

**EI-1239**

**MAX EBEL**

**BIRTHDATE: JUNE 1, 1919**

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**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 82**

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**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PHD**

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**GERMANY, 1937**

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- **GERMANY: SPIELHOF**
- **THE US: BOSTON, MA; CAMBRIDGE, MA; NEW LONDON, NH**

**INTERNEED AT ELLIS ISLAND, 1942**

LEVINE: Today is April the 12<sup>th</sup>, the year 2002 and I'm here in New London, New Hampshire, with Max F.J. Ebel (pronounced with a hard "A").

EBEL: That's right. It's *Ebel* (pronounced with a hard "E")---

LEVINE: Ebel (correcting her pronunciation).

EBEL: ---otherwise they would---they spell it with an "A".

LEVINE: With an "A". So ok, I see, Ebel.

EBEL: That'd be Abbel (pronounced with a soft "A")

LEVINE: That's how you say it? Abbel?

EBEL: Abbel'd be, no, we say Ebel.

LEVINE: Oh Ok. Ok. So we'll say it Ebel. And he came here ah, for---from Germany to the United States, he immigrated in 1937 when he was seventeen years of age, on a ship called the "New York". The reason I'm interviewing Mr. Ebel is that he was also interned as a, quote, "enemy alien," uh, during World War Two. And he---and at that time, he passed through Ellis Island. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and ah, we'll start at the beginning. Mr. Ebel again, if you would please say your birth date and where in Germany you were born.

EBEL: I was born in the city of Spielhof (ph) and I was born there (?) I lived there until I was seventeen. And I left Germany because of politics reasons.

LEVINE: Ok. Just uh, say your birth date for the tape.

EBEL: My birthday is June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919.

LEVINE: Ok. Now before talking about uh, you're leaving, if we could talk just a little bit about your early life there before you had the idea to leave.

EBEL: Well, my parents were split. My dad came to this country in 1929 and worked as a woodcarver and---

LEVINE: Now did you correspond with him in those years?

EBEL: Uh, vaguely. But we always---we always knew where [each were at war?] and my dad heard of the c---calamity through some friends, what's going on over in Germany, some people came here before that and you know, you know German society was always stuck together in (?) you know, clubs. There was the (?) and all the other clubs out by the harbor, you know whatever. You know there were---they was pretty closely linked in---in Boston.

LEVINE: Oh. You're talking about German clubs in Boston? That---

EBEL: And, well no. I started going back to my youth.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: I lived with my father my---as I said [until]---when '29---[he] come here and worked as a woodcarver. And then afterwards went into business with himself. And my father heard that I could---in fights over politics. I didn't want to join the Hitler Youth so uh, I was opposed to (?), still today. And uh, so the uh---I wrote to my dad and I said "gee, something's going on." A lot of my friends were going to school with, they uh, they had these big daggers that was the Hitler Youth and uh, some of my school chums and I got into a fight and I got a scar right there, right here.

LEVINE: Ummm. On your hand, you are---right there.

EBEL: So anyway that's---

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: He got cut too. But anyway this uh, this is about my life. I went to grade school then I went to trade---trade school. I also been on a (?) at that time and I worked for fifty cents a week (coughs) so, big deal.

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: And ah, I guess---I guess I gave it to my mother (laughs). But anyway ah, I was a full-fledged cabinet maker when I came here.

LEVINE: When you came here, uh-huh.

EBEL: When I left. And I made all these pieces here, this---

LEVINE: Oh, they're beautiful.

EBEL: Whatever you go around (?), I made.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So, but anyway, my dad went back to Germany and he passed away over there on short notice. Saturday he was here, left airport, and before he left uh, down Boston at Logan, he went, flew over to Germany, went to see my grandmother because she was ailing, this is his mother. And so, anyway, I get to tell grand---next one to follow him, Wednesday, that my father had passed on. And my father (?).

LEVINE: Wh---what year was that?

EBEL: That was in, uh seventies.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh. Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So anyway, I took the business over and---when we moved up here, Rose and I were just a (?)---a young couple and we moved up here because the business moved from Boston, or Cambridge, that's where the company was. And ah, so, anyway we uh, landed here and we've lived here ever since.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And so then I---I was making church pews and things like that and custom furniture, whatever you wanted I built. So (coughs)--- so anyways that was the experiences uh, cabinetmaker-wise, and my shop was burned out by an arsonist. And so, we had our hard road, and a good road.

LEVINE: Where---where was the shop that was burned?

EBEL: In (?), St. (?), New Hampshire.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: Yeah. Was a big one. Had to be big when you build pews.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: And the equipment. So from there we---my wife and I, we started up again, and then why, we called it quits. I said, "this is not gonna work." I was getting poorer instead of making a week's pay. Everything was ran down and (?). So anyway that's, as far it---it goes, and then---then you know the rest that you want to know.

LEVINE: Well, getting back to your very early life, do you remember when your father left?

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: Germany?

EBEL: Yes. I was---I was ten. And I had a little brother that was four years younger and I had an older sister that was three years older.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And uh---

LEVINE: What was, why--- did he leave when he left, do you know?

EBEL: Yeah. It was just a matter of no work for my father's talent. He was a master. Way up here. I got things at home to prove it.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: He was a figurist. And he would cut either stone or---or wood. And either way, I guess I sort of have a little bit of him, and it shows in my grandchildren too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: The artist is there. (?) you know, he was quite a talented man.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was your father's name?

EBEL: Same name as I.

LEVINE: Same name?

EBEL: Same name.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Maxamillian Franz-Joseph Ebel Senior.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what would you say he was like as far as his personality, his temperament?

EBEL: Oh he was, he was real---really a jolly man. Uh, he never drank. He never smoked. And, oh, he stayed his uh, course, was the (?) thing.

LEVINE: That was important.

EBEL: A lot of times, my father would take a chair back---this is way back in the '30s, and we made chairs (?) and all the other and had to took 'em into the streets (?) so it was hard going.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: Until I came here and gave him a little bit of relief.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: And I done all the cabinet work, he did the carving and worked together and we worked together until I got the internment.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well now, how about your mother? What was her name?

EBEL: My mother was Mina (ph).

LEVINE: And her maiden name?

EBEL: Lehr.

LEVINE: L—

EBEL: L-E-H-R. Lehr.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And uh, and was she a part of your life? What---when you were growing up?

EBEL: Oh yes.

LEVINE: Yeah. Un-huh.

EBEL: Definitely. I was just with my mother, period.

LEVINE: Yeah I wasn't sure if you---

EBEL: Yeah. My, no, my father left in good---in good standing you know---

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: But uh, he needed to get out. His talents were wasted there and he had to drive up miles and miles. Then my ah, a friend of my father's he went to school with, come over here. And it was the, I believe it was the time when they built the (?) in Washington D.C. and they carved all the ends, I understand. I haven't been in it because I couldn't get there, and it was made in Cambridge. There was a big furniture outlet in Cambridge and uh, all the wood carvers come together and they put in (?) all at the same time. There was, there weren't many, except the Italian, and they're mostly stone people because there wasn't any wood carving.

LEVINE: I see, so his friend was in Cambridge, Mass and---and then---

EBEL: No. He, they were in---most of the time, I'm talkin' Boston, the only time Cambridge came was---

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: I came to Cambridge on Essex street in Central Square not to far away from Harvard.

LEVINE: I know where that is, yeah.

EBEL: Yeah, and I lived on Essex street.

LEVINE: I see. But it was Boston where your father had the friend---

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: ---who went to Boston and then he went to Boston. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah. And then he made a lot of friends in the---in the carving, because there's all the modeliers (ph), the casting, which my father did. My father made all kinds of figurines they're still, Karen, they're actually, our girls, Karen and Julie, my wife and I (?) and I showed 'em what their grandfather did and we did a statue, and that I can remember. He did a statue of the uh, uh, one of the Habsburgs.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: Uh, let's see what was the (?), was Rudolph.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Rudolph. Kaiser. Kaiser Rudolph.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And they were all buried in my hometown so it's quite a historic---

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: --- at the same time, it was an old (?) drop-off. That's how the city started way back in year one. And another five years, going up the road, the uh, the stone, well the cornerstone was laid for the dome. And I have a couple, even then there was a walled city and it was a free city. And ah, there wasn't, ah, any occupation there until Second World---First World War, was when the French occupation and they still today.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: But now they have sister cities between, and I don't think France and Germany will fight again, at least that's what I'd rather think--- feel about it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And---

LEVINE: So in Boston, was---was that, um, a lot of German people, doing their---doing. . .

EBEL: Defi---definitely yeah. There was a big, uh, community there at---at Columbus Avenue. There was a monastery there and ah, that was what---Columbus Avenue I think that's where the German settlement was---

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: ---year's back. And ah, then uh, they moved out because undesirable people would come in you know, like Negroes or some of them other (?). I think the uh, but the uh, whole---all the people went out to Jamaica Plain---

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Which was the German Society.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: And then now they're out in (?) and (?).

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: The only thing here is that Germans c---controlled the city politically wise, but they were not politicians they were sinners.

LEVINE: They were saints?

EBELE: Sinners.

LEVINE: Oh sinners (laughs).

EBEL: Yeah, they had more fun you know, from drink and from having a--- having a good time at the bar and whatever---wherever they go.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah there's quite a few German restaurants still around---

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: ---and so far, in other words, that was the life and otherwise we did do other things. We were very poor at the time that my father left because we were put in you know, welfare, except my mother had done some other work. Mostly she was a housewife or a mother, and was a good one two. And I never seen my mother again.

LEVINE: I see, after you left, uh-huh. Would you---

EBEL: Then there was the war. It's funny the way that went. The---came here, I want to be happy and everything else. My father and I got along so well, and then my stepmother got along well with me so, so I lived with them for, until I was twenty-eight and I had my own room and all that. And we were just fine, until my father left and of course, that was a bummer, and he figured he'd have a good time. He did see his mother, she lived to be ninety-six and he, when he died he was seventy. But, what do you do?

