

LUBRECHT: Yes. And of course the invalids came back too, the injured and maimed and what have you. And in the little store next to my grandmother's was a paper store, you know, a stationery store. And they used to have—in the window they made little dolls or so out of hazelnuts.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: They made the little nurses and doctors. They showed that. I remember that so vividly at Christmas time that they had that in the window.

LEVINE: Do you remember your mother receiving news—

LUBRECHT: Yes.

LEVINE: —of your father's death?

LUBRECHT: Yes. We were at my grandfather's when the news came through. My grandfather in Oldenburg had one of these telephones w—that you w—you know, you had to wind up.

LEVINE: And it was probably a party line. W—wouldn't it?

LUBRECHT: I don't know.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: But my grandfather had one also. You know, they were up on the wall with a little table attached to the wall. And the news came through. Mom had just put her hair up in curlers in paper, made curls out of—you know, with paper curls. And we had gone up to our room upstairs in my grandfather's house, which was also an inn.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And he—that's why he collected toll and it was what they called an—a wertshaft [PH] where they had the bar, which we couldn't call it a bar now. But it—they had the bar and, of course, the bottles and the beer and so forth. They called that eine wertshaft. Then they had tables there and that's where people would come and have their beer or their schnapps.

LEVINE: But they didn't sleep there?

LUBRECHT: They had—

LEVINE: Were there rooms for sleeping?

LUBRECHT: They—he had guest rooms upstairs.

LEVINE: Oh, he did. Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: He had—for—for the traveling salesmen. You see, the salesmen had to travel.

LEVINE: Do you remember any salesmen passing through?

LUBRECHT: Well, they were there but that mail was also delivered by the man on a bicycle. The bicycle was the—was the main transportation in Oldenburg, which was flat.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: No hills. A—and the bicycles, if they went through the town, you see. You asked me about the cars. There were no automobiles. The—the first automobile came in 1922, just before we left. And a classmate of mine was killed because she didn't realize that she couldn't cross the street when a truck came through. First [unclear]. So we—of course, we all went to the funeral. And I walked behind and you had your little basket full of little greeneries, boxwood or something.

LEVINE: Oh, really? How—tell—tell about a funeral. What—what was it—what happened?

LUBRECHT: Well, people walked behind the casket.

LEVINE: People were carrying it?

LUBRECHT: No, no. It was on a hearse.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: It was a horse-and-wagon-drawn hearse.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And everybody walked behind it. Well, you've seen it in some—

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: —of our old western movies—

LEVINE: Right, right.

LUBRECHT: —where they had the same customs. But we children when we went, we threw little petals or something at the cemetery when this little girl was—I remember her name was Beck. And she—she, as I say, it was our first experience with the automobile.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And after that, of course, the cars came into being. And the—where were we at? In Idafehn where the hearse—the horse and wagon hearse was, of course, the black one with the cover. The—you've seen it—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: —in pictures. And of course, the men all wore mourning suits, the black suit with the white—with the gray striped pants and a high hat. Customary. They wore what they call a shupoclock [PH], which is the high hat, which collapses.

LEVINE: Oh. And they just, I suppose, saved these for—for such occasions. I mean, that's [unclear] with them?

LUBRECHT: Well, very formal. Those were the formal mourning su—they called them morgen roch [PH], because that was very customary to have your suits made, a dark jacket. And you've seen it—the British wearing them with the gray striped pants, very fine striped, and the spats, of course. So—and the ties, I think, were wide at the time or they were just tied. You know, string ties. But the—that was customary that the men wore those. And mostly, the men followed. The women too, I guess, but so many people all wore black because of the war. You didn't see color. Black and white.

LEVINE: Because people had died or [unclear]?

LUBRECHT: Because they lost so many during the war.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, oh.

LUBRECHT: You know, you didn't wear red. But we children were put into red and blue.

LEVINE: Ah.

LUBRECHT: Mom said she could always find us. But she gave us a lot of freedom.

- LEVINE: Now, do—you were saying you remember when the news came. You were at your grandfather's.
- LUBRECHT: I was at my grandfather's and I was three and a half. And Mom—we came down—we were called to come downstairs and take the train back to Oldenburg. And we had to travel in the dark because there were no lights, of course. Blackout. And we were on this wagon, which was one of these open wagons, you know, all wrapped up, warm. And I remember going on the train but was all black. But by the time we got home I guess it was daylight, because it was a few hours trip.
- LEVINE: But the call came on that old fashioned telephone [unclear]?
- LUBRECHT: On the old fashioned at my grandfather's. This, of course—Mom, I saw her crying a lot and talking—you know, when we came home from school. But she had to carry on. She was widowed for eight years.
- LEVINE: Uh-hmm.
- LUBRECHT: But, of course, she had a lot of [unclear], admirers.
- LEVINE: Uh-hmm.
- LUBRECHT: And the youngest brother of my uncles, whom I saw again when he was 90—he said, "Your mother was my bride," but we didn't want Uncle Fritz.
- LEVINE: [laughs]
- LUBRECHT: We—we preferred Uncle August [PH] then. Of course, Mom asked if we'd like to go to America. But my father's [telephone rings] [tape off/on]—
- LEVINE: Your father—you were just—say it again what you—I just turned it off.
- LUBRECHT: In February, 1915—Peter has the exact date—
- LEVINE: Uh-huh.
- LUBRECHT: The word came that my father had been killed. I think he volunteered to throw a bomb.
- LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: Whatever.

LEVINE: Okay, well, so it—it was—

LUBRECHT: It was a traumatic experience—

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: —for all of us.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: That was in 1915 and we came in 1922.

LEVINE: And so is there anything else about life in Germany when you think about it, when you think back to that time—

LUBRECHT: Oh, I've—

LEVINE: —about?

LUBRECHT: I've written it up but I don't have it here.

LEVINE: Oh, really? Oh.

LUBRECHT: I started writing my life history when my husband was ill.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: But he had a stroke and we were in Germany and we were in Stuttgart, and he had to go to Ludwigsburg to be in the hospital when he had a stroke. And while I was waiting [clears throat]—you could visit all day long—[clears throat] they put a light on in the room—outside the room and you could go in. When the light was on you could go in and see a patient.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: It was very nice idea.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: So I wrote my life history at that time. I started writing it.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, if you ever want [clears throat] to have it on file—

LUBRECHT: Oh, I'll be glad to.

LEVINE: —we keep a file on everyone—

LUBRECHT: Yeah.

LEVINE: —we interview. If you wanted to—

LUBRECHT: Because—

LEVINE: —we could put it in there.

LUBRECHT: —as I say, my interest in botany, as you've found out—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —became at an early age, because it was Wilhelm Meyer [PH] whose—who, in 1913, was told to start a botanical garden in Oldenburg. And because the stu—only the students had access to the books. The youth should be educated in botany. That was just like they started early with the higher education for women, that they recognized that.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: And the—it was one of the archduke's people who said that the—oh, Cecelia [PH]. It was named after Cecelia. And that she was the one who was very instrumental in taking care of the education for children—for young ladies.

LEVINE: What was your mother like when you were a little girl in Germany? What—how do you remember her?

