

EI-1327

**FULL NAME: ANNE BERTHA DORR
BIRTHDATE: JANUARY 16, 1912
INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 15, 2004
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 92
RUNNING TIME: 54:27
INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME
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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: KATHERINE MEYERS
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**GERMANY, 1928
AGE: 16**

**SHIP: OF NORD DEUTSCHER LLOYD LINE
PORT: BREMERHAVEN
RESIDENCES:**

- **GERMANY: STUTTGART**
- **US: NEW YORK CITY, YONKERS, NY; WINTER PARK, FL**

LEVINE: Today is May the 15th, the year 2004, and I'm here with Anne Bertha Dorr.

DORR: Yeah.

LEVINE: Whose maiden name was Graf.

DORR: That's right.

LEVINE: G-R-A-F. I'm here in Winter Park, Florida, and Mrs. Dorr came from Germany in 1928, late November.

DORR: That's right, December-- December the third I landed here.

LEVINE: Ok, great. Let's see, if you were born in 1912, you were what, sixteen?

DORR: I was not quite seventeen.

LEVINE: Ok, so you were not quite seventeen. And you left from Bremerhaven--

DORR: Bremerhaven, yes.

LEVINE: Bremerhaven. And, let's see. Ok, this is Janet Levine for the National Parks Service. Ok, if you would say again for the tape, your birth-date.

DORR: I should say my birth-date? Janua-- Now? January 16, nineteen hundred and twelve.

LEVINE: And where in Germany were you born?

DORR: In Stuttgart.

LEVINE: Stuttgart, ok. And, so you actually must have some memories of Stuttgart and Germany.

DORR: Oh yes, I mean I went to school there and all that. And I wanted to come to America.

LEVINE: Why did you want to come?

DORR: I couldn't— my parents didn't have the money to s-- let me do what I wanted. I wanted to be a nurse, a baby nurse. In those days, it was different than it is today.

LEVINE: How was it different, how can you--?

DORR: You had to know how to take care of the baby, and the mother when she gives birth and everything else.

LEVINE: And why couldn't you do that in Germany?

DORR: I didn't have the money to train for that. Don't forget we had the inflation. The inflation ate up all the money.

LEVINE: I see. Well, what was your father's name?

DORR: Friedrich.

LEVINE: Friedrich Graf?

DORR: Yeah.

LEVINE: And your mother?

DORR: Uh, her maiden name?

LEVINE: Yeah.

DORR: Anna Harr. H-A-double-R.

LEVINE: Ok, and did you have sisters and brothers?

DORR: A stepsi-- I had a-- one brother and a stepsister.

LEVINE: And what were their names?

DORR: The girl's name was Maria. She lives in Australia. She's four months older than I am-- she's ninety— she's going to be ninety-three in September.

LEVINE: Now was she your mother's child or your fa--

DORR: Yeah-- no, my mother's child, my stepmother's child. When my father remarried she had that girl, see. Her father was killed in the war in 1914.

LEVINE: Oh, ok. So-- and your brother, what was his name?

DORR: Uh, Friedrich Graf.

LEVINE: Ok and ah, where were you? Were you the oldest-- older than your brother or younger than your brother?

DORR: Uh, he was older, he was almost ten years older than I am.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: He was born nineteen hundred and two. And-- October? I think in October. See now, it's starting to fade away everything.

LEVINE: Well, you are-- I can tell you still remember a lot. Tell me, do you remember where you lived in Stuttgart?

DORR: Yeah, *Tübingen Strasse vier und sechzig*. [Sixty four Tübingen Street]

(Both laugh.)

LEVINE: Ok, and what was it like? You remember-- describe the house a little bit.

DORR: Well, we had an apartment and in the front of the street there was the trolley-car and the train until 1 o'clock every night.

LEVINE: And did you take the trolley?

DORR: Oh, yeah. We-- oh, we kids jumped on it.

LEVINE: I see, and you said you went to school?

DORR: Pardon?

LEVINE: You went to school.

DORR: Oh yes, I went to eight years. In those days you only went eight years and then two years for [in German]. I don't know how you would say that in English. We had to go after only once a week-- we had to go for two more years after the eight years.

LEVINE: And what did you learn in the-- when you went to that school?

DORR: Uh, house, uh cooking and uh regular household things-- because I didn't-- I was mad because I didn't get what I wanted.

LEVINE: What did you want?