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah.

EBEL: So---

LEVINE: Well about uh, just to finish off with your early life, um, you went to school in Germany?

EBEL: Yes. I went to eight---eighth grade. So in Germany the fachhochschule, what that means is a regular, like a high school here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: I graduated from that.

LEVINE: And you were active in the Boy Scouts.

EBEL: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: What was it about the Boy Scouts that made---caught your interest and maintained---

EBEL: Yeah the---the, well, I like the woods.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: I like outdoor life. And I started the Boy Scouts group over here in (?) they still go on. It's been fifty years but (?) you come from Boston and figure everything is the same, you come out here and there was absolutely nothing. There wasn't even a Catholic Church and there were only two couples, my wife and I and Dr. Duby (ph). He uh, he started, when he passed on he lived in out of the (?) or the farm or whatever but, but anyway we built the church which I designed the interior and exterior.

LEVINE: And where is the church?

EBEL: In (?).

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: It's a Catholic Church.

LEVINE: Now were you uh, religious when you were growing up? Were you a strongly religious boy?

EBEL: I was in a split, in a split family. My mother was Protestant and my father was Catholic and I, as I remember it, now this is oh years, you know, my father rode a motorbike and his cap was (?) "S.A.", the Socialistic [sic] Party and then, and it wasn't brown, it was

green, I think it was said that he was a Nazi. But, so that didn't sit too well with the church, so he was forced to---to do something.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So he, so he left the church then did he?

EBEL: No. He didn't leave the church but he uh, he left (?)

LEVINE: Oh he left---

EBEL: I don't think he could get any church work anymore.

LEVINE: Oh I see.

EBEL: You know, churches been all built.

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: He was down in Salzburg, he was in Munich and all these different places. This was before he---he got married, my father got married (coughs), so, then he went to school again. (?), which is a big military base you've maybe heard of.

LEVINE: Yeah?

EBEL: And uh, so then he took up figurist and learned to do more of the, I don't know, the points on the body you know and all that and then, then he come over here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And his friend was uh, John Lawrence (ph).

LEVINE: Lawrence?

EBEL: Lawrence.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And he came from (?). My father and him were buddies.

LEVINE: So what churches did your father have a---have a hand in, in this country, do you---

EBEL: In this country? Oh, I can tell you a few---

LEVINE: Yeah?

EBEL: There's some in the---the Congregational Church in Peabody, there's the, I built ah, the (?), I finished the chapel for him. Did the pews, matched them up to the old ones that were two inches across. So, that's my famous one.

LEVINE: And where's that one?

EBEL: That is in Peabody---

LEVINE: Peabody.

EBEL: Outside---outside of the (?).

LEVINE: Yeah. I know Peabody.

EBEL: Yeah anyway, as you come out of the tunnel and you go towards, what is it? Peabody or Lynn I guess, forgot but I will remember, and it's the church that sits back in the square there. And you can see my father's name, or my name in the altar on the railing.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: It's a---it's a round church.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: We built the church, the whole thing. Everything, interior-wise. Then uh, they built a Catholic Church and I made all the pews for that and I think what is nice, they incorporated my father's carving. My father had made some, what do you call them fleur---fleur de-lis?

LEVINE: Fleur-de-lis?

EBEL: Yes. And those are incorporated in the new church. That was um, already made, but is still there.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And, I don't know, a few other donated, like from my father put a big cross inside the church, but not long before Easter. Anyway, (?), otherwise I just brought up my family and tended my business and--  
-

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: ---until I had a heart attack and then that was over.

LEVINE: Ah. I see. Ok. Well let's just, let's just finish off now with, um, your mother growing up, you said she was a really good mother. What--  
-how would you describe your mother and her personality?

EBEL: My mother was a very, uh, soft-hearted person. She was out to help anybody, including Gypsies.

LEVINE: Do you remember Gypsies?

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: Yeah?

EBEL: That, well yeah, definitely?

LEVINE: What do you remember about them as a little boy?

EBEL: Oh, what do you call them, the wagons? We were the first, the first water pump, and they come from (?) down the Reine, wherever they went, but we were the first water pump. Like you know, I remember them coming in to get water, in fact she helped one of--- one woman to get a uh, have a baby. (laughs)

LEVINE: Were Gypsies people who were looked down upon at that point?

EBEL: Well, they were strangers. They were all thieves. (laughs)

LEVINE: That's what I thought (laughs).

EBEL: But uh, if they get you, well they got you. Otherwise they were nice people, no different than we are. Except that they were Hungarians or Bulgarians, but they always treated my mother right and I guess the word got around so if they needed anything you know, my mother might be you know, a couple eggs or something. Come to kind out they had more money than we did. (laughs) But there was a nice wagon and two horses. Maybe a goat along the road with it, perhaps? And there was a settlement there where they could park, you don't park in the city. Gotta stay outside the city. And uh, there's a river there and uh, they could soak their wagon wheels so that they won't (?). And then actually would go with these basket or all kinds of things 'cause they, the wagons were able to you know, of course they had all those fights you know, that was a big thing for us kids to see, when they'd get at each other, those bloody fists (laughs)

LEVINE: Were they---were the fights that were between like ah---an entertainment? Or they were just fights?

EBEL: They were just fights.

LEVINE: Just fights, just fights. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Usually---usually about women.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And the women and their husband, so---

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And then later when I came back to Germany that, where I was, was nothing but houses. My---my house was bombed and well, actually from shrapnel it was, the next door neighbor across the street was completely wiped out and all them killed. So all these kids from uh, Germany, there's only about fifty left out of uh, hundreds.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well um, so just to summarize before we talk about your leaving Germany. You had a childhood where you didn't have a lot of---

EBEL: I didn't have a lot---

LEVINE: --- extra money.

EBEL: --- but I had a happy home.

LEVINE: But you were---

EBEL: I raised hen, I raised uh, chickens and I raised rabbit.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And I ran a few geese and ducks. So I uh, I had a little garden. And like we could use in the kitchen here.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: So then the rest of it, whatever I didn't have, I had to steal. Like my grandfather's grapes and etcetera (laughs).

LEVINE: Your grandfather's graves?

EBEL: Grapes. The uh, he had wines there.

LEVINE: Oh grapes. Uh-huh.

EBEL: He was sitting inside of the house and he would come back to my house and tell my fathers we've been stealing all the grapes while I'm sitting in there and never knew---

LEVINE: It was you

EBEL: ---(?) We come down on the backside of the house and go down the uh, fields, and steal from the outside while he was in--- (laughs). So my grandfather he was a truck driver and worked in a water mill and---

LEVINE: Do you remember---

EBEL: All my father's side worked in a water, in a---in a mill. There was a big w---water mill there, had kindergartens and everything else.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh.

EBEL: (Coughs) So then the company, the person uh, who ran it, they uh, they died out. And not---there's not really so many stories there. It's a you know, you got to forget it all.

LEVINE: Well---

EBEL: But my---my father's side, my father's parents uh, they came, I don't know, Huguenots or something and---that's uh, Ebel is actually Swiss.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: It's not German. And my uh, grandmother came, grandfather came, this is mother's side, came with the Huguenots.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: So, so when they got kicked out of France they came up the Rhine and um, eventually worked their ways up to England and then over here. So---

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: So my brother he was four year---four years younger and he and I held everything down and---

LEVINE: Did you work as a child? I mean---

EBEL: No, only at home.

LEVINE: At home. Uh-huh.

EBEL: But I worked for a farmer to get---get some food and I came to Mill T---so I was a Mill boy.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Anything to make it, (?). Sometimes you'd get a bag of potatoes to come home with it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Or chicken feed or something like that. So it was uh, it was a happy house okay. And that, my mother would, as I said, she would go around and, everywhere. She even, of course she (?) Protestant and I was Catholic you know, so I didn't float between the two.

LEVINE: The two.

EBEL: So that's ah, then my brother, he was younger. He had to join the uh, Hitler Youth. Not the Hitler Youth, but there was another step down and if we, I mean Hitler Youth. He was only ten, twelve.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And uh, so uh, he actually had to go in the army and he was sent to Russia. And from there he went A.W.L. and stayed in Germany for a while up until in---America had the (?) Italy. So they says how come you (?) walking around here when there's a big battle down in Italy? So anyway, they went down there and the first night he got captured (coughs) and he spent seven years in (?) on the English (?) at that time, or the base. And he was there seven years.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: Then I had another cousin who was put into the same camp, not a brother a cousin. My, when---when the uh, we were turned over to

the (?) from the military, my cousin Keo(ph) went into the same camp where I was.

LEVINE: Oh. Wow.

EBEL: So, actually all of the Ebel's were interned.

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

EBEL: In a one way or another.

LEVINE: Or another. Right.

EBEL: I happened to be the lucky one. I was here. Then I---I was (?) and uh, I was drafted and I didn't make the first (?) and then things started after that. My father uh, was, interned my the government but he won that case. Then uh, they said, "well he's got a son, why don't we go and grab him." That was quite a battle in uh, '41, '42. It was uh, it was pretty bad. But I was already interned when that all happened.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: So I don't know anything about it except what the paper---  
(garbled voices)--- Karen knows.

LEVINE: Ok. Well, let's just ah, clarify. When you came here, did you come here by yourself?

EBEL: Absolutely.

LEVINE: Yeah. And did---

EBEL: I had ten cents in my pocket.

LEVINE: Wow. And why did you come at that particular time?

EBEL: That was the only time I'm thinking my---my mother could schmooze up with the major who was the uh, commander in the city. He had a son in military release and I got a piece of paper to come back in '39 to finish my uh, duty as a German soldier. Well, you know what I told them (laughs), when I was here.

LEVINE: That wasn't your intention.

EBEL: So anyway I'm glad I did come. I mean I---I'm a very happy man I mean, throughout my life.

LEVINE: Well how did you---how did you get out in 1942?