LUBRECHT: Oh, Mother was—Mother died here in '91. And, well, Mother was quite a gal. Oh, I have the pictures here of my brother wearing a—what they called a kittel at the time. K-I-T-T-E-L. It was a little white shirt, like outer shirt. And she'd always embroidered daisies around our dresses, my dresses too. Just a plain round neck with blue daisies, yellow stamens with dots in the middle. And she put 'em around the sleeves and around the neck and then when I had a belt, and that was—and she made us jersey dresses same way, and with a little boat neck. And we wore them for I don't know how long. The same style but she embroidered. And she would embroider—and we always—for Christmas, we always had to make something. Our Christmases were really beautiful because we'd get a plate with oranges and one pretzel made out of marzipan with chocolate. And

the—well, our fruit was on the plate. Apples and oran—if you— oranges were very scarce. If you got an orange right after the war, that was—you know, they came from Spain. And they were peeled and you were handed a piece—a section of an orange. Didn't have oranges perfuse as you have them here when they first came back. And you were asking about sugar earlier. We went to the grocery store and we would get a piece of sugarcane to chew on.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: They had sugarcane there. They called it zussholtz [PH]. Sweet wood. And we could chew on that. And, you know, those are the things you do remember. Of course, my sister had butter on her sandwich. We always had recess and we all—we went to school about eight o'clock in the morning. We had to walk it, of course. And the—and we'd always take a sandwich. We'd have—we were allowed to eat a sandwich at recess, first recess. But because school only went to one o'clock, you came home for your lunch. But you had your little recess in between. Everybody took a sandwich. And of course, my sister had a—a sandwich with butter and another girl had one with margarine. So she exchanged it, margarine for butter. [laughs] She didn't appreciate it because my grandfather had the cows and the milk and—and, of course, when we went there we were fed the cream out of the centrifuge, [chuckles] which wasn't the best for our skins. Break out beautifully.

LEVINE: [chuckles]

LUBRECHT: And as I remember, a little girl, I picked beautiful blue flowers, flax. I got it by grandfather picking the flower, because they spun their own linen and they spun their own—they had the East Frisian milk sheep. And they spun their own wool. Your socks and stockings were made out—were knitted, hand knitted out of—from the wool. And of course, we all wore long stockings with a garter with a button attached, you know, to hold them up, and high shoes. You didn't wear low shoes. We had to beg to get low shoes before we left. But many of our shoes were hand me downs, you know, from whoever had 'em before. And then during the war they came out with paper sandals. They were wood and paper woven like denizens used to do the crepe paper. And they were woven and they were sectional sandals to the—the—move with foot. And we were not permitted to wear them because we—we thought that wasn't good for us. And they—that's what they did to improvise during the war. And they—what had to collect the peat—you know, the—from the peat byproduct, so to speak, where the roots were still there in the peat. And that was collected to make cloth and burlap or something like that, I suppose.

But they co—that was collected. That all was collected because they spun—they used the fiber for material too. You know, material was so scarce. And then I think at one time they were even collecting cherry pits to get—extract the oil from them. And they had soup kitchens out in the—on the marketplace for people to get fed, you know, which, of course, we didn't go to. And, of course, vegetables, if you could get 'em, were always on the table, lettuce with a little vinegar and a little sugar. And Mom used to make pancakes, the great big pancakes and put apples—applesauce in between them. And then the day the woman came to do the laundry it was always pea soup and pancakes. That was lunch. But do you know—you wanted some of the customs—

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: —in World War I. Because we were not the ones—they had a lot of people who were fleeing from other areas. And they would take—my—my aunt, my mother's sister, whose husband was a schoolmaster of a school and the brother of my stepfather—

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And he was near [unclear]. Kaihosen [PH] was the place and we would go there in harvest time too, or spring—you know, during the summer. We had a long summer vacation and we would always go either to Idafehn to my grandparent's, and that was in harvest time we always went there. We had to pick cherries so they made the juice out of the cherries and preserved them. And when they butchered we'd go there too. Of course, everybody had to help. They made the wursht [PH] and—and everything was smoked. You see, the hams. And the—so we would always go there or go to my aunt's where they had the school and the—and she was—taught sewing and taught me a little bit of it too. And these chairs and a matter of fact, those too—the one you're sitting in—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: They came from my—my uncle. I had them sent over when my cousin had them sent over for me.

LEVINE: Hmm. Really?

LUBRECHT: And there were four of them but two I don't have with me. And I remembered seeing them in the schoolhouse.

LEVINE: Wow. Wh—how did your life change after your stepfather came to Germany—

LUBRECHT: Well, we—

LEVINE: —and before you left? Was there—was he there—was there a period of time—

LUBRECHT: Oh, no, no. He went right back.

LEVINE: Oh, he went right back.

LUBRECHT: He went back to the States, sent us the tickets so that we could come in June, '22. They became engaged at the time when he was there.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: He stayed—well, October—towards Christmas. Before Christmas, I think he left again. He stayed quite a while.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And well it wasn't any change. Mama had to pack—I was sent to my grandmother's. My grandfather had lost—had sold his business and got nothing for it. And he was a broken man. But I remember somebody had a yacht and was on the sh—on the hunte. And I was allowed to go along with him because they rented a villa from the local confectionary or kaffee—kaffee klinge [PH]—had a villa out there on the hunte on the—on the river. It was beautiful little house. And next door to it was a girl who had been in school with me. But we were sent—I was sent out there to be—and what my mother was packing. So I had nothing to do with the packing and the whatever. She put her furniture in the house that my stepfather had bought for his mother.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And it was stored and we always thought we'd come back but we never did.

LEVINE: Well, so when you left—when your mother left, she thought she was going to return to Germany?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes, was the idea, you know. All her furniture was stored.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: But she never did because inflation—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: —happened. And nobody went back and—you couldn't afford it.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: My stepfather was a partner on a delicatessen store down in the Village—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —on Charlton and Naking [PH] Street down there near—Carl probably filled you in on that—Leroy Park—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —where Mayor Walker lived afterwards.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, we're—we're near the end of this first tape but I wanted to—we'll finish off with—with Germany. So that when you were leaving, your mother—when you said goodbye to your grandparents, you—

LUBRECHT: Yeah.

LEVINE: —thought you would be coming back?

LUBRECHT: Sure.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: Yeah, that was—she stored her furniture, hoping they'd come back but she never did. I mean, she went back again—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —to her—

LEVINE: But not to live.

LUBRECHT: —to her father's 50th anniversary in 1928.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: I have a picture of her there.

LEVINE: Oh, wonderful. Well, now—so do you remember leaving then, saying goodbye—

LUBRECHT: Oh, well. Oh, that was a very exciting trip for us because our Uncle George, my mother's brother-in-law, was Custom's officer. And first, he used to wave off the trains. He'd always be there. We'd be late. She'd be late coming for the train. He'd hold the train for her. [chuckles] Because it was quite a long walk. She sent us up ahead to hold the train. [laughs] And Uncle George took us to—to Bremen because the train leaves to Bremerhaven from Bremen. And we spent the night in Bremen at a hotel.

LEVINE: Okay. I'm going to turn the—I'm going to switch tapes here and we'll continue there. Okay. This is the end of tape one.

LUBRECHT: Yeah.