DORR: Well, I wanted to be a baby nurse, see.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh. And so in other words the girls would go to that and learn about housekeeping and the boys probably went somewhere else?

DORR: What?

LEVINE: What did the boys do after they finished the eight years?

DORR: They-- well, some of them went to private school-- they made-- my brother went to private school, but he only went eight years too, and then he became an apprentice as a mechanic. They had to learn four years. They had to learn how to sweep the floor, too.

LEVINE: They did everything.

DORR: Oh yes.

LEVINE: And how about your father, what did he do?

DORR: He was a handyman. In a big factory, Blyle factory,

LEVINE: How do--? [interposes]

DORR: Blyle, B-L-Y I think it's spelled, B-L-Y-L-E, Blyle.

LEVINE: What does that mean—is that-- ?

DORR: Well, that's the-- the factory's name. That was very famous when they made clothes, knitted clothes like this. See?

LEVINE: Yeah, and did your mother work at all?

DORR: Not when I was a-- a little girl. Before that my parents had the restaurant. And they gave that up then because my mother got sick, I guess. Because she did all the cooking and all that, you know. She died in 19-- let me see, she must

have died in 1917, because my father remarried in 1918 this woman with the child.

LEVINE: Ah, so you were—you were only five years old?

DORR: When she died, yeah, five and a half years old I was.

LEVINE: Oh, do you remember your mother?

DORR: Very little. Very little. I remember her laying in the coffin and her hands folded. That's the biggest memory: not her face, but her hands. It's funny how a child observes something, you know?

LEVINE: Yes, uh huh.

DORR: So.

LEVINE: And how about your stepmother; was she good too you?

DORR: She was fair.

LEVINE: Fair, uh huh.

DORR: I mean today I look at it different as I did— when-- when it really-- when she really raised me. I thought she was not nice then, but now I realize it was hard for her, too.

LEVINE: Uh huh. You realize a lot of things later when you think back.

DORR: Yes, that's true.

LEVINE: Do you do that much, like during the day, do you think back over your life?

DORR: Oh, sometimes you do.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

DORR: Not all the time. Sometimes there's days where things come back to you and then again nothing at all.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: See.

LEVINE: Well when you think about Stuttgart what are the things you remember the most? What makes you-- what are the things that stick out in your mind?

DORR: Well, eh, we used to go Sundays-- Sunday was parade, and the Schlossblatt [ph], that's a certain section. And we would go there and flirt with the boys. You know, I was then already fifteen going on sixteen and all that.

LEVINE: So what would you do, you'd just kind of promenade?

DORR: That's all, oh yes, it wasn't like they are today.

LEVINE: Uh huh, so did you have, like best friends? What would you do for fun? Besides going on Sundays? What else would you do?

DORR: Oh, we went out to car races.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: We-- in Stuttgart they had on the street [unsure] car races, we would go there. We had to walk of course, there was no money to trolley and there wouldn't have been a trolley that far anyway

LEVINE: It was outside of town?

DORR: Yeah, that was outside of Stuttgart.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: See. But we didn't do too much. Once in a while we went to the movie, but we had to put a hat on to look older because they wouldn't let you go in unless you was sixteen.

LEVINE: Really?

DORR: Oh yes.

LEVINE: And did you see German movies, or American movies?

DORR: Oh, German movies. Nothing-- I didn't know a word of English when I came. All I knew was "darling."

LEVINE: (laughs) How did you happen to know that word?

DORR: From a book.

LEVINE: I see.

DORR: I read a book and there it was in-- you know, they mentioned it. But that's the only word I knew when I came here.

LEVINE: And did you know what it meant?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: You knew what it meant? Did you know the meaning of the word “darling”?

DORR: Sort of, yes. Sort of. Maybe. I don't know. As I say, I came here and uh, we learned it in—in uh, 84th street in New York.

LEVINE: But before we talk about that, first I want to know a little bit more about your life before you came--

DORR: There wasn't much.

LEVINE: Yeah, how about your mother—ah, not your mother, your father. What kind of a personality did he have?

DORR: He was very easygoing. Very good, very easygoing, and uh. He loved children, you know, and well-- there wasn't much going on, he would play catch with us girls once in a while at night. You know, we were allowed to stay up a little longer.

LEVINE: Was he strict?

DORR: Not too strict, no.

LEVINE: And your stepmother, was she strict?

DORR: She was stricter, yes.