EBEL: Oh. There was the German Consulate. Not the German, the American Consulate in Stuttgart and I went down there and got the passport and the uh, well at that time I guess immigration went all---all over you know, you're healthy enough, whether you have your (?). So but the um, then I finally got my passport and---

LEVINE: Were there ships actually going across with people at that point? I mean weren't---

EBEL: Yeah. The S.S. Bremen, the S.S. Hamburg, and all I can remember when we went from Bremen, I mean from Hamburg---

LEVINE: (Not understood)?

EBEL: No I came out of Hamburg.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Ah, Hamburg, and then we went over to Le Harve, across the channel on and I saw the cliffs of white over there and there was battle wagons all over the place. Oh it was sort of a, everybody shows their best of uh, ships, gun ships and that. There must've been thousands of them there. And uh, we went right between Germany and Russia, in between.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: You know, Germany and Russia, th---they weren't mixing too well. So anyway, so I say "well Jesus, there's the enemy on one side there and the Germans---there we are---

LEVINE: Going through.

EBEL: So then we picked up more people (?) and uh---

LEVINE: Where did you pick up more?

EBEL: The, at the, more people, other people that went onto the boat.

LEVINE: Where was that? Where you---

EBEL: That was in England.

LEVINE: England.

EBEL: England in Le Havre.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So there were French, English, German, whatever. Then from there we left for the States.

LEVINE: Was---was there the threat of mines? In---in---in the ocean that you---?

EBEL: Not at that time. No.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: No. That was all done afterwards.

LEVINE: Okay. Yeah.

EBEL: It was down by Germany and then Ireland and wherever they had these bombs.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE B

LEVINE: What did you feel, what were you thinking, what were you feeling when you were a seventeen-year-old crossing the ocean and--- during the war time and---

EBEL: Well, I tell you I was on a round table and, with three nuns---

LEVINE: Nuns?

EBEL: Nuns. And well, one of those---one of those people got frustrated with me being young, I sort of rolled with it, your ship, they set solid, and they got seasick. And of course I was a hungry boy, believe me, and well I got there first (?) and the next day this---this other dude got seasick, that was all in the channel coming over here, so I was sitting all alone there with all these meals and I took the best and I left the rest.

LEVINE: (Laughing) So you never got seasick.

EBEL: I never got seasick. No that was one of those things I still can do today. But no I uh, it---it was nice, of course you get lonesome, you know it's good to pick up somebody, you know you get friends with. You know, there were some German girls there I sort of hung around with and they had oh, more money than I did. They went to the balls and everything else and I was out watching the sky.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Which is nice although I (?) when I was here before, so it was quite a, quite a (?)

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well was the a---do you know like was there first second and third class on that ship?

EBEL: Yes. Definitely.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah and I was down in the hold---

LEVINE: You were down in the bottom. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah, well, I think I was on the second floor.

LEVINE: Second floor.

EBEL: The second floor down.

LEVINE: Down. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And I---it was a nice ship. I mean, it wasn't as big as Bremen it was the S.S. New York.

LEVINE: Un-huh.

EBEL: There were two boats coming back and forth to the United States, and then the Bremen got caught by the uh, by the Americans you know, then they sank it. But it would---so anyway, my boat was captured too, naturally and uh, the one I came over with---there was two (?) boat.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: For---for United---United States you know they go (?) together, the whole works. So---

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember when the S.S. New York came into the New York Harbor? When you were coming over?

EBEL: Well it had to be the 28<sup>th</sup>. The 28<sup>th</sup>.

LEVINE: Do you remember the---scene? I mean, did you see the Statue of Liberty?

EBEL: Oh yes. Oh yes. That was the first thing we did it was very inviting. Of course we went into the pier we didn't stop at Ellis Island. And there were these guards. I only had one suitcase and my tools. I still got some tools today.

LEVINE: You do, that you brought. Wow.

EBEL: A (?) and a hammer and a few chisels and---and they were all wooden. All that was I had, and I had one suit and I can remember it was hotter than blazes in New York. And I had a wool, English-tweed suit with knickerbockers. And them days it was the fashion and ah, boy did I sweat (laughs). Then I come to Cambridge---

LEVINE: Well now, did somebody meet you?

EBEL: My father was there.

LEVINE: Hmm.

EBEL: Oh yeah he had to get me. I wouldn't know where to go, you know.

LEVINE: And what was it like, having the reunion with your father?

EBEL: Ahhh, it was a happy reunion as I recall.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Then he says, "well, we've got a lot of time before the next train that goes to Boston" and we run around in New York. I think it was 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue—

LEVINE: Elevated train?

EBEL: Elevated train. And well, stupid me, asked my father I says, "what the hell of all of this stuff hanging out here?" He says well those are (?). (Not understood)--- leave them for the birds.

Then the pier was very filthy. This was the first impression I got was dirt. And you know, they---they never used (?) or something. They knew that ship was coming in, they could've cleaned up. But this---it was unbelievable---

LEVINE: Hmm.

EBEL: ---to my standards, you know (not understood). So anyway (clears throat).

LEVINE: And how about other impressions? When you left the pier and you went around New York that first time?

EBEL: Well I, I was quite in between. I don't know. I---can't say I wasn't happy and I can't say that I was. That first impression left me a bad feeling, I suppose that way. It was filthy.

LEVINE: Well were you also a little homesick?

EBEL: Uh---

LEVINE: I mean for your mother and your sister and brother.

EBEL: Well. Not really. The, I mean the war came in between us and we lost contact. The only way we found my brother was because my father inquired with the Red Cross and found him---finally found him over in Egypt. And---so my stepmother was good to me and---she didn't---she worked as a maid.

LEVINE: So when you came to Boston your father had remarried.

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: So it was your father and your stepmother.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: So I came over on the visa because both of 'em signed. So that's the---that's the way I think it happened.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: (Coughs). But they only got married 'bout a---'bout six or seven months before I came over.

LEVINE: So it was just the three of you living in the same place or did they have---

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah. Well I don't---my sister, she left. Soon my brother and I were the only ones home with my mother and then the war came along and we lost contact and in the meantime my mother had died.

LEVINE: Oh. Oh. So your mother had died before you left.

EBEL: Before, no. She---she was alive when I left but when I was over there the second time my mother had died in between.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: And I never spoke to her. I never spoke to her, that was the---I said goodbye and that---

(a dog can be heard barking in the background)

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: --- was as close as I could get to my mother, having pictures of them, looking at the photo then.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So---but that pretty---well naturally you miss your mother regardless.

LEVINE: Sure.

EBEL: It always comes into your mind I mean I'm not a guy to forget anything. And so that---that was about the life of Germany.

LEVINE: Okay. So now you were in Boston and you were working with your father.

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: And then uh, when did---the sort of trouble start? With the---

EBEL: Well it was, I think it was in September or October after the war started. And Karen knows more about that than frankly I do.

LEVINE: Well just what you remember about your experience---

EBEL: Well, it---the weird thing is not being told where we're going. The guy came in armed, naturally, and uh, he says, "well we want you down at the Immigration Department or something to interviewed once more and then---about the, you know, when I was 4F and all that and I had made the remark that I would rather fight in the Pacific in---instead of against my own country. Which would be natural for a kid who just came home. So, anyway we---they went and took me and instead of taking me to the Immigration

Department they took me to the Immigration Station and closed the door.

LEVINE: Hmm.

EBEL: And I was in behind barbed-wire and I thought, "boy (?)". And then we had visiting hours and by that time I was going with a girl. And she would come in there she would be---oh, censored and they---all the letters, everything---everything that was done, that was sent. And---you know sometimes you know you wanted to send something. You know, like they would say, uh---

LEVINE: "How are you?" (laughs)

EBEL: Yeah (laughs). And the signature (?) and everything was marked out in black. All the letters were opened (coughs).

LEVINE: Well now, could you sit and talk with here when she would visit?

EBEL: Yeah. We could visit in a circle. There was a guard sitting in the middle.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And they kept an eye on us that nothing was being passed but I could sit here with you like this. There'd be another couple over there and another, say (not understood).

That's when I met a Harvard professor. And he taught at Harvard and he was one of these researchers of law.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: He was a law professor. I've forgotten now. I think his name was Coombs (ph). And---he was picked up because he had married, the professor from Harvard was English but they---they locked him up. I don't know what happened to him maybe he got a release to go back to Harvard to teach, that I don't know. But anyway he---he was quite educated so he started a little school and um, learn how to write and read, whatever. And---and I met a fellow the---by the name of Habsburg who was the incoming Kaiser.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: And he was (?) von Habsburg. And I got his signature in one of the magazine, maybe you saw. And---there was him and I, and there was another, there was a Japanese fellow who tried to commit suicide. And we saved him, thanks God. Now he was an old man.

LEVINE: Why don't you tell what, how that happened and what---

EBEL: Well, we were sitting all in one room, naturally, and there was a toilet off to the side and little old fellow, he was no taller than this (gestures), he worked for a lady in (?). And on a Thursday he had his shoes polish and that station, that shoe polish shop was near GE and of course naturally being Japanese, they figure he's spy. So they pulled him in. All he did was he worked for a woman and she was a slave to (not understood). So anyway, we were allowed razors (not understood) these thin razors. Started right here to cut himself like that on both sides and uh, well, he kept flushing the blood down and Mr. Coombs (ph) who was the first one of us in there, I immediately followed him when he hollered, it was an open

toilet you know. And uh, well we went in, well anyway up the(?) to seal the bleeding. And then they took him to the hospital then he come back wearing a towel around his neck.

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: Because uh, you know, so nobody could see the scars. They were zigzagged you know, just the way the blade cut and uh, he must've been seventy years old. Well---

LEVINE: Did he ever talk to you about it? About what put him over the edge?

EBEL: Not really uh, he just told us the story what I just told you. That was the only reason they picked him up for. And---of course they arrested Japanese at that time too.