LEVINE: And we'll be beginning tape two.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A]

LEVINE: Today is January 12th, the year 2001. We're beginning here with tape two. I'm speaking with Ann Lubrecht. And we were talking about you stayed overnight in a hotel in Bremen on your way to the—Bremerhaven to take the ship.

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. Well, they had a bathtub. And somebody'd brought us a sponge. It was a red rubber sponge, I remember. That was exciting. And Uncle Fritz came to the boat with us and gave us a thimble there. My sister and I [unclear] silver thimble [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And he gave us a silver thimble each and I think a box of chocolates when he saw us off. And of course, he was a disappointed young man.

LEVINE: Now, who—who was your Uncle Fritz? Was that—

LUBRECHT: He was a brother of the—my fath—my stepfather.

LEVINE: Ah, right.

LUBRECHT: So, of course, he was disappointed. But we didn't care for him as much. [laughter]

LEVINE: So do you remember the George Washington and the boarding of the ship?

LUBRECHT: Yeah, Mom was—oh, we had a [unclear] room because we were—we had a [unclear] room for all of us, bunk beds too. My mother was seasick the whole trip. But we—we kids, we roamed around. I do remember seeing passengers who were wearing hats like pith helmets with a—with a piece of material, light blue material but, you know, not in the back, seeing them walking around. They were passengers who had been visiting, evidently, somewhere. We never wore hats.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: The only hats we ever had was when my—my aunt—my mother's sister-in-law got married when she [unclear] and married Uncle George. Then she had hats made for us, very fancy little hats. But when we came to the U.S.A., Mrs. Schweibold [PH], who was my father's—the partner's wife, decided—I—I think she was a Catholic—w—we needed hats to go to church. And there was—St. John's Christopher Street in the village was—Sister Louise got wind of the fact that German children had arrived in the neighborhood. So she came to see us and invite us to come to church. And Mrs. Schweibold said, "The girls have to wear hats to go to church." There was a milliner on Bleecker [PH] Street, Bleecker and Christopher Street. And the hats were made out of woven—like strips of felt sewn together.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: I remember those hats so well. We always went there to get our hats afterwards. There were florists there and a milliner shop right off the corner of Christopher Street and Bleecker.

LEVINE: Do you—just to back up for a minute, do you remember when the George Washington arrived in the New York harbor?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. We were in New York harbor on July 4th.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And they gave us ice cream and we didn't care for the ice cream, because ice cream in those days had gelatin or something in it that—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: We didn't get one.

LEVINE: Well, you—you were used to real cream. [chuckles]

LUBRECHT: No, we were used to ice—

LEVINE: Oh, ice.

LUBRECHT: —for the glaze and that. You know, eggs and vanilla. Vanilla ice. They called it ice and they made it in a machine. But we didn't care for this ice cream at all. It was just like Charlotte [unclear], had something in it that we didn't care for.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And so [unclear]—

LEVINE: Were you aboard—were you aboard ship during July 4th when—

LUBRECHT: I think so because we were in the harbor and we could see Coney Island from the ship. The Ferris wheels were lit up at night. I remember that very well. And—but that's about all you saw. And then we—when we were able to dock—I forg—I must check when in 1922 was the Fourth of July. You know, what day? Because we were on that ship for a while longer. And when we came into the harbor, the ships—the Immigration people came on board. And we all had to—well, before we walked off the gangplank they examined our eyes. And we were permitted to go off.

LEVINE: This was in Battery Park?

LUBRECHT: No. This was on the pier. I—I'm not s—sure where the pier docked. Didn't bo—boats came in—ships came in at Hoboken, I think, in those days. The loading—I'm almost sure that the ships—they didn't come into the piers the way they do in the Hudson River now. They must have been later because Hoboken was the docking place, because we went by boat, you see. We came by boat to the—to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Yeah. I think what usually happened was that the boats went to Battery Park and then you took the ferry to Ellis Island.

LUBRECHT: Could that—

LEVINE: That was the usual way.

LUBRECHT: But it wasn't a ferry. It was a tugboat.

LEVINE: Tug—right. It was like a tender—

LUBRECHT: It was a small tugboat, like tugboat that you see in the little children's—

LEVINE: Huh.

LUBRECHT: —storybooks. But that hand of bananas that you told me was right in the front. That's the first time we saw how bananas grew. That was very interesting.

LEVINE: It was right in the front of the boat?

LUBRECHT: Yeah, they had it right there in front of the boat. We had to sit on the sides. It was open.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: And then we—we came to Ellis Island. It was a nice, sunny day. Of course, when we get off the boat all our baggage came with us and my dolls were left on the boat. And my sister, I think, had something to do with it. But I missed my dolls and stood [unclear].

LEVINE: So you got them back?

LUBRECHT: I got them back, yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember those dolls?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: What were they like?

LUBRECHT: Very much.

LEVINE: What were they like?

LUBRECHT: It was one of these nice big ones that stood up and had real hair.

LEVINE: What was it made out of?

LUBRECHT: Porcelain.

LEVINE: Porcelain.

LUBRECHT: It was one of those expensive ones now. You couldn't pay for it. And so it somehow got lost when we moved.

LEVINE: So it was tall. It was a few feet high?

LUBRECHT: It was about your height.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And it had had, of course, nice clothes with it that were always made for them, and had a little one that had very short hair. And that was a little one like that.

LEVINE: And you had different outfits for them?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. You know, for Christmas—our Christmas gift was a plate of fruit and our dolls got new clothes. We had to make potholders for our grandmother—for our rel—you know, grandma where we visited. And we—we'd go from one house to the other first. We'd come to the grandmother's house. Well, first at home; then Grandmother for dinner. It was in the evening. Then we landed up at Uncle Leo's and we had a beautiful tree with big candles. You know, they had candles on those trees those day. And he had a [unclear] snifter. So—and then my great aunt would give me—I remember a bowl of wool where they put something in the wool and you had to knit it off to get the present out of it. A windup [PH] ball, they called it. So that I remember and the—and my brother at the last Christmas—I think Mom went down the street and—I'm going back again. I'm sorry.

LEVINE: That's okay.

LUBRECHT: Went down the street and bought what they called a castle—a cas—a castle with a moat, you know.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: A wooden model, little model and with some soldiers on it. And she bought that for my brother for Christmas. We always went out shopping wherever you could get something, you know. Everything was hand me down. But the dolls got new dresses for Christmas.

LEVINE: Yeah. So what about Ellis Island? What were your impressions of that?

LUBRECHT: Well, that's what I was—when we went to Ellis Island, my group from the New York Botanical Garden—there are 12 of us—they let me go in first because they knew I'd come and, you know, through Ellis Island. So it was kind of a funny feeling at first. But it's so changed.

LEVINE: Tell me about the first time.

LUBRECHT: When we got off the boat—

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

LUBRECHT: —we had to walk to the main entrance, as we did here. You know, you like to the entrance. And the first one to greet us was a black woman and she spoke German. A nice—Pearl, you know—what's her name? Do you remember the—the singer? Pearl what?

LEVINE: Pearl. Pearl [unclear].