LEVINE: And you were-- were you close to your half-sister?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: Were you and your half-sister close?

DORR: Fair. Fairly close, I mean we went to the same class in school and everything, and I told her, "Don't you say anything," if I got, uh, reprimanded or something.

LEVINE: And what was she like?

DORR: A very timid child, and she was a little bit [not understood—German?]- and look at her; she's four months older than-- she's still alive in Australia. In Sydney she lives.

LEVINE: And how would you describe yourself when you were fifteen years old, what kind of a--?

DORR: Easygoing. Knowing that I wanted to go to America-- that was-- my mind was made up for that.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: And I had to wait until I was sixteen on account of going to school here.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: See, my brother couldn't support me. My brother in the meantime had gone to America.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: He went in 1923 and in '28 I went. But he couldn't-- if I would have gone then right away with him, I would have had to go to school here, that was a law. So I had to wait until I was sixteen, see, and he sent me my ticket and I went-- off I went.

LEVINE: Now did your brother-- was he a mechanic here in America?

DORR: Yes. Oh yes, he had a very-- a good job. He worked for the government.

LEVINE: Where did he settle?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: Where did he settle? Where did he live in America?

DORR: In New Jersey.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: Plainfield, New Jersey.

LEVINE: Do you know why he went there?

DORR: Well, it was hard to get a job in Germany then when he was finished with his apprenticeship, so he went to America.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Did he know people in Plainfield, New Jersey?

DORR: That I don't know. I guess so.

LEVINE: Because he was the first one in your family to come here.

DORR: Yeah, well, here we had an uncle.

LEVINE: And was he in New Jersey?

DORR: No, he was in New York.

LEVINE: Oh, he was in Yorkville?

DORR: No, no. No, my uncle lived in New York already then. He went-- he went as a fourteen year old boy to America.

LEVINE: Now did you know that uncle?

DORR: No, I never met him until I came to America.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: I might have known him as a little one but I don't remember that at all.

LEVINE: Ok, so were you writing back and forth to your brother before you came?

DORR: Oh yes, he wrote me and we wrote back and forth, you know.

LEVINE: And what did he tell you about America? Before you came, what did you expect?

DORR: Well, he just wrote me that I had to wait until I was sixteen on account of the school system. He couldn't support me-- he didn't want to take that responsibility, I guess.

LEVINE: Did he live by himself?

DORR: No, he lived with my uncle and my aunt.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

DORR: In Jamaica.

LEVINE: Oh, in Jamaica, New York.

DORR: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: Well you know, I don't know if you're familiar--

LEVINE: Yeah, I know Jamaica, uh huh.

DORR: In those days the elevator went there.

LEVINE: The elevator train. The subway, yeah, right, I think it still does.

DORR: I don't know. I haven't been there in years now.

LEVINE: Uh huh, so did your-- was your uncle married?

DORR: Yes, his wife gave the—uh, the affidavit that I could come to America-- you know, you had to have a sponsor.

LEVINE: Yes, uh huh.

DORR: See.

LEVINE: So when you came to America was your brother living with your aunt and uncle?

DORR: No, he had just gotten married

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: Four weeks before I came.

LEVINE: Ah ha, so then he moved out?

DORR: He moved out and I moved in with my uncle.

LEVINE: I see, I see.

DORR: For-- not very long-- until I got a job.

LEVINE: Ok, well do you remember any expectations you had, what you thought America would be like, before you came?

DORR: Not really. I mean, all I knew-- I wanted to go, and come.

LEVINE: Was it hard to leave your father?

DORR: Well, yes and no. You know when you're young you don't think that way. He felt worse than I did.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh huh, did he tell you anything, give you any advice, or--?

DORR: Yeah, he says, "Just don't bother with the men."

(LEVINE laughs)

DORR: That's all he told me.

LEVINE: So you came— now you went-- how did you get to Bremenhaven?

DORR: By train.

LEVINE: So do you remember leaving, saying goodbye to your friends and--?

DORR: Well yes, it just-- there was nothing—there was nothing major: just goodbye and that was it.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of people that you knew leaving for America?

DORR: No, not too many.

LEVINE: Not too many. So you left and how did you get to the train? It was right there in Stuttgart?

DORR: Yeah, in-- Stuttgart had a big train station. Stuttgart was then already a big city; it had four hundred thousand people.

LEVINE: Oh. And so did your father go with you to the train?