LEVINE: Yes.

EBEL: So, but he was the unfortunate one. And he was so ashamed of being---arrested that he would commit suicide. Because he wasn't--he wasn't told. Nobody of us was told whether we go home from here today.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: Are we getting released? Or why doesn't, after three months, come finally a hearing.

LEVINE: Is this in Boston?

EBEL: This is all in Boston I'm talking about.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And we got a hearing. My father could sit with me. 'Cause I didn't understand English very well and he understood it better than I did. Thanks to a cousin, kid who worked for my father was same age as I was, Johnny Poindexter (ph) was his last name.

LEVINE: Poindexter? (ph)

EBEL: Poindexter (ph). He was colored. Negro. And he and I exchanged, I taught him German he taught me English.

LEVINE: How did you do it? What---what would you do?

EBEL: Well I would---he would talk to me in English, or write it, then I would write it in German, what he did. Well, during the war he was the translator for (?)

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Yeah, yeah in German. Because he had traveled to all these different countries.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: So it did come---it was great (not understood)

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: That's why you know, of course I sound more like him. I never lost it (laughs). Because I was going by his sound, you know. I---I didn't know the sound didn't reverse (coughs). So anyway, Johnny and I, we chummed around quite a bit and then they would come to the shop, we were there eight hours you know, every so often he would (not understood) my bench. They would, what you do when you have something like that, he (?). Then he went to a library, I believe, Cambridge, I don't know whether that was the University Library, but anyway there was an old negro who spoke German too. And he was on that job when he got—so (?) the old fellow finished (?).

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: So---so he---he got a good job out of it and oh his parents had passed on so---

LEVINE: Uh-huh

EBEL: ---there was nothing much, not much you can do. And he was with us you know, we gave him his money, whatever the pay was in them days, and then the war came along and broke that up.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: You know you had a---every relation you had was broken by the FBI. You know, and it---

LEVINE: Could he visit you, for example, when you were taking into---

EBEL: Well he was then on sea.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: He---he signed up as a Merchant Marine.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: So then he go into (?) twice and he came out and then he says "well that's enough, maybe the third time I won't drown." And they were traveling up the English channel up to Russia or up along Egypt, Tokyo---not Tokyo (coughs), Key or, where all these big ammunition ships come.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: You know, to transports you know (not understood) he was on a supply ship.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And then they got shot twice. By a U boat, lucky enough nothin' sank. Oh, they took water but everything was all right they got back into England as I understand it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: (Coughs) Then there was another Irish kid who worked for us, many types worked for us. They all were in training from---from the military. They got the tools why, just as big as that, that (?) full of tools, of wood-working tools. (Not understood)

LEVINE: Where did they get all their tools from?

EBEL: They got from the Veteran's Administration for schooling.

LEVINE: Ah. Well you know, you mentioned the Japanese man and that he was ashamed.

EBEL: Ummm.

LEVINE: And I've heard that now from several people, the being ashamed, even though being interned was not for something you had done.

EBEL: Well, yeah.

LEVINE: But still there was the feeling of shame. Could you, did you feel that way too? And could you say anything about that? Why---what was the shame?

EBEL: Well I don't know what---what the shame was. Well you felt more like a convict more than ashamed. The Japanese fellow well, he tried to commit suicide, but he never said anything was a very quiet man. Stood by himself mostly, he would eat with us and all that but he never spoke much.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And of course he never---he'd come back for a day or two and apparently the lady he worked for got him out you know, she was quite wealthy. So anyway, but I never felt ashamed, no.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh. Okay

EBEL: No. I never did.

LEVINE: What feelings did it bring out in you when you?

EBEL: Well through the grapevine I heard that you had this law way back when, when the---something to do with a law passed, if you come in as an enemy you know or something they can arrest you if the countries---

LEVINE: Are at war.

EBEL: Are at each other's throat. I says "well if that is the law that's the law." I didn't fuss about it you know, I just went along with it. You have to roll with the ball to---

LEVINE: Like you did on the ship right? Rolled with the ship.

EBEL: (Laughter) Yeah.

LEVINE: Well you were three months then in that room, whatever.

EBEL: Yeah. And up until I got the hearing and then finally the orders came through, Karen's got the papers that Hoover---Hoover had signed my order to be interned. And so, well that's what happened. They gave you a hearing, there were seven men, there were business men, priest, I guess there were Protestant and Catholic and a couple of other guys, business men. And that uh attorney Johnson, and they did take me down there to the hearing. He says "well you know I did have the pleasure to take the people of the U

boat in the First World War." I said "well (?) my goose is cooked" right there and then. So anyway as he would, he would ask me questions and I would answer them. But, he would never let me talk back. No it were a one-sided hearing.

LEVINE: Oh. What would he ask you, do you remember any of the questions?

EBEL: Oh, "when do you do this? Where you do---who you going with? And how come you're in with the boy scouts?" All this baloney. And there was a guy there a (?) man from the station by the---I can't remember the name right now. I did know. And, well, it'll come to me.

LEVINE Yeah.

EBLE: But anyway the --- it was all one-sided. And the boys had told me, in the---in the writing, not in writing, that I was going to be interned. But then there was another cover letter to that, that I should be released and (not understood) the United States. See but that was (not understood) well I went (clears throat) and spent two and a half years behind barbed wire. (coughs)

LEVINE: Where did you go when you left that Boston place?

EBEL: Boston. We went to Ellis Island

LEVINE: And that, and what happened to you there?

EBEL: Well, it was actually not much happened to me except the gate locked behind me and we all there and it was filthy. Cockroaches. Rats. And everything else.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of people there at that point?

EBEL: At that point there must have been over six hundred---hundred.

LEVINE: Really. And they were all being interned?

EBEL: All being interned yes. Or some maybe getting repatriated. Some have signed the paper to be repatriated.

LEVINE: But were there---Were you aware of a Coast Guard big station there?

EBEL: I wasn't until I got sick. I had the tonsillitis.

LEVINE: At Ellis Island?

EBEL: At Ellis Island. That was, oh that was bad. It was cold then and it wasn't a pleasant place to be at. It was felt more like a prison than anything else. But then I talked to the guard and then got a doctor from the Coast Guard station there and he examined my throat and he says, "well, I have to spank your hiney for getting me up." That was around three o'clock, and I couldn't breathe. I was so---the next day they told us to pack and then we were shipped up to Fort Meade.

LEVINE: You still—you still had your tonsils?

EBEL: I still had my tonsils, yes. He didn't ever do a darned thing. He--- didn't even give me an aspirin.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: So uh---

LEVINE: Just before we leave the Ellis Island part, where were you sleeping, do you remember?

EBEL: Well, I know we went through the gate, the pier.

LEVINE: Yeah. Right.

EBEL: And we were on the second floor. A big big big hall.

LEVINE: The big hall.

EBEL: The big hall.

LEVINE: That's where you slept?

EBEL: That's where I slept.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And there were, and that's where there were like six hundred people, other people, sleeping.

EBEL: In that big room.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: It's the second floor.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: It's---a massive room.

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: And there were guards every five feet.

LEVINE: And what was that like there? Were people talking to each other, were people---

EBEL: Oh yeah, oh yeah, I mean they all spoke German.

LEVINE: Everybody was German, it was, in that Great Hall?

EBEL: Yeah. It was a, there were people from New York, from Connecticut, from New York especially. And (not understood) out on eighty-sixth street, there was a guy with me, he's on the picture there what was on the paper, and there was another fellow he goes to the Hungarian restaurant---

LEVINE: In Yorkville

EBEL: ---and we were on our honeymoon we bumped into these guys. So anyway we had a great time.

LEVINE: But but what, I mean, it must've been, everybody was there not knowing---

EBEL: Not knowing. Absolutely not knowing. There was no communications between see the department and the prisoners, whatever you want to call it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: That's what I felt like. And I says "well how did we get on this island, Lord knows?"

LEVINE: How long did you have to stay there?

EBEL: Well we stayed there up until June, I think.

LEVINE: And when did you arrive?

EBEL: In the early part of the year, like in February, January.

LEVINE: Oh. So you were there like three, four months?

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Mmm.

EBEL: And then finally the orders came that we gotta move out. Apparently there had been a letter to me by the Red Cross and---

LEVINE: Because of conditions, you think?

EBEL: Conditions and food. All that was, the food was bad. It was a military meal, you know. I'm sure it wasn't---otherwise I wouldn't be here, you know. But taste wise, you took what you got.

LEVINE: Now were you aware of Italians and Japanese? Being there at the same time?

EBEL: No. No. Absolutely---

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: Absolutely not. I heard that later as I came out---every once in a while we'd get a (not understood). But there was no music, nothing.

LEVINE: No music, no radio.

EBEL: Absolutely not. Nothing.

LEVINE: No newspaper

EBEL: You just were there. Period.

LEVINE: Did you have any, I suppose you could go out at some point?

EBEL: Not. Not very often.

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: Maybe they'd let you out for---I don't even remember if they did let me out. I don't remember going out.

LEVINE: So what did people do all day?

EBEL: (Laughs). Twiddling their thumbs. Play cards or read or whatever. Whatever their hobbies were.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And some would just smoke, that we got. There was no shortage on that. And but food was mediocre.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: And once we got in there, you know, the men, course being German we're clean-loving people, and of course we made sure we catch all this---the rats and there were all the---

LEVINE: Roaches

EBEL: Roaches. And they were, oh, blah (sound of disgust). And we finally got rid of them. We threw 'em out with a cigar. (laughter) Some of them---especially the New Yorkers, they didn't care what either one way or the other, you know. They---So you know I was more on the timid side. I'd just roll with the ball and I says, you know, "later I'll get out of here"

LEVINE: Did you---did you have a library? Did you have books and---

EBEL: No. No.

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: Magazines maybe. What you brought in made the rounds. And we read it again when it come along again. There was some books there but nothing really---

LEVINE: And how about people who were being deported? For other reasons. Not repatriated, but maybe just, people committed crimes or whatever, were you aware of people being sent---No.