LUBRECHT: Yeah, yeah. She was a nice, statuesque woman. She spoke German—very nice, very pleasant, and told us to sit down. They had—you walked in there and all the brown benches. There was an aisle with the brown benches. But the walls to me were all dark [unclear]. It wasn't that bright; it was dark. And of course, the balcony was up above.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And as I remember, we—we had to sit down. We didn't sit long. All—we walked right through and we had to go past the benches to the left to the stairs.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: That, I recall. And we were put up in a room, a dormitory-type room. And there were bunk beds. There were four in that room where we were. And like when you went to camp, you had a row of sinks.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: They were there.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: And the bunk beds had just the iron. You know, the—oh, what do you call it? I can't think of it.

LEVINE: Like the framework, you mean, for the bunks?

LUBRECHT: They were bunks with the metal—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: —mattresses. Not mattress. There was no mattress. You had these disinfected blankets. And it was a Mother Blohm who came from Kansas waiting for her son to pick her up. She was with us because we were mother and two children. And this lady said there were four. There were—had to have bunk beds. And she said, "Don't get undressed." We were all in white starched dresses waiting for a marriage ceremony.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: My great aunt had made dresses for us with this whole, you know, laced—not laced, but embroidered dresses. And my brother, of course, had his little white jumper on.

LEVINE: And you had dressed up—

LUBRECHT: Oh, [unclear]—

LEVINE: —on arrival, thinking you were going to—

LUBRECHT: For the marriage ceremony. So here we were, stuck in Ellis Island, the same clothes, for I don't—it must have been a week.

LEVINE: Oh, my gosh.

LUBRECHT: Whenever we arrived, it was a Sunday—well, I don't—all right. We were in these bunk—put in these bunk beds. Then we were told to come down to eat and we had to go downstairs again. And there were these rows of tables with, of course, the roll of paper rolled up. They were covered with white paper. And—and then I still smell it—what was it? Beans or—or eggs. How the smell stay with you. And we sat in rows at the table and we were fed there. I don't remember the food very much. But we had to go upstairs again and sit. More benches. But that room overlooked the entrance room. There was a balcony there with doors that opened, glass doors. And it was pretty hot in that place in July. And there were rows of benches and we

were sitting in the—maybe in the third row back. We all had to sit together. Of course, we kids could roam around a little bit. And they came around selling Fig Newtons and vendors came around and sold, and we liked the Fig Newtons. So Mom would buy us Fig Newtons. And there were women there who had small children. And they put their diapers in the window—the window. We sat here and the window was here, and I think we were pretty much up front. Then the—she hung her diapers in the window. The window was on the left. We faced those doors somehow.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And a rabbi every morning would use the leather throngs, wind them around his arm and pray, [unclear], you know—

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: —in the morning. And there were a young—two young men in there who were coming to the States. I think they had been law students or I don't know what. But one of the name—was Sacks [PH]. And they kind of looked after us, you know, a young widow there and two children. And so on that hot Sunday they managed to get them to open the doors, which overlooked—it was a Sunday; there was nothing doing downstairs—overlooked that room where we came in.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: See, that's what was missing when I went to Ellis Island. You came into this great big hall, painted the same as this thing.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And it left me cold, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: There was nothing there that reminded me, really.

LEVINE: Well, then you went up to the Great Hall, did you? Upstairs?

LUBRECHT: Well, we—yeah, we went where the balcony is.

LEVINE: Yes.

LUBRECHT: Yeah, but we were on this side of it. We weren't on the other side. That's where the room was. But we went there into a conference room—

LEVINE: Yes.

LUBRECHT: —to have our lunch.

LEVINE: Yes.

LUBRECHT: Well, we had a little sandwich and whatever they had ordered. We had a little meeting there. But then you went around. They showed you, you know, some of the—where the—

LEVINE: Did they have a little dormitory set up? Did you see that?

LUBRECHT: [unclear].

LEVINE: It was on one side of the balcony. Did they have [unclear]—

LUBRECHT: Those iron beds?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: The bedsteads?

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

LUBRECHT: And wh—I don't remember seeing that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: But we had—the exhibit was on this side.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: And there were the flower—pictures [unclear]—you know, whatever paintings they had left [unclear]. And then in the exhibit where one of the girls who was Jewish said, "Oh, looks like my grandmother's gefilte fish pot."

LEVINE: [chuckles]

LUBRECHT: She was with the—you know, from the garden. So—and then they had a few things that people brought along. That's why I say it would

be nice to have a children's museum. I have some of my children's books [unclear]—

LEVINE: Oh, you know something?

LUBRECHT: Hand me the box with the Kleenex.

LEVINE: You know, I never—wait. We're pausing now. [tape off/on] We're resuming here. You started to say something about the woman when you were in the dormitory with Mrs. Blume, was it? And she said to you—

LUBRECHT: Blohm, I think.

LEVINE: Blome?

LUBRECHT: B-L-O-H-M, I think.

LEVINE: Oh, Blohm.

LUBRECHT: She came from Kansas.

LEVINE: Right. And she's—

LUBRECHT: Mother Blohm, we just called her.

LEVINE: Mother Blohm. She said, "Don't take off your clothes."?

LUBRECHT: Yeah, because the whole thing—you know, they smell of disinfectant.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. But you had on these starched dresses?

LUBRECHT: We had the—well, we had—you were dressed—the—the question was, "What do they wear in America?" And my great aunt sewed all our underwear. We wore—I had almost like a union suit on. She had been to America and described the [unclear]. She called them volkenkatze [PH]. You know, skyscrapers. And I always imagined that we would just come into a slip with the buildings right next to us. Of course, New York harbor isn't that way anyway. But we didn't come into New York harbor at that time as such. We didn't see the—we just saw, you know, Ellis Island because we went right to Ellis Island. Boy, that was a little bit of a change. And she had been there, oh, I don't know how many years ago before that and passed by and told us about these stories. Of course, we were anxious to go see America. And another thing that helped, she was my

grandmother's sister, Tante [PH] Mimi. But Tante Mimi sewed us our underwear.

LEVINE: So she knew what they wore in America?

LUBRECHT: Well, she was asking, "What do they wear in America? What do I do?" Now, we had some [unclear] dresses made and we had—I know the belts had little silver buckles all the way through. And the dressmaker had to make some of our dresses and Mom's too. And the New York harbor, of course, is beautiful when you see it early in the morning. I love it when it's just a little bit—

LEVINE: Did you see it early in the morning? Is that what—do you know when you arrived [unclear]?

LUBRECHT: No, no, on. I mean later on—

LEVINE: This is later you saw it.

LUBRECHT: —I've seen it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: But—but the thing is it—it was—it was—we were curious children and it didn't bother us. No—nobody was sad or anything like that. Then Mother was called and, finally, they called her name. And she went downstairs and was a little room there. And of course, we traveled along. And they had the wrong man. "Oh, das ist [unclear], nicht," [PH] she cried out. [laughs] "That isn't me at all." They had the wrong one. So we went again and we had to wait a little longer until my father came along. That was another experience. When we came, we—we were taken to 34th Street opposite the Armory on the East Side. And it was a—it was a minister who took us in. Lansburg [PH], or something like that. And we got to the minister's. Of course, we were anxious to have a bath. So in—in the afternoon we landed there. And we had to stay the night there, a couple of nights and then he—on Friday the 13th was the wedding ceremony. Well, Friday the 13th figures. And we were—10th—we were quite—on Ellis Island a few days.