DORR: Oh yes, he st-- I still see him standing there waving.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: That was it.

LEVINE: Did you have the idea that you would come back after you learned how to be a baby nurse? Did you think you would go to America, learn how to be a baby nurse, and go back to Germany?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: No.

DORR: No, I came here and I knew I would stay.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: And I worked in the rich houses as a baby nurse, you know. They didn't work while you were in the training, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, I see, I see. Ok, well, ok so you got on the train-- were you by yourself?

DORR: From Stuttgart? Yeah, sure.

LEVINE: So you-- you were fifteen years old--

DORR: Not quite seventeen-- going on seventeen.

LEVINE: Ok, so sixteen years old and you went by yourself—

DORR: Naturally. [interposes]

LEVINE: --were you frightened?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: No.

DORR: No, no, I was-- it didn't bother me, you know. I knew I wanted what I wanted and that was it.

LEVINE: Well, it sounds like you were very sure in your own mind--

DORR: Yes. [interposes]

LEVINE: --with what you wanted.

DORR: I wanted-- I knew I wanted to come here and I figured, well, somehow I make a living. And I did.

LEVINE: Good, so you got to Bremenhaven. And then, what happened?

DORR: Well, nothing; you go on the boat.

LEVINE: You didn't have to stay over, or anything?

DORR: That I don't-- I don't think we stayed over. We got there in the morning light, we travelled through in the night by train, and we got there and you went on the boat. And you naturally-- you had to have your papers and all that, and that was it.

LEVINE: Do you remember getting your papers?

DORR: What do you mean?

LEVINE: Did you have to have examinations, or anything like that?

DORR: Oh yeah, before you go you go-- you had to have a health examination and all that. But I don't remember too much of that

LEVINE: Uh huh. So, what was the ship— do you remember the ship--?

DORR: No, I don't remember the name of the ship. My son told me and I-- it just doesn't stay with me.

LEVINE: Ok, that's ok. So, can you remember the passage coming over on the ship-- anything that you remember?

DORR: I was very seasick-- they were ready to put me into the hospital.

LEVINE: Really.

DORR: And then I came-- when it stopped and when we got in, it was alright.

LEVINE: Ok, um, let's see, you said there was a kindly steward on the ship.

DORR: What?

LEVINE: A kindly steward on the ship. Do you remember that?

No, ok, oh, ok, so, let's see, when you first got here, do you remember when the ship came into the New York Harbor?

DORR: Yeah, sure, we were all on deck.

LEVINE: And what was that like?

DORR: Well, that's very exciting to see the Statue of Liberty, you know, that-- I mean, we were glad that we-- we had very bad weather coming over. We were all glad to— you know, that it was over.

LEVINE: And then, you probably got off the ship in New York and took a ferry to Ellis Island.

DORR: No, I didn't have to go any more.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: The only one that had to go were if they had any sickness or something. Then they were taken to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Do you remember your accommodations on the ship? Do you remember, were you in a cabin? Were you in steerage? What--?

DORR: In a cabin with four people.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: Three other people. We had four beds.

LEVINE: Bunk beds.

DORR: Yeah, it was very primitive-- it was-- and it was second class.

LEVINE: Oh, it was second class. I see.

DORR: And yet it was primitive, you know, not like it is today.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Ok, and so when you got off that ship who met you?

DORR: My aunt, my uncle's wife, she had to get me. She came on board ship and signed papers and off we went. She had a car, a-- a Studebaker. See.

LEVINE: Well, that must have seemed like a big thing.

DORR: Oh yes, I thought they were very rich. (chuckles)

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

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: What was her name?

DORR: Chessie [ph].

LEVINE: Chessie.

DORR: Chessie Harr.

LEVINE: Ok, so you went with your aunt, and you went to Jamaica?

DORR: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what-- and what-- can you talk about the things you saw that were new to you when you first got here?

DORR: Well, all the big buildings and all that, and of course them talking English. I just sat there and listened. See.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Now could your aunt speak German?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: Could your aunt speak German?

DORR: Very little. She was not-- she was an American-born person. My uncle still spoke German.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: But, you know, you could get-- they spoke English and I had to just pick it up somehow. And you do.

LEVINE: Yeah, so did you see your brother when you first got here?

DORR: Oh yeah, he came also to the boat. He wasn't allowed to go on the boat but he waited down-- down there on the pier.

LEVINE: What was it like seeing him?

DORR: Well, I was glad to see him. Somebody from home, you know.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah.