EBEL: They couldn't send 'em.

LEVINE: Oh they couldn't.

EBEL: They wouldn't let 'em put them in their prison. If that was the case the (?) all the guys we were that we were people that got arrested right before the war you know, because of espionage and all that and they---they would go around to these different German families you know, oh and a guy come to the house. The first time, this was before I was taken away, he searched the---the house, my room especially. And he was a guard and everything else but he just took everything what I had.

LEVINE: He took it?

EBEL: Yeah. I had a shortwave radio about like that and I always stayed in touch you know, I didn't turn around (not understood) and he took that. He took my father's photo (?) and it was one of those extended frame ones.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: He wanted the lens. So that's, he got a bag after the war. He got the lens and the camera.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: But he needed at that time, they didn't have enough lenses to---

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Supply the army. Or the navy. Whichever.

LEVINE: So did you, when people, the first time somebody came to the house, what did they say? Do you remember?

EBEL: Well he showed me the shield. And he says, "I'm gonna have to investigate you" and that's about it. And I seen the guy sitting on the road by the water.

LEVINE: In a car like across the street or something?

EBEL: No it was out on a hill like, at the bottom of the hill and he would be by the store or somewhere that way he could read in the store, he would watch me. And I never noticed, you know, but it scared me no question about it.

LEVINE: And did they come back more than once before they took---?

EBEL: No. The second time I saw him was when he ---when he took me away. Or arrested me or whatever you want to call it. The, I was behind barbed wire.

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: So, that was the first part of my life.

LEVINE: Yeah. Ok. Well we're right at the end of this tape.

EBEL: Ok.

LEVINE: So why don't we stop here, I'll change the tape, and then we'll keep going. Ok?

EBEL: Yeah.

END OF SIDE B, TAPE ONE

BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: Ok. This is the beginning of tape two and I'm speaking with Max Ebel and I'm here in the New London, New Hampshire. We were just talking about, you were just saying it's the second generation that's bringing the story out.

EBEL: That's right. That's what Karen is doing.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And (not understood) it's kind of an emotional thing.

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah.

EBEL: Particularly as---excuse me for a minute (coughs).

LEVINE: But it still feels emotional from even though it's a long time ago.

EBEL: Oh yes. Definitely. It left your mark. You always can look back here.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: And I (not understood)---very proud.

LEVINE: You're proud.

EBEL: Absolutely. I'm German regardless.

LEVINE: Yes.

EBEL: Never to forget your mother's (?)

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: Well my girls, they were called Nazis and all that in school. And--- Adolf Hitler or some---some stupid remark, belligerent remark, they didn't know even what Nazis were---They heard as much as I did. You know, on the radio. And Karen tinkering around on her computer come on to this so then she made the research and got the papers down in Boston and photocopies and all this came out

and she pursued it. And this is the result---well you're here and well the others are here. And of course she's (not understood). (laughter). So---emotionally I would say it's hard. Even after the fifty-five years. Then have your children be called Nazis and all that, it didn't sit well. And it was that these stupid hillbillies (?) they had no sense and they didn't even know. It was just what the teachers told them or whatever they heard on the radio. And Karen didn't have a very good time in school. She would always come home to complain about it. All three kids, except the middle daughter Linda, she would fight. She would grab 'em by the neck just as soon as not. (laughs) But she protected the other two. So anyway, but you never forget it. You---even at my age, you know you see (not understood) you remember what I'm saying.

LEVINE: Right

EBEL: And the---will come out the same way as all the rest of it. It's only because I've forgot it.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: Doesn't get, that's---that's the point.

LEVINE: Well you're remembering a lot, so---

EBEL: So, but anyway the---that was the end of Ellis Island and then I went across the river and it was military group on the train and a little battalion sergeant, if I remember right and he says, "well here you are." We were all lined up in a line there and he says "I'll get you there either head first or feet first. I don't care. I'll shoot you just as soon as---" Well they thought we were actual prisoners.

See they weren't told we were, they knew they had to guard us but they didn't know.

LEVINE: So they were just transporting you, and--

EBEL: They were just taking us. We were, the Immigration Department overturned all the internees into the army rules or regulations. So anyway he said, he said, "yeah, well, you either go with us or you're going to be dead. We'll take you feet first." Or shoes, I think it was shoes when he made the remark. So anyway, what do we do? We just followed orders, all right? And I think we go in a, then we went to Fort Meade.

LEVINE: So you probably went to Hoboken? So you think? When---In New Jersey?

EBEL: Yeah. I suspect, what it seems to me there's right straight across there's a railroad---

LEVINE: Right. I know where you mean. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And that's where we were.

LEVINE: And where's Fort Meade?

EBEL: Fort Meade is in Maryland.

LEVINE: Maryland. So you were taken there.

EBEL: And then we were taken there and then we got inspected again, you know, physically wise. Health wise 'cause they have all the army shots. And---

LEVINE: Were you taken care of health wise? Were you like with your tonsillitis?

EBEL: Well by that time I, they had given me medicine or it had went away. But I think it was the dampness who caused that. So the--- when we got to Fort Meade we got good food, I must say. And we were there, I think, no more than a week, or something similar to that.

LEVINE: This is the same six hundred, more or less.

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: People right?

EBEL: The whole---the whole bunch of us.

LEVINE: And were there any women or children in this group?

EBEL: No.

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: It was just plain men.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And the---the---we came in and they let us practically run around free. And there were hardly any guards there you know, while we were going from one barrack to the other. They don't---all we did do was just follow each other, you know. I'm sure there were guys there, but they weren't armed if you were in the base. Then the food was good I can remember the (?) and chicken and all the pancakes you could eat.

LEVINE: Well that must have been welcome. (laughs)

EBEL: That was, that was good. I do remember that. There was a German chef who was drafted and he was doing something which was more nourishable so he had a bunch of good guys that he could test it on.

LEVINE: Uh-huh

EBEL: So we ate it nicely. But he was a German fellow. I forget, quartermaster, or something like that.

LEVINE: So there were no military people on the base---

EBEL: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: ---like soldiers, were there?

EBEL: Oh yes.

LEVINE: Oh there were.

EBEL: Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.

LEVINE: At the same time.

EBEL: That's a big one. That was a big camp.

LEVINE: Oh, okay, so at the same time.

EBEL: All we, actually, all we went through was the physical part of the(?) then that's when they took the clothes away from us and gave us all the stuff they had from the First World War. The pants were a mile too big. I got two of those, and I got one of these (?) and a (?) hat from the Navy. I think they wore it in the First World War. So that's--that was that. They took our clothes away.

LEVINE: How did you feel about that?

EBEL: Not very good. I knew then what---what's coming. There you had the Immigration Department and there was no (not understood)--- afterwards they changed it all. See then it was Immigration Department. Then---then that was all right, because then we knew that we were getting in under the International Law 'cause we had smart people there too. They knew quite a bit, you know, how to handle this. There were lawyers, there was every trade that you can possibly think of. And they fought, they got in touch with government and were going between, between us. And inspector, and the board of law, International law, came and the Red Cross would check on us. So, but they only come just rarely, believe me. You don't see any of 'em until. . . And then from there they put us on a (?) and we went down to Camp Forrest, down in Tennessee. And, well when we got in there, the gates closed again. But we were under armed guard and there were towers. That was a, a two

fence line all the way around the camp. And a big ditch. So when it rained, and it rained down there, the ditch would be full of water. You know, it was muddy out there. It was bad. But then Kennedy came. Not Kennedy, Roosevelt came over here to meet the camp. We looked and I'm sure he was told "those are POW's from Germany." And that was us. See, so Hoover wasn't quite the man that everybody thought he was. (coughs) So anyway, we spent a little time down there until they got too many prisoners from Germany. You know after they arrested---after they captured them (coughs). And as I say, my cousin, Keo(ph), he wound up in the same place I did. After we left. So I mean you can see how close-- -how close this is that the world is knitted. The---you can go back in the boonies and you'll find someone that knows somebody.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And, so, but the camp. We were Companies. I was in the Fifth Company. And the other ones were First, Second, Third, Fourth, everybody were all New Yorkers.

LEVINE: Were they still the same, roughly the same six hundred men? Or where there more, or. . . .?

EBEL: No I don't---I think we're, we held---It was by Companies.

LEVINE: And how, about how many in a Company?

EBEL: Ah, I think we were in a hundred in a Company. Some worked in fields or some went in there, we went. We lived in a regular house, army house, six feet by sixteen and a cinder stoke you know, to have fire or whatever when it gets cold. And, but we had a camp

commander. It was called (not understood) or something. They worked together. He gets the order and then he makes sure we get it. I need some help, I don't know what---

LEVINE: I can't think of the name, no.

EBEL: I can't think of the name. But anyway they, they would say, "you can do this, you do your work." There was a regular routine you had to do, you got KP, kitchen. And then you got the latrines. And then maybe you had to sweep you know, your own place. Then you have the laundry, oh heavens.

LEVINE: So was this the first place they, where you were carrying on these kinds of duties that---

EBEL: This was the first place.

LEVINE: to keep the place going and all that?

EBEL: Yeah. Yeah they had theatres. They had all kinds of shows, musicals.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And all this. Because they did allow us the instruments and they put on some very good shows you know that, made up everything what we had. Sometimes we had nothing but a bed sheet, but there's a dress, and later on we paid for it. So anyway, in it, Camp Forrest wasn't---wasn't bad. I was always the type of person who wanted to do something physically. So then I found out that they needed a little help in the hospital. So anyway there was only two prisoners

allowed to go in there. Me and another fellow from New York. And I---we were met a male nurse.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And there were two---doctors there. One was a pretty high muck-a-luck I don't know how (?) if he was a major or lieutenant major, or something like that. He was I don't think from here (?). The other doctor was definitely from here around. So we got (not understood) guys who were sick. And they all repaired them, you know, and operated on them so, Camp Forrest was a good place.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Lot of guys got (?) they got to have an operation, they have it in there.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: And there was sort of a good mix. There were some hillbillies from Tennessee. And as I say, an Italian sergeant, there was a Jewish male nurse. There was a---I, both of us were German. So we put the either in one of these departments, either behind the doctor, putting the lights on the (?) and all that. But we had work there until we got moved again.