LEVINE: Did you ever change your clothes or you just [unclear]—

LUBRECHT: Well, I don't know. We may have stayed till the seventh—we may have—the boat might have landed—if the Fourth of July was a Friday, you'd have a few days in between. We landed on the seventh or the eighth. You know, I'd have to check that out—until the 13th.

The 12th, we must have arrived—the 11th or 12th we arrived at the minister's house. And that night Mom wanted to take a bath. We all wanted to take a bath, of course. We were wearing these little shirts. And those days, you wore linen shifts or shirts under your clothes. You didn't have the knitted ones. And she locked herself out of her room. Of course, who had to go down to the minister in her little shirt—was I—to get the key. [chuckles] So my mo—my sister didn't want to go. My brother, [chuckles] of course, [unclear]. So little Annie had to go down there. And that was the experience. Then I had a toothache. I think my brother had an earache or something.

LEVINE: Yeah, he said he had an earache.

LUBRECHT: He had an earache. And Mrs. Schweibel [PH] took me to a dentist. And what did—and we had to take the trolley. I don't know where the dentist was, might have been in the Village, might have been in the Bronx. However, he put oil of cloves into my tooth, which I hated, to kill the pain. Might have been a wisdom tooth or something. So—and Carl, of course, had the ear trouble. Of course, he had been at the East C [PH] for gaining strength in Tindorf [PH], which I just found out last year. No, 1997. The name Tindorf came because the stewardess on the flight I was on when my husband was coming back from Germany came from Tindorf. And she was so kind to me. And I said, "That's the place where my brother was when he had ear trouble." And he had to walk around in the garden with a little cane and a little hat. That's all they put on him to get the sunshine—

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: —at my—my mother's cousin's house. So he was at, you know—oh, so many things. But that was our arrival in New York City. Then we went—moved—we moved into West 11th Street.

LEVINE: Well, do you remember the marriage? Did you—do you [unclear]?

LUBRECHT: Well, the ceremony took place at the minister. Yes, he—in his office. You know, it was a very civil ceremony.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Do you remember any things in the very first days or weeks that struck you about New York City that were new and different?

LUBRECHT: Oh, well, of course we hadn't been used to that kind of city living. So we moved into this apartment—oh, yes. I can tell you a few things about that—on 277 West 11th street. The 277 follows me all over.

LEVINE: Really?

LUBRECHT: The—all my life. I've got to play the lottery on that one. And the—the apartment was on the—one flight up. And the Johanna was the name of the building between Bleecker and West Fourth. It was on the north side of the street. Uptown side, yes. And across the way were brownstones. And we children—of course, it was summertime. The grocery street was around the corner on Bleecker Street. And he was a little Italian one. And he had, like, a crew cut. And my—my sister named him Sweneygel [PH] because that's a—a hedgehog. [laughs] A hedge—she had learned English when we were in school. French was my language. We had to learn French immediately. And during the war, we were not allowed to speak any more French outside. But here, we were [several words unclear]. You know, all the little games we would play outside. All of a sudden, our French teacher who spoke French to us only, said, "No more French outside." That's what I remember about the war. But the—of course, we weren't in a war-torn area. We were very fortunate there. My—my grandfather—I'm—I'm skipping back again. He had a prisoner of war there called Lefe [PH]. And—Levi. And he came from Belgium and he was wonderful. We all loved him.

LEVINE: He was a prisoner of war?

LUBRECHT: He hi—they han—the prisoner of war was sent to work in the—to—on the farms.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And when my bro—my grandfather wanted to keep him, the government would not permit it. He had family in Belgium and he used to love us children. He made me a pair of slippers before I left out of horsehair. He used horsehair—made horsehair br—bracelets. And we—we would—he would share his hardtack or whatever they called those hard buttons with us. So he was very kind and we liked him. But he slept in a bunk bed, which had doors on it, outside in the wash—where the centrifuge was in the kitchen—towards the stables there next to the kitchen. That's just going back to—

LEVINE: Yeah.

LUBRECHT: —wartime.

LEVINE: Oh, that's interesting. Yeah, right.

LUBRECHT: And then the lamp—they had no—they had no regular electricity. They burned carbon. Oh, and that smelled something awful. They used it on their bicycles. And when those lamps were clean, it was like a battery—the stuff coming out of a battery, you know? It wasn't very pleasant smelling. But [unclear] lit oil lamps, they used. They would come down and they light them. So that was their elec—their lighting at that time. But coming back to the Village, there were girls across the street. And we could sit on the stoop of Mr. Rame [PH] across the street. And he let us sit there. And he enjoyed having the children sit on the shady side of the street. And we would embroider.

LEVINE: And were there other immigrant children?

LUBRECHT: No, but there was one girl who had a grandmother who was—her name was Betz [PH], I think—her grandmother had been German. She knew a few German words. Of course, my sister had had English. And she was three years ahead of me. So s—she would go to the grocery store to the little man. And he said, "How much?" We would buy peaches. Oh, we loved the fruit. The oran—the peaches, we especially remembered, you know, and the bananas, of course, and the vegetables. But she would—she knew and she could say, "How much?" He didn't know much English either because he was Italian. And next to it was the barbershop and on the corner was a little hotel where we first went the first night. It was Portuguese.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: I think. On Bank Street, on the corner, Bank Street. And the shoeshine man was right there. He had the big steps. Oh, could that man shine shoes with spit and polish, you know. And they used some kind of a yellow stuff to put on and make the shoes shine. That was on Bleecker and Bank Street. See, right off Abington [PH] Square.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And of course, Bank Street had then had a big factory on it. I think it was Fleischmann's [PH] had the—had a warehouse there. Well, warehouse happened to have a fire at Christmas time. And all the Christmas ornaments were on the street. I think Carl still has one of the birds with a tail on it. So they picked up the—which is now the new—you know, became the Bank Street School.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: And that was still there when—when we first came. And they would have block dances.

LEVINE: Oh, what would they—

LUBRECHT: They had—you know, Abington Square has the rotunda there where the orchestra could sit upstairs. Restrooms were underneath. And they would—every Saturday night they'd have an orchestra up there. And kids—and people could dance in the streets. And then they had the vendors with the soft ice. You—for a penny, you could get a cup of ice and watermelon. Well, watermelon didn't agree with us so well. They sold those while—you know, in the evening, Saturday evening. It was hot in the summertime. And then there was a little delicatessen store on Bank Street, a grocery store. And he had the ice. And what else did they sell? Of course, they called them nigger babies at the time—the Tootsie Rolls made out—you know. And you could buy them for a penny or you—but penny candy there. And the man came from my mother's hometown, Oldenburg. [tape off/on]—railroad station if you so wished. But we used to walk it. It was a long walk to the railroad station. And we had to take the train from Oldenburg to Ohald [PH], where we had to change trains. Ohald was a stop at—a train stop. And we had to take the train to what they called Strichlingen [PH], which is now—is no longer a railroad station. But at the time it was. And that's where I'm coming to the—the smallest speech area in Germany—smallest speech island, they call it. And I have it here in my little calendar.