DORR: So uh, but I-- Ellis Island was only for the ones that got sick on the boat then-- that already had stopped gradually.

LEVINE: Well, if you were traveling second class then you probably wouldn't have to go. Unless there was something wrong.

DORR: That could be. That could be the reason.

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. Ok, so you got to your uncle's house and then what happened, what did you do?

DORR: Well, uh, after a couple of days we-- I talked. I said I wanted a job and, uh, they got me a place with some people to-- taking care of the little girl.

LEVINE: Oh, where was that?

DORR: That I don't remember, but nothing-- Jamaica it wasn't-- oh I can't remember the name.

LEVINE: Did you live there?

DORR: Yeah, sure, you lived there, you got so much a month. I got forty-five dollars a month.

LEVINE: And then did you have days off?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: Did you have some days off?

DORR: Uh, once a week I had a day off.

LEVINE: And what would you do on your day off?

DORR: Well, I went to my aunt's house in the beginning and gradually I went to the stores and, you know.

LEVINE: Uh huh. What was learning English like for you?

DORR: What?

LEVINE: What was it like for you to learn English?

DORR: You just pick it up somehow; you hear nothing else anymore, well you pick it up.

LEVINE: Was it difficult?

DORR: No, when you're young like that it comes easy.

LEVINE: Yeah, now did you have any friends who had come here? Did you see anybody you knew from Germany besides your family?

DORR: No, no, but I met people then gradually.

LEVINE: Now, um, the family that you worked for, were they German?

DORR: No, they were Jewish people.

LEVINE: So you couldn't really speak?

DORR: Pardon?

LEVINE: You couldn't really talk?

DORR: No, no, but we communicated and gradually I picked up.

LEVINE: And what about the baby – it was a baby you were taking care of?

DORR: No, that one was three years old and later on I-- I quit that job. I didn't like it anymore.

LEVINE: What didn't you like? What was it that you didn't like?

DORR: They made me sleep in the same room with their older son. He was sixteen or seventeen.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: I didn't like that. When I told my aunt she says-- I called her-- her telephone number was the public line 3374. And, uh, she says, "You go in your room and pack your suitcase." She came over and she says, "That's not going be—," you know.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: And then I got a job in Bronxville, which is outside of New York.

LEVINE: Yes.

DORR: In those days Bronxville was a very rich town.

LEVINE: Still is.

DORR: It still is a little, but not-- not what it used to be.

LEVINE: Uh huh, so what—and what did you do there, did--?

DORR: Baby.

LEVINE: Another baby?

DORR: Oh, yes, I—the one party I had, she had two children, unexpected one. The girl was eight and the other one was fifteen months and we expected the baby then. About three months later I think it was, little Ruth was born. I took care of her.

LEVINE: And did you like that job?

DORR: Oh y—well, fairly much.

LEVINE: Did you have your own room?

DORR: I had a room, but I slept with the children. Ah, see I had a room where I could sit if I wanted to, but you know-- I don't know how to say that— you—you— mix [unclear] with the cook. Then we had the cook in the house. She was German. I would sit with her sometimes in the evening when the children were in bed.

LEVINE: Now were these people German people?

DORR: No, no, they were American people, see, but then I had picked up enough English to, you know.

LEVINE: Now-- now when you were there did you start meeting some German or German-American people that you socialized with?

DORR: Yeah, sure, in Yorkville. We went to-- 86th street up was German-- German section. No more. It's all gone. See. And then I got married.

LEVINE: Well, now, and did you get another job in Yorkville-- in 86th--

DORR: No, no, I only went there on my day off. I had a day off during the week.

LEVINE: Now was there a German club, a social club that you would meet people--?

DORR: Well, you went to those restaurants and you met people.

LEVINE: I see.

DORR: And you danced, you know, and stuff like that.

LEVINE: Uh huh, so that must have been good--

DORR: Oh yes. [interposes]

LEVINE: To see other people that were from Germany.

DORR: Oh yes. I had-- I can't complain.

LEVINE: Now when you got married were you still working for those three children?

DORR: No, I quit that job after a while and I took a job just cooking because I wanted to go out at night once in a while, too, you know, which you can't when you're a nurse.

LEVINE: So where were you for that job when you were cooking?

DORR: In Bronxville.

LEVINE: Oh, in Bronxville.