LEVINE: How long were you there, roughly?

EBEL: Well I was put in there two or three months.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm. Did you ever hear people talk, when you were interned, pro-Hitler? When you were in there? Pro---

EBEL: More so in Mount Dakota.

LEVINE: Oh. Ok. We're coming to that.

EBEL: That's where we got it.

LEVINE: Ok.

EBEL: The---

LEVINE: Is that where you went after you left Tennessee?

EBEL: That's correct---

LEVINE: So you went from hot to cold?

EBEL: Yes. Cold, oh yes it was.

LEVINE: I bet.

EBEL: So anyway they put us on a train and we went on the Sioux line, which goes from Tennessee around the back way to---to get up there. So we don't see any military installations and all this stuff you know---

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: ---which is crazy, I mean, what can you do there? You got a machine gun there and one down there. So anyway, we were two days to get there. We spent one night (?) in the train, we slept on it. When we got to Fort Lincoln, I'll tell you, that's Hell. When we looked out of the window there was absolutely nothing just flat that's all. Nothin' but weed.

LEVINE: And cold, right?

EBEL: Well in the winter it's cold but come's now it's hotter than blazes.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: You know in the sun, you know. SO anyway we stood there for a while and then the first time they asked for help from the camp--- who wants to go out and harvest all the oats and the wheat and all that. Nobody volunteered for that and, but then they came back again. They had a line going from Bismark, North Dakota, down to Fargo and the troops (?) were all there. They were too heavy for this railing. So they had quite a few jump off the rail and hold up the whole battalion there for a couple of days before it got back on again. And they had an arrangement to---wait or, pipes missing and all that---badly maintained. So then they asked if we want to go out on the railroad. That, I was one of the first ones to say.

LEVINE: Why did you volunteer?

EBEL: Oh I wanted to get the hell out of that barbed wire.

LEVINE: Yeah. Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Anything is better than nothing.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So anyway my room was L3 at Fort Lincoln. And oh, Karen has a stub where I bought a ticket to go to a show or something, stamped at Fort Lincoln.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: I rode along the backside. Then I had some money that we had when we bought (not understood) I don't know whether paper money, it was all coins.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: They would make it like a silver dollar oh, that size, and the smaller ones, pennies. I happen to have one of ten cents I guess.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: (Not understood) But anyway we---I, I want to get back to Fort, Camp Forrest, in the hospital.

LEVINE: Right. Did you miss that, when you left there?

EBEL: And, yeah. So I was asked by the doctors to go with the group to Africa. He would've taken me, but his time was too short. There was only two days before they got their furlough. The camp, oh, everything was cleaned out (not understood). And then that would've helped me in my life, been a big rescue.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Oh yeah. And I founded the rescue squad. We started a boy scout squad and at times they still go on. We got a rescue---I'm forty-five years in the fire department. And I'm retired, not resign, but I retired (laughter), and only due to illness. And---but the way, this was nice. We were outdoors. We lived on a work train. You know it was just cars, we're a bunch a bums with a stove.

LEVINE: Oh. So you mean you didn't have to go back in the camp at night.

EBEL: No. No. We were on our own.

LEVINE: Oh. So that's what appealed to you. UH-huh.

EBEL: This was on your own and on your honor.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And it was more or less, more or less guys who didn't care to be locked up. So there---there's another ten or twenty men and we worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad. We maintained everything between Maine then and Fargo. We laid new rails, put new switches in and all kinds of things. I was always in the work crew when motorized or had something to do with cabinet---you know, cabinet making. So once in a while I have to (not understood) a pound of potatoes. That was all right.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: I was outdoors. It was nice. But one night we got there they had all shotguns, the guards, and they were old. We could of overturned them in a minute. And I, but then there's (?) officer, I still can't even think of, that's not the word I want to say, but anyway it's, we had the company train at a representative of all the men. And he sat with the Immigration Department and we had a desk there. And anything we wanted we had to go through him and then the fellow who was in charge was Mr. Danforth (ph). He was the Immigration Department representative. It was a good job. He made sure we got good food. Some of it was not---it all depends on what the government gave us. And (coughs), but then we would go out and the people who were the railroad people who was the engineers and all them told us how, they were under arms. But because of these guys standing guard and they said absolutely we're not going to do any work until, you've got to get rid of these guards here (?).

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And ah, they did. So then we only had one guy escape.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And he got as far as Chicago or somewheres a little further down, I don't know.

LEVINE: And they caught him?

EBEL: Yeah. Finally they caught him. But he had a little dirty stick in, I guess, in civilian life. So but anyhow, meanwhile the trains would have to stop when we are not ready, you know we can try to close

but sometimes we had a bit of a few more spikes into the wood or it'd de-rail.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And he hung out to meet the carriage, like a hobos (not understood)

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: He got out of town, so, and then they caught him I guess hitchhiking or something like that and I don't know, you can't hide out there there's not as much fat. (laughter) Behind a bush maybe, if there is one. The only bushes I ever saw was on the railroad.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: Well they were fertilized, you know, you know what I mean?

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: Yeah and then it was nice. And then the winter time we stayed right there, sixty below zero, and we worked out there. The others they don't have to work but we did. And we got those (?) the car, and a bunch of mechanics. There was only one, Marcel (ph), he was a Frenchman. He---he----they all came from New York, more or less, they were all, well, I don't know. Forward, you want to say? Or something. But anyway I got in on that and we would do all the extra stuff. We got all the overtime. And it was nice. And---

LEVINE: There must've been quite a bond between you guys who were out in the---

EBEL: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: Working on those tracks.

EBEL: The bad part was when we had to go back to the camp and well, you maybe got sick or something or injured. That's when you get it.

LEVINE: Oh. From the other guys.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: What? Like what? What would you get?

EBEL: Well they said, "traitor" and all that. All these little goodies one, whatever they said, it didn't sit very good.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: But anyway we stayed with mostly, if we had to go back we stayed in another area so they wouldn't get at us.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And there was a bad feeling there.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: What about the, you mentioned earlier that it was at this camp that there were some people who were pro-Nazi.

EBEL: Absolutely. There weren't many.

LEVINE: Uh-huh..

EBEL: Maybe ten out of the---out of the six hundred?

LEVINE: Uh-huh

EBEL: That were Nazi. So I really, I really, I didn't, I never ran across any, but I know they were there.

LEVINE: They were there.

EBEL: They were, you always have two sides.

LEVINE: Sure.

EBEL: And some are bold and some of 'em just take it the way it is and make the best of it. But there---there were---there were a few who would be pro-German, let's put it that way.

LEVINE: Yeah. Right.

EBEL: Not pro-Nazi but pro-German.

LEVINE: Pro-German.

EBEL: And I know Karen, she has a ring on there, that silver ring of hers, it was made up there. (coughs) And it was engraved. I had a silver ring and then I had a quarter. And then the guy melted it down and made a silver ring.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And then afterwards, but after that I went out, you know, on the railroad. And he says "if I knew that, if I had known that, you wouldn't have that ring."

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: So, that's all he said, you know, well he said---

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: But I think the only way, anybody who downs his mother's tongue is not worth anything on the other side of the ocean.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: If you're German you're German, if you're English you're English.

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: Right?

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: You will never forget your mother's tongue.

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: And I'm sure I have a hard time speaking German. Sometimes I get back into English, but I still can remember quite a bit of it.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And, so, but the--- from Fort Lincoln I was drafted.

LEVINE: Before we leave Fort Lincoln, tell the story---

EBEL: I'm not leaving this is about Fort Lincoln, right now, where I'm talking about.

LEVINE: Oh. That's where you were drafted. Oh, but I wanted to ask you too, were you being asked the whole time whether you wanted to go back to Germany? Whether you wanted---

EBEL: There were papers around to do that. But that was all done in New York on Ellis Island.

LEVINE: That's where you were asked about that?

EBEL: Yes. There were, the whole, not many---

LEVINE: Not many wanted too.

EBEL: No.

LEVINE: No.

EBEL: They just took 'em for orders---we had a couple there, that German bund or whatever that was down in New York.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah. The, where they maybe had paid, they paid some money like dues or something like that. And that's why the FBI picked on 'em.

LEVINE: That was like a social club, was it? Or something like that?

EBEL: Well, no. It wasn't a social club. You know it was party, you know, German. I can't remember which one—how you would say it, but anyway it was pro-Nazi. And some people were forced into that.

LEVINE: Ah.

EBEL: By other, other people. They made a donation or some other donation showed up.

LEVINE: And they, that's why they were picked up.

EBEL: That's why they were picked up. I'll never forget my dad thought he belonged to a Veterans of Foreign War, except it was a German society. And they asked him, you know, "what are you doing there? And what are you doing there?" What the hell do you do, have a beer with good friends. That's all.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So, but anyway, coming back to Fort Lincoln. I was drafted. And I had to come in from the railroad, go into the camp. That's when I

got a little bit hassled. Not hit or anything, but pretty bad language. And then---like---a deserter. You know, they said, "you're a deserter."

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: Uh. I still (not understood) I knew I was going to be let out. So I got my drafting papers and they put me on the train all by myself. Were a military train there were all the kids, all the guys from there were going into Fort Snelling. And they all were to be inspected into you know, into the army. And I come out 4F and I went all the way down to Minnesota, Fort Snelling. And I went all the way back again to Bismark. And I went back along the train, the work train. My papers were there for my release. Then I come back to Boston.

LEVINE: Wow.

EBEL: But anyway it was quite an experience.