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE B]

LUBRECHT: —[unclear]. Oh, of course she enjoyed talking with him, Mr. Zindeman [PH], because they'd had a jewelry store in Oldenburg. And the—and the iceman—we had to have ice delivered to us. We had an icebox. You know, the one where the water came through. And that was Frank—whatever. He—he was in the basement on Bleecker Street and he would deliver the ice, a very nice young Italian man. The fish store was Italian, Regario's [PH]. And that—that's another—coming to school. We'll get to the school in a minute. And of course, we could sit there on the stoops. The flower wagons came through on Saturday morning. They sold flowers off an open wagon. And, of course, Eighth Street had the tulips. I loved Eighth Street. And so—and then, of course, Sister Louise found us. We went to Sunday school at St. John's, Christopher Street. And on Saturday mornings she had me come in and we would sew patches. They—she made quilts for the Koreans.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: In those years. Imagine, 1922, they were—the missionaries—for the missionaries, they were sewing quilts. And there were little pieces too. We had to sew it together. And that was Sister Louise. She was lovely. And of course we joined the Sunday school.

LEVINE: Now, was she—she was a Catholic nun?

LUBRECHT: No, no. She was deaconess.

LEVINE: Oh, a deaconess.

LUBRECHT: They called them sister at that time.

LEVINE: [unclear].

LUBRECHT: But I don't think they have them anymore. But she was unique and very lovely. And of course, the bakery, the Klines [PH], they were on Bleecker Street and they went to the church. That's probably where she got her information. They were Hungarians. And the—and Christopher Street. Oh, we had—we could walk there, you know, and the undertaker w—oh, what was her name? Ome Danicus [PH]. They were also next to—near the bakery there and they went to the church. So a lot of the people from the church lived in the area. So—

LEVINE: Now, what was the denomination of that?

LUBRECHT: That was evangelical Lutheran church.

LEVINE: Oh, Lutheran.

LUBRECHT: Which is now the gays' capitol of the world.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: Christopher Street has—and they're using the church for that. But the minister who was there confirmed us, married us, baptized my son, Charley, my—we were all three married in that church. My brother had a different minister.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: So—and Pastor Overlander [PH]. And I found a letter he wrote to me when I was back in Germany one time. So he was very nice. And so village life was very interesting in those day—the fish store, as I said, the—Regario's—I think the girl was in my class in school. S—

LEVINE: Well, it sounds like a mixed neighborhood.

LUBRECHT: It was—Bleecker Street became Little Italy a little while down.

LEVINE: So there were a lot of Italians and a lot of Germans, it sounds like.

LUBRECHT: Then German came in '22 because, you know, your immigration laws did not permit every country to send—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —their people over, so that in my classes I remember were mostly Italians or Hungarians or Germans. And we were all put into one class. Mrs. Slavik [PH] was our teacher and she taught us English. We were a mixture. And I remember we had to make our—our dresses for cooking. We had to sew. And then they'd have their Christmas shows and things like that. And the gym teacher had the Christmas show. So I had to do the minuet because I was very skinny and t—well, small in stature. But my great aunt, Contadina [PH], brought my mother to the show. Mom never missed a show. If we were in school and performed, she was there. They believed in having us perform. And so the teachers sort of liked us and it was nice.

LEVINE: When you say it was a special class, was that just for learning language—

LUBRECHT: For the immigrants.

LEVINE: —or for the whole—

LUBRECHT: No, no. For the immigrants to learning English.

LEVINE: And—and did you stay in that class all day?

LUBRECHT: No, no, no. All day, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: But the minute classes changed—you know, when—when they had the change of classes in September, I think—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: In Germany, it was the spring, you see.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: Easter—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: —was change. Semester change.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: And the—

LEVINE: Once you learned enough English from—

LUBRECHT: No, then they must have tested us as they went along and put me into the fourth grade. They thought I belonged there. But I'd had all the pronouns and nouns and all that in Germany before that, but had to relearn it all in English. And so you lost a little along the way.

LEVINE: How did the school compare with the school you had attended in Germany?

LUBRECHT: Oh—

LEVINE: Did you make any comparisons?

LUBRECHT: Oh, we couldn't compare because we were already changing classes, teachers. We had to go—my—just before I left in the—in the next class—were getting a little difficult for me—we had mythology. We had the German history. You know, the old German history. They brought you back to history. But the history started in the second class of school, in the higher educational class. First, they concentrated on language, French, and religion. You had religion in the first class when you came in. Quiets everybody down a little bit. And then the teachers—the first time—oh, wait a minute. We were put into a—well, a palee [PH], a little palace way off somewhere. We had to walk to another building for our classes. And, oh, what I should have mentioned was what they called the Quaker food.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: We were fed during First World War—they had chocolate soup. And, well, it's chocolate drink and we thought it was soup and these little frankfurter rolls.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: And they—they called that Quaker speize [PH]. Hoover. You know, the Quakers were feeding the children. Milk was served. There were—women came in with great big milk—what—you know, you saw—

LEVINE: Big cans.

LUBRECHT: Big—big milk cans.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: That were—that are now antiques.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: They came in with those. It was warm milk. I loved the skin on 'em.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: And we could—in recess, we would get milk. They gave us milk during recess.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: After the religious class was recess and we'd get milk. Our recess was outside. We could go outside and play and, you know, we'd play little games and what have you. But there was always a big place where you can have recess, the classes all together outside—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: If the weather permitted. And that's where the French teacher came in and just talked French with us and no German was mentioned. He just later on—and then, of course, during the war we went—but the Quaker—I want to bring out that the Quaker food that the Americans fed the German children, milk and chocolate and what looked like frankfurter rolls. You could get those during recess, mainly those who needed it.

LEVINE: And—and did—and you said pea soup? Did you say pea soup?

LUBRECHT: No, no. Chocolate soup.

LEVINE: Chocolate soup.

LUBRECHT: It was chocolate drink.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: We thought it was soup, you know.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: It was thick, like a chocolate pudding.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

LUBRECHT: A thick—a thin chocolate pudding, it seemed like.

LEVINE: I see.

LUBRECHT: And of course, we all enjoyed that because you couldn't get chocolate at that time. Of course, yes, they did have chocolate. I don't know where their chocolate came from. Holland, I guess. But then I wanted to bring out that the Americans fed the German children, the Quakers. They were called Quaker food, Quaker speize [PH]. And that, I just wanted to remember. But I remembered, now comparing that to our recess in P.S. 3, which I attended, it was a downstairs area, you know, in the school—schoolyard, enclosed, where they had tables also where you could, you know, get some—something to eat, I guess. But outside were the vendors that came from Varig [PH] Street where they kept their frankfurters, little carts, their pushcarts. They—and they were selling sweet Mickeys [PH] out on Grove Street. Sweet potatoes. We—now, where they're heated. Hot and sweet potatoes.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

LUBRECHT: And of course, the chestnuts. But of course, we didn't buy those. We would take our lunch along. But they did have lunch in the inside in the inner court there in Bier [PH] Street. I hear it's being remodeled right now. It was across the street from St. Luke's Church.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And—and they did a lot of filming on—on Grove Street there and the actors and actresses would come in there. I think they had cars at that time while I was still in P.S. 3. And they would make—they would be filming in the Village. They used one of those houses there for [unclear]. The movies came into being, you know.