LEVINE: Um, during that period was when you became friendly with the--- when the crew became friendly with the Sioux Indian Tribe?

EBEL: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: Was that out there?

EBEL: Yeah. Well---I don't know. It comes out of Bismark and there's a--- the road out back where we got the (?) and all that. And we were sort of stationed near the reservation. This side over there was Sioux, and this side over here was German. And naturally they knew what was going on, they were told. And I'll be darned when

that one Indian, he spoke a dialect and could fluently speak German.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: So he goes back. When they lay the railroad tracks and all these guys came from Stuttgart, who worked up there to lay the rails. And he learned and he spoke the same dialect just like I.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: And it was interesting. And, of course, we had barter systems. You know they give us (?) and we give 'em money. We got fifteen dollars a week to, or a month we spent. We got fifteen dollars a month.

LEVINE: And what would you get from them.

EBEL: Oh, you know, like moccasins or jewelry. Oh, whatever we could, we got. I got some beads where they have tooth on it and, well it was all beaded, you know, it was everything Indian. I mean (not understood).

LEVINE: Were they unfriendly at first? Or did---

EBEL: No. Never.

LEVINE: They were always friendly.

EBEL: No. They come right out and they were, the, it's a sad, sad story, the way we treat the Indians. I gotta stick up for 'em, I'm sorry.

END OF SIDE A, TAPE TWO

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE TWO

EBEL: They're house was sixteen, sixteen. Two families in there, maybe another. A bunch of kids. And it was cold at night and I, we visited there in one of the huts, no floor. They had to take the floor out in order to burn, keep warm. And absolutely nothing, no medicine, nothing there. And it's always an outside person who feels sorry for them and comes to do their midwife and all that. And, but the, they were all diseased, you know, I mean----urinal tract disease or something like that. And they told us they said, don't shake any hands, and all this. But anyway, the guy they were, we shook hands anyway and I never got anything. So, but then---then we learned, yeah it was Christmas, we went, we were just outside the bosom of Bismark. There's a (?) there, a big thing. And there was a church on the bottom, I think it was Baptist or whatever. Anyway, it was Indian. So we went, we were invited to go to the church. And Indian people were putting up the foods and all this. And, you know, quite social. A social event. But what during---during his service, he was giving us the dickens, boy. He said, "you whites, you got everything and we got nothin'." And he says "we can never go anywhere, we can't really get any food or money and if we have money we don't know where to spend it or, you know to buy things." There was actually no store there where I was. They must have had to go into (?) then or Bismark. They would have to do it with a wagon.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Just like you would see in the, in the films.

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: The squaw was sitting in there. She was, she was actually the one that was (?). The man had the (?) there and then he traveled back and forth. And she should (not understood). (laughs)

And it was windy and this and I wanted a shirt, you know, one of these little---

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: ---shirts, and the woman said, "well it's too late." She didn't have any (not understood). So, but anyway, we were dickering and I don't know, I had a tomahawk. And some sort of moccasins for me to wear, and I wore them for quite a while before they fell apart. And then---we also heard of a little girl being sick and she was one of the chieftains cousins or daughters, that we never found out. But she had died. She had tb and they asked if we could chip in. We actually had a fund for that girl and I think she later on passed on. But nevertheless I think we spent pretty close to a thousand dollars.

LEVINE: Hmmm. But she lived for a while?

EBEL: Yes she did. She finally, finally died.

LEVINE: Hmmm.

EBEL: Then we helped the church. The church (not understood). . . giving us all the dickens. Say uh, "do this and do this and do this, you don't help us you don't give us anything, you know, and we got no money and we got this church here. And we have no fire." And so on and so forth. And he says, "but yeah, you can pay for the rent." We did. So.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Everybody had a couple of bucks, you know, to pay.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And it wasn't much, you know. But I think it was over five, six hundred dollars.

LEVINE: What kind of a church was it.

EBEL: It was a Baptist.

LEVINE: Baptist, uh-huh.

EBEL: I think it was Baptist.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: But the minister was Indian.

LEVINE: Indian. Uh-huh.

EBEL: So the men, with no guards around. So whenever we got into town they would let us go out. And we go to a café or something, whatever they have in town. Maybe one hotel and a couple of houses and then a wheat tower for storage. And we all go there, well, we left always a couple of hundred bucks in the town every time we went or could go.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: It was nice. They had, but North Dakota is not for me. (laughter)  
Too dang cold.

LEVINE: Yeah. I bet.

EBEL: Windy. The funniest part is, got where we were---they made us work because they had to pay us, regardless of whether we're sitting in the wagon or not. We got do much a month, you know, or so much an hour. Forgot now what it was. Like two bucks.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Two or three dollars

LEVINE: Um-hmmm

EBEL: Per day. So we would go out and we pick ax the frost line. That took almost five hours to get down where we can give it a couple shovels full. You know, to dig out and then put the stone back. It was (?). And it was a---cow pass, where cows go underneath the rails. And we shored it up and repaired the line. But you get used to it.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm. I guess you're happy you did that. I mean, that you left the camp.

EBEL: Oh definitely, definitely.

LEVINE: And you went out into the---

EBEL: Definitely. I wouldn't have wanted to stay there. You (not understood).

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

EBEL: It was---the, that was bad.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Morally, physically, you were down. You couldn't walk outside without having a shotgun at you. And, either that or you didn't get the right medicine, that was poor. There was no hospital there, there was just doctors come in.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: And the food was bad at Fort Lincoln. As I say in the letter there, when we got, one day we got the liver. It'd be just soggy and (?). And the next day we got a piece of liver you would throw on the wall and it'd bounce back at you. And, but that's---that is the food and it's then recooked, what's on it. If they give us our own materials---

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: ---it was good tasting. You know, the chef, he was a German trained chef.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: He'd been all over the countryside. But he was also a German subject.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: So he got picked up in New York.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: But he, lucky enough, it was in our company.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And he would turn out a good meal.

LEVINE: Well how did you feel when you got back and you found out you were released? Were you---

EBEL: Well, I don't know, to tell you the---I just, well, I don't know. Something---

LEVINE: Were---were you just kind of numb? Or (laughter)

EBEL: Yeah, I would say so, yeah. (laughter.) I was glad that I could go home. And they told me, "here's your time schedule, you've gotta fallow that time schedule, get your clothes." So, and, they put me on the train and off I went.

LEVINE: And you were by yourself then?

EBEL: I was by myself, yes, and then I had a change in Chicago. And then take the, another train to New York.

LEVINE: So you were released while there were still many others who weren't—

EBEL: Oh yes.

LEVINE: ---yet released.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Oh yeah, they were all there.

LEVINE: All there, uh-huh.

EBEL: Yeah, when I got released I mean, most of these railroaders were released because what we were doing, you know.

LEVINE: Is that why you, do you think that helped you?

EBEL: I think it, I think it helped me in the hospital. Those papers went with me, and they know that I was a (?) trained, to a certain extent, like an EMT.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: Or, I'm not a para---paramedic, you know but EMT I can do.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And, but when I got on the railroad station there, they all knew I was a prisoner. Or what, I don't know, maybe (not understood). And especially one woman, she gave me a dirty eye, you know, she knew that I came from there.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And, but otherwise, I went on the train and I got into Chicago and my papers were checked. And I might, of course, I'd never been in Chicago in my life, you know, and how do you get to the transfer station? So anyway, it was all arranged and I got on the train and I come to New York, and then up to Boston. (coughs) And I (not understood).

LEVINE: And then who, did anyone meet you?

EBEL: No.

LEVINE: What did you do when you got to Boston?

EBEL: Well I went back to my father's house. And---

LEVINE: And, was anyone there?

EBEL: Oh yeah. My father, my aunt, my cousins. Even the, you know, from my mother's side. And they, we had a great big party.

LEVINE: Wow. Did they know you were coming then?

EBEL: Oh yeah.

LEVINE: Had you gotten in touch with them?

EBEL: I had called my dad yeah---

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: ---told him I was comin' home.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: So then he, but then they, it cost them money for the government money to move us around, you know and all that. And it's unbelievable. There is only one side. There were thousands of these camps, I'm sure.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: That were just like, just like a holocaust, like Hitler did. Terrorized us the same way. And I think they're doing it down, down in Cuba. I'm not afraid to say that because I think it's true.

LEVINE: You mean with the Arabs, the Arab-Americans.

EBEL: And I don't want that to be repeated, what they done to us. I would fight for that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: And, not because they're Arabs, I think they're—men. Human beings. You know, put 'em in a hot box because they get a couple words out of it. And sure we're at war with the people, but that, they shouldn't go through what they have there in the cages like a bunch of dogs. And we see on t.v. What the hell is that?

LEVINE: Um-hmmm. Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Just because they live out in the desert that doesn't say they have to live here in a cage. And, but we're at war.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So that means somebody's gonna have to suffer. And it may not be to our liking, but unfortunately that's what happens. And it's the persons who handle your case, you know, President says one thing, our Attorney General says one---another thing, and then our--guy who rules over these men down there, I see him on the t.v. and I says they're doing the same thing to them what they, what Karen is frightened for.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And I don't care if they come from Europe or anywheres, you don't treat a person like that.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Like them or not. I mean see, they got plenty of fresh air, but I don't know. (coughs) So, but---I'm against that.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm. Well, you know, there are so many things that have come out of this experience for you.

EBEL: Yeah. Oh yeah.

LEVINE: I mean---I mean, many very positive things.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: I mean, being the, what do you call, the medical emergency---EMT.

EBEL: Yes. Yeah, EMT. I started the rescue squad here.

LEVINE: And the church work. Well, that didn't come out of that, but I mean--

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EBEL: No. But the---that goes back to my mother, I think.

LEVINE: Your mother, not your father?

EBEL: Not my, no, I don't think so. No. My father was another scumball in German, as I say. (laughs)

LEVINE: No, but I mean the carvings for the church? And the pews?

EBEL: Yeah. I never took up carving, believe it or not.