LEVINE: Do you remember your first movies?

LUBRECHT: Oh, yes. Christmas Eve, we were sent to the movies so we wouldn't see the Christmas tree until—we never saw the Christmas tree until Mom was a—had it all ready and opened the door. And her first words for her first Christmas tree, which was, of course, from wall—floor to ceiling—“Isn't it beautiful?” said she. [chuckles] So, of course, Mom didn't know English. But she was self-taught because she came from East Frisia, and where the English was mixed into the language she didn't have too much difficulty learning it. She worked in the store in the back where they gave lunch. It was a gold mine at the time because—

LEVINE: The delicatessen?

LUBRECHT: The delicatessen and lunchroom. But the lunchroom was in back of the deli and Heidi's Candy, Westinghouse—all those places were downtown in New York on Hudson Street. They were located there and they would—the men would come in to eat. They didn't mind sitting on beer boxes because Shatzi [PH] was very good to them and gave them generous portions. And for years—you know, for many years they were down there on Hudson Street. But Trinity Church owned the property. They leased it. When Trinity Church sold it to the World Trade people, they lost it. But it was a very interesting neighborhood. The trolley car would go there. And we had a big—Pops, as we call him—his supper. And he would say, “Walk home. Save your nickel.” It was a nickel for the trolley. And the trolley would have a flag on it with a red ball in the middle, a white flag with red ball, Japanese flag, to tell us that the ice was safe in Central Park. We'd take the trolley car to Central Park and go skating there. Of course, we had to get shoe skates. Of course, the only type of skates we used to have were the kinds you used the key and they'd fall off very nicely, so that Central Park was our experience before the subway came in. Eighth Avenue was torn up afterwards. They put the subway in. And that was still not—you know, it came later. And the 23rd Street Opera House was there.

LEVINE: Hmm.

LUBRECHT: And we were used to seeing the vaudeville. They only had vaudeville there. Oh, the best one was what we called the Dump on Christopher Street, was a movie house. And they showed Jackie Cooper, the Kid, one of the first ones I saw there. And of course, the piano player was there playing his piano up front because you didn't have sound. And Charley Chaplin, of course, was popular at the time. In the Sheraton, you'd see the movie. We went to the Sheraton that first—that—there was no movies. It was Looney Tones—Toons they showed.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: And we were sent there so that Mom could get ready for Christmas Eve. And then, of course, through the curtains we saw that the Christmas tree was there. And that's when she said, "Wasn't it beautiful, the first Christmas?" And the apartment was a two, three, four-room apartment, went into five—maybe five room. But it was a parlor, a kitchen with the icebox, a dining room and one bedroom and a little alcove sort of a room that my mother and father used off the parlor with a big—

LEVINE: Curtain?

LUBRECHT: They didn't call them curtains. Not a drapery either. It'll come back—drawn across it. That was their bedroom.

LEVINE: How did your living quarters compare between what you left in Germany and—

LUBRECHT: Well—

LEVINE: —what you went to in Greenwich Village?

LUBRECHT: Well, it was different because there we were in the city where you could roam around, you know. You could go outside one f—one level. We were on the ground floor. And we could go swimming in the hunte. They had regular swimming lessons and they had, like, for [unclear], a lift for those who were in the deep water, who could swim. My sister was ready for that. We had sectioned off for beginners and intermediates that were sectioned off with wood. The boys were on the other side and the girls were on this side. And they had the—the little changing rooms, you know, where you could change your clothes with a bench and a door. And my brother, of course, fell in—into the me—into [unclear] with his clothes. We were sent home to get fresh clothes but I, my sister and her friends took care of him there. He learned to swim in a hurry. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Well, wait. I'm going to p—[tape off/on]. Okay, we're resuming here. So let's talk about you—you went to P.S. 3.

LUBRECHT: I wen—

LEVINE: And then how far did you go and [unclear]?

LUBRECHT: All right. At P.S. 3, I was put into the fourth grade. I was promoted to the fifth grade. While I was halfway through the fifth grade they sent me into the sixth grade. And I had—Miss Palmer was my fifth grade teacher. I missed out on mythology, which they were just starting to teach. And I went to Miss Lyons [PH] class, who was an expert in math. And Dr. Taylor came to see our class and we brought him a shamrock on St. Patrick's Day. And I have a picture of me in that class where they took pictures of the class at that time. Miss Rochester was the principal and we had some very lovely teachers. Miss Bass was our biology teacher in junior high. They put us—put me into the rapid advance, they called it those days. And then later on, when I asked Trude Weil [PH], our superintendent of schools in Washington Heights—I said, "Well, what do you think about the advanced class?" She said, "No, it's only to save the city money." That was her remark. They wanted to push the children through school as they were able to do, you see. And then I—I—I went to Washington Irving. Washington Irving was, of course, on 16th Street. So you had to walk from West 11th Street to 16th Street. Crossing Seventh Avenue near St. Vincent's, there was a lovely policeman on the corner who would cross us there because that's a big crossing. We would walk through 12th Street, then 13th Street, walk through Hern's [PH], walk through the department stores, the Woolworth, and wind our way to Union Square, cross Union Square to go to Irving Place. And our classroom, of course, was on the top floor. They did have an elevator in Washington Irving. It was an all-girls school at the time. But art was their specialty. So I took the dressmaking and custom design class, plus the general class. So we went to school from eight o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon. And on 14th Street was a shoe store, Beck Hazzards [PH], and I would wear Buster Brown shoes because you had to walk. My sister would say, "Why don't you get heels?" Whoops, I'm sorry.

LEVINE: Okay. That's all right.

LUBRECHT: And of course, Lewshaus [PH] was on 14th Street there also. And when we were married my father gave us our dinner when our wedding was in the Lillian Russell Room in Lewshaus. So I have some memorabilia from Lewshaus. And Washington Irving, of course

we were from this rapid advance class. We missed the first class of high school and we went right into the ninth grade instead of the eighth. And you only had the three years in the—in the high school. And the—the year before I was—the friend of mine, who was in the class the year before me was—had her graduation. They graduated them in June and February in those days. We had two—two separate, you know—

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: —classes. And so it was a celebration for Washington Irving. I was put into a costume, a gold costume with black lace and they tied up my hair in this [unclear] costume. Teacher dressed me up. I was to meet D—Dean Gildesleeve [PH] from Barnard High School, who was a speaker at my friend's graduation. Well, I was standing outside. All of a sudden, this lady comes in with her little fur stole. I guess it was February. Well, I'm Dean Gildesleeve." I said, "I didn't know who she was." I had to watch her all the way through the auditorium. Washington Irving has a big one with a balcony. And Dr. Zubrisky [PH] was our principal—had to sit on stage behind her while she made her speech and the whole graduation. And she wore a beaded dress like Eleanor Roosevelt. And I counted all the beads on her dress. That was my experience [chuckles] at the graduation. Of course, I graduated six months later, 1930, from Washington Irving. In those days, that's the Depression time.

LEVINE: Right.