LEVINE: Oh. But you, well then the cabin---the woodworking.

EBEL: Yes. I do regular cabinet---cabinet making. You know, I don't care what you give me, I'll do it. And, but I never learned how to carve. Well yeah, when I was a kid I fooled around with 'em, poke a few chisels, my father got after me. But otherwise, I would say it goes back to my mother.

LEVINE: Why do you think the woodworking goes back to her?

EBEL: Oh. Not the woodworking.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: Woodworking was my trade.

LEVINE: Oh. Ok.

EBEL: But my mother had something to do with

LEVINE: Ok.

EBEL: She, she took me to the bars where I learned my cabinet making.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: Yeah. So I, I think a lot of it goes back to my mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: I always remembered that. She always told me, when I left, the last words she had told me, "watch your heart. " Sure enough, it kicked up twice.

LEVINE: "Watch your heart?" She said? Uh-huh

EBEL: So apparently, there was a heart---problem from birth.

LEVINE: I see.

EBEL: I don't---I never knew why, but I found out. And I remember my mother's last words to me before I left.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But um, getting back to the things that have come out of this, I mean your, you still do work for Native American Indians, is that?

EBEL: I belong to a society which is called the "Red Men of the United States." And they're the only organization that was chartered by the United States Congress and that goes way back to the Boston Tea Party. And I was what they call, Great (?) of New Hampshire, three times.

LEVINE: Huh.

EBEL: And we, we go buy the ritual of the Iro---Iroquois---I can never remember.

LEVINE: Iroquois. Iroquois. Uh-huh.

EBEL: By their rituals.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And we have the same secret deals, just like the Masons or, except that we're ---we're a patriotic, they're stationed down in Texas.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: (coughs) And that's where the main, the main people are. And then all the rest of them, we use different councils. There's New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and they're all over the place. And that goes back to the, when the Boston Tea Party, when they dressed themselves up as Indians and then had the Indians being blamed, but they were all whites. So, that's where it stems from.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And this year, this is now the Reformed Red Men, because of the language. Some of the Indian language, like squaw and all that. And we had a little, they never bothered us, but we just have to be careful that we don't say anything what offends them. So but the Indian General uh, its quite an organization and people don't even know about it.

LEVINE: And do you do things, do you do activities as part of---

EBEL: Yes. We do, we're running the University down in Indiana for the Indians.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh-huh.

EBEL: That's where we spend our money. And now we're also diversified all over. Not just one---some old age people, they have a, I understand now that they have their own hospital, old age homes where you can apply to to get in, which is run by the Red Men.

LEVINE: Oh wonderful.

EBEL: So---

LEVINE: Well how about the other side? I mean, those are the positive things that have come from your internment.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: But, how do you think about it all now, after the fact?

EBEL: I have no, I have no bad feelings. Because I accepted the fact the law was put on my, way back when, and enemy aliens can be arrested.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And that's what I did. I figured that's what it was. I'm gonna be away for the duration.

LEVINE: Um-hmm.

EBEL: The only thing I didn't like is that we weren't told what's gonna happen. This is the bad part.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And you, you know, you sit in a room and you're waiting for somebody and nobody comes.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And then they maybe throw you a little bit of food, just to keep you going. But that's, that's what I feel. Nothing against the United States government or nothin'. I'm an American, always will be.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: That's my dad's. (Clears throats)

LEVINE: How 'bout this, the September 11<sup>th</sup> incident, how did you res—react when you---

EBEL: Well, being a fireman, naturally I was madder than a hornet. And people got killed, and what we're doing now when we're chasing these guys all over the countryside, and we're gonna finish 'em. They're not gonna do it again, not if we can help it.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Or I---

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: I'd be there if----But so, unfortunately there was a lot of people killed.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: And that is a bad deal. Karen was there. I haven't seen it, but I've got the, the cap---

LEVINE: Um-hmmm

EBEL: From (laughs) Ground Zero

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: So. But I have no bad feelings of any kind. I don't blame anybody. They all have done their job.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Now your making research, I'll build you a cabinet, I mean that's what we do.

LEVINE: You do it.

EBEL: And I hope that somebody will profit by it.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: Or not do it again.

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: And I think research is good. Karen keeps comin' up with things which I never knew. But then, I was behind barbed wire, how could I know?

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you think there was a period of time when you didn't want to think about it or talk about it? And then as time went on---

EBEL: Well I admit, I was a little on the secret side. Uh, the girlfriend I was going with, I went with a girl for about eight years, it was unfortunate. Unfortunately she's out in Washington and I'm up here. So we never got married. But anyway, the, I would say I could feel a distance because my girlfriend, she worked for the government. And I don't know, secretary or what, right now she's in the Pentagon. Of course, I imagine she's retired by now. But there was feelings. And I befriended another girl and the FBI, always came in and said to the girl not to see me anymore. Because she worked for some electronic center in Cambridge. I don't know, we'd see each other every day on the railroad track and we'd be the last ones getting' on. You know, sooner or later, the girl spoke to me and, unknown to me, she was German born. Not-- -this was second generation. And so, when she says, "well, can't see you anymore." That was the end. But there was a bad feeling there. Not on my side but on government's side.

LEVINE: So, in other words, you feel that the government has sort of kept this alive in a sense that you're a little suspect, even though you were released.

EBEL: Yeah. Yeah. Even though you're released. Yeah. And I had a friend just passed away. His father was a shoe maker, all kinds of women's shoes, they've been world famous. His father and mother were questioned by the FBI. He says, "what in the hell do you want to do that for?" He says "I got two sons out there in the army fighting, get the hell out of here." I mean, he had more to fight for than they did.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: So, but this is, this is what is wrong.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: See there, there's the American way. And then somebody turns their head around and says, "well, you're an enemy."

LEVINE: Right.

EBEL: Yet, I know damn well that some people did that. Where we had no connection anymore like it used to be. We were friendly but there was, I felt a distance in between it. You know, I'm over here, you're over there.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: And unfortunately, it does happen.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: And there's the hatred, what you find in our law now.

LEVINE: And you encountered that here, too, in New Hampshire?

EBEL: Not so much up here, when I came back. I didn't come here, I went to Boston.

LEVINE: To Boston, and that's where.

EBEL: That's where that all happened. Up here, well, they knew I was German and all that. My daughter and I and about twenty-five people, and we were putting money to them. But it's the kids who said it.

LEVINE: The kids who were just na—naive and didn't know what they were talking about.

EBEL: No. It just, just for fun I suppose. They would call her Nazi or whatever.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

EBEL: So, it didn't sit good with me but what could I do?

LEVINE: Yeah. Yeah.

EBEL: I mean---it's just not right.

LEVINE: Yeah. Do you feel some relief now that your daughter's taking on this---this

EBEL: Oh yeah

LEVINE: this mission?

EBEL: Oh definitely yeah. 'Cause I told her when she was spoke up Washington D.C. I said, "I'm standing right behind you." (laughter) That's how it is.

LEVINE: Yeah.

EBEL: My life story.

LEVINE: Yep. Ok, well, we're nearly the end of this tape, is there anything maybe that we haven't talked about or anything you'd like to say before we close?

EBEL: Well, I'm thankin' you for takin' this.

LEVINE: Well---

EBEL: Takin' the time.

LEVINE: I think uh,

EBEL: To bring the story out, you know, one way or the other. I mean, I'm not asking for any money, believe me, all I want is what was right. What we believe in. That should be practiced. Everywheres. Not being railroaded one politician to the next. Or have somebody stepping down on you and give you all kinds of problems. It's not necessary. Being accused I can feel. I know I'm an American. That I know.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: Peoples who don't like it? Out.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm. Um-hmmm. Well you've certainly contributed to this country. That's for sure.

EBEL: Oh. I done my share.

LEVINE: Um-hmmm.

EBEL: I got lawyers, I got nurses, I got a beautician. So you want your hair cut? (laughter)

LEVINE: Okay. Well I want to thank you so much for this interview.

EBEL: Oh, it's my pleasure---Karen makes the arrangements but sometimes I don't know what she's doing.

LEVINE: Yeah, well---

EBEL: Until she tells me.

LEVINE: Well, good. In this case it was a good thing, I think. (laughter). Ok I'm gonna---

EBEL: So, I hope you mention Karen, she's the one who's---

LEVINE: Well, I guess we, why don't we say that Karen Ebel is one of---

EBEL: My daughter, yeah.

LEVINE: ---Max Ebel's daughters

EBEL: One of my daughters. Yeah.

LEVINE: And---

EBEL: And sister over there on that poster.

LEVINE: Oh. Okay, and anyway, she has been involved, as an attorney,

EBEL: Yes.

LEVINE: in getting the story out of the---

EBEL: Yes. She wrote a bill. And the bill is in the Senate now.

LEVINE: Okay.

EBEL: So, she, the Senator (?) has introduced the bill, and Mr. Kennedy, and there's another, there's a couple of more in charge, by the name of Russell, from Minnesota. Because the German society apparently is more out there than it is up here now.

LEVINE: Ok. Yeah.

EBEL: And they have their own papers and all that. And I think somehow, I think Karen got into it by the book, "The Railroaders," and so on and so forth. And she met more researchers, and we can show you the books. But what was written by them people, they were a lot worse off than I was.

LEVINE: Well, I want to say that we're gonna have a file too, as we do with people who are in the interview collection. So we can have additional information, like your story that was in the *Concord Monitor*.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And any other information that you care to have there.

EBEL: Yeah. Yeah and Karen has, I know it was over at Nurmberg (ph), it was over in Germany, our interview from the *Freelancer*.

LEVINE: Oh.

EBEL: And he had tapes and handbook, he was down in Bavaria. He's sort of a, you know, he makes interviews. So, I'm getting quite an experience from this. (laughs)

LEVINE: Yeah. You're getting to be a real star.

EBEL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Ok. I've been speaking with Max Ebel and this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW

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