LUBRECHT: No jobs to be had. And I missed out on geometry because we went in on the ninth grade and we didn't have geometry. The girls who were able to go to Hunter had—you had to have the math. We didn't know at that time that we could go to night school and make it up. But so anyway, I went back home and what do you do now? So that—well, of course, we always had to help around the house and help with cooking and stuff. But I tiptoed through the tulips. That was the song that was popular at the time. And I still remember. I made myself a hat with the ribbons. In those days, you made your own clothes. And Wanamaker's [PH] was still there and, you know, all those stores on 14th Street, gone by the board, so that I went to the Bell Laboratories on West Street, which was right near West 11th Street. You walked through Abington Square. And that would have been—and then I went to—now, I worked there till the Depression. And then they told me, "Look busy." I was the last one on the totem pole. My sister decided she was going back to Germany to visit so I went along with her and left the Laboratory. Of course, when you came back—we left in July, came back in Dec—early December,

there were no jobs to be had. We went from one agency to the other. They sent me to a soap factory on 34th Street and it smelled to high heaven. And the man there said, "You don't belong here." The bathrooms were unsanitary and what have you. So I saw the seamy side of factory work. And then I walked—I had been a Girl Scout and I failed to mention that when the Girl Scouts meeting was held at the church, and I went as far as [unclear] England, had a le—letter of recommendation. And we were talking about New York Botanical Garden before. I met Mrs. Choat [PH]. My letter of recommendation was signed by a Ann Choat. So when I had occasion to see Mrs. Choat recently, I said, "Who was Ann Choat?" She was Thomas Choat's mother and he was a trustee of the garden and also at the hospital where I worked afterwards. Anyway, my—I was married in '37. I had met my husband in 1935 in Camp Forestburgh [PH], which was run by—was—the property was owned by Dr. Darlington, Thomas Darlington, former health commissioner of New York. And his Fraulein—because his wife had died, she was taking care of his two children—was there. And they opened the camp on the property he owned at Forestburgh. There, I was to meet someone else. I went up with a friend of mine who was working at International Nickel. We drove up on a hot Fourth of July, and the other friend I was to meet there didn't show up. But my husband was there when they had a dance, Paul Jones dance, and he was the only one who could dance because he'd taken Arthur Murray classes before. And I held on to his sweatshirt ever since. So two years later we were married but he was earning \$26 working for Steckard Hafner [PH] where he had been employed. And I said, "Well, we can't afford to get married on that," so we waited two years to get married. And that's where we have our—and then Miss Trump [PH] gave us our piece of property as a wedding present, because she had had trouble with her eye and I was able to take her to the eye hospital and help her, take care of her. So we were taking care of her for quite a while. And that's what brought us up to Forestburgh. And the—and then when my children both went—attended Bronx High School of Science, plus New York University. And Peter had graduated and Charley was behind [unclear], of course, four years different. And he was about to gra—he was just finishing high school and I was—had been going down to medical center because Charley had had seizures. And I started Seizure Parents Assoc—Seizure Clinic Parents Association. That's another story. So in 1950, he became a patient at the clinic. And he—they needed someone to pose for "Variety" magazine. And they met at the Piccadilly and Charley became their poster, providing they didn't use his name. I said, "He'll change." "I don't care." So the first picture, he got \$5 for the po—"Saturday Evening Post" and for the EEG picture. And so the friend who got me to do that through the Variety Club—I still correspond with Dr. Defries [PH], who is now

down in Florida and Shelter Island. So that was quite a while ago. S—so in—and then I went down to—to see Jack Joseph off on the Queen Mary one day. And John Malotnick [PH], who worked for Barnes and Nobles, took me—dropped me off on Madison Avenue where they had a show at the—from the New Y—from Columbia Presbyterian. And a friend of mine was—as a v—head of the volunteers, was showing the—when Eisenhower was the president of Columbia they had an opening of the new heart bed and all. And she’s—“Oh, Friday, I don’t have any volunteers for volunteers for Friday.” I said, “All right, I’ll volunteer for you.” And she put me in a big smock. I said, “I like this. Maybe I’d like to do something like this one day.” And she said, “Wait.” So in January she became the head of the volunteers at Columbian Presbyterian and recommended me for her job as tour hostess.

LEVINE: Oh.

LUBRECHT: That was the third—I was the third and last in line. And so I applied for the job and I—my husband said, “Don’t ask what you’re going to earn. Just go. Enjoy it.” He—I was a housewife till then but very active in the Parents Association, United Parents and all that. So that I got the job because I spoke German. And, you know, at that time all the visitors came in droves to see the hospital, and I stuck it out for 15 years. It wasn’t easy. And so—but that’s when I retired in ’76.

LEVINE: Okay. Can you talk briefly about the Botanical Gardens and your connection?

LUBRECHT: My husband had been with Steckard Hafner on 31 East 10th Street where he got his first job because he was willing to take the \$15 salary. That was the going salary at those days. And he was willing to take it so he worked his way up to St—in Steckard Hafner. And Steckard Hafner handled all the publications for the Botanical Garden at one time. And so that’s how we got connected with Botanical Garden. And later on, we were always active. My children took the course there for the children’s workshop and Pete came home with a first prize. I sported white orchids for Mother’s Day. And then, later on, we were very much involved with the garden and Dr. Andrews, who was an orth—on orthopedist at the Columbia, he started the Visiting Library Committee. He’s the chairman of that, and enticed us to join that. And that’s—we—I’m still active with—on that committee, which is where I met Mrs. Choat, so that we’re still active with that and I still have a lot of work to do with all kinds of stuff. My husband died in 1997.

LEVINE: What was his name?

LUBRECHT: Harry Lubrecht. And he's also in "Who's Who" if you want to check him out.

LEVINE: Okay.

LUBRECHT: And he was so proud of that.

LEVINE: What are you most proud of, looking back on your life. What—

LUBRECHT: I don't know. We raised two sons and both achieved. Both went to Bronx High School of Science. They both got the Re—Regents Scholarship and Charley—what was interesting—for preservation. I had the—the Seizure Clinic Parents Association and all the neurologists, Doctor [unclear], et cetera, come to lecture to the parents. They let—let me go through the files and send out notices. And they were in the health center at 168th Street, which didn't cost us a nickel. And through that, we educated the schools, teachers. One of the doctors went down to the Board of Education with me, and Trude Weil was then the superintendent of schools, who was very friendly with all the parents in the neighborhood. And she was instrumental in letting us go to all the schools and educate the teachers after school at three o'clock. So we did Washington Heights and Harlem.

LEVINE: Wow.

LUBRECHT: And then you could safely go into Harlem, which you cannot do anymore. So the garden has always been very dear to me. As you know, I just got the call now to go to through the archives, help with the archives.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

LUBRECHT: And Missouri Botanical Garden—you see the calendar over there—they're also good friends because my husband had worked with them. And I get my calendar every year from the Missouri Botanical Garden.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Okay, well—

LUBRECHT: Now, you've got it.

LEVINE: We—we're [chuckles] at the end of the tape and I want to thank you so much. A wonderful interview and I know there's, like, a lot more that you remember that we didn't tape. But maybe [unclear].

LUBRECHT: Well, I'll—I'll send you what I remember in my childhood.

LEVINE: Wonderful. Okay. I've been speaking with Ann—

[END OF INTERVIEW]