DORR: Yeah. I worked for the Greens. I met the-- in the Greens' house-- the son was a friend of President Kennedy.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: I knew President Kennedy's mother Rose-- Rose Kennedy. She said

END SIDE A, BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: Is that where you were working when you met your husband?

DORR: Yeah.

LEVINE: And how did you meet him?

DORR: In Yorkville.

LEVINE: At a dance?

DORR: At a dance, yeah, at a dance, and you get acquainted and you take a chance and get married.

(LEVINE laughs)

LEVINE: Now, was your husband from Germany?

DORR: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: From a little town in Germany.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: So, uh, it, uh -- we married-- we knew each other about a year when we got married. He had a delicatessen.

LEVINE: In-- in Yorkville.

DORR: No, in—yeah, he had it in Yorkville, that's right, on 84th street. And, uh, well we never talked about that I would work in there, but I did. Gradually I got sucked into it.

(LEVINE laughs)

LEVINE: And where were you living then, after you got married?

DORR: Well, we had an apartment on 85th street.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: And later on in 84th street.

LEVINE: I see.

DORR: And from there, when we sold that business we went to Yonkers, NY.

LEVINE: And then did you have another delicatessen?

DORR: Yeah, sure, we had that store for twenty-some odd years in Yor- in Yonkers.

LEVINE: Oh, well, could you describe Yorkville back when you used to go there?

DORR: Well, you could speak German again. You met mostly German people and I don't know-- I don't remember too much. All I know is that we went dancing at night.

LEVINE: Uh huh. And what about the delicatessen? Could you describe that a little bit?

DORR: Well, what's there to describe? You work, you—you-- we had the business and I-- I worked behind the counter. I did the cooking.

LEVINE: And it was all German? Was it German cooking?

DORR: Well, we didn't do much-- too much cooking. Salads we made mainly. German style, you know. That's it.

LEVINE: And then-- could people go in and-- and sit down and have--?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: No.

DORR: We didn't have-- they only bought. Like-- and on Thursday night I made three hundred fishcakes.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: And they sold on Friday then, you know. In Yonkers in those days there was the carpet factory Schmitke [ph, not understood], Schmitke carpet factory. Oh, I can't talk that much anymore.

LEVINE: Uh huh, what was the name of the deli?

DORR: Herman's deli.

(LEVINE laughs)

LEVINE: That was your husband's name?

DORR: That's what I-- that's right, that's what I called it: Herman's deli.

LEVINE: And the same thing in Yonkers? They called it Herman's deli in Yonkers too?

[DORR says something in the middle, not understood.]

DORR: Oh yes.

LEVINE: And was that deli the same idea, people took out the food in the-- in the deli in Yonkers, it was the same idea, people just took the food out?

DORR: Yeah, sure, they just come and bought and took it home, see.

LEVINE: So then did you-- and when you had children did you still work in the deli?

DORR: Oh, yeah, we managed somehow, you know. And after—well, Stephen was-- they both were born in NY, both boys, before we moved to Yonkers. And when we moved to Yonkers, the baby was a year old and the other fellow was four years old, see. And in Yonkers I had to live behind a store for a while. You couldn't get an apartment. It was very hard. Then gradually we built a house.

LEVINE: In Yonkers?

DORR: Yeah. And, uh, well, you raised them and [not understood], you know every day I arranged it so when they were little I made all my salads during the evening. When they went to school I made it during the day and I had the evening more with them.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: See? You arranged that somehow, you know.

LEVINE: Right. Did you become a citizen?

DORR: Oh, yes, in 1937.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh, did you have to go to classes?

DORR: Yeah, we had to-- you had to know a certain amount of English and, uh, I don't remem— I only remember I wanted it in 1936 before I went to on a trip to Germany.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: And, uh, some Jewish man started to question me about Hitler. I said, "Forget it," I says, "I'm not going to-- I don't know anything about Hitler," you know, uh--

LEVINE: Wait, was this when you went for your citizenship?

DORR: Yeah, you had-- you know they had-- they examined you, and he questioned me all about Hitler instead of American knowing [unclear] or anything and I got mad. I say, "Look, I don't know anything about Hitler. I don't care about Hitler." I says, and, "Forget it," I says, "I'm going to apply for my papers when I get back from Germany again."

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: See, see, because it was easier to get off the boat when you had your citizenship, see.

LEVINE: Now did you run into much anti-German feeling when we were at war with Germany? Did, were--

DORR: Yes.

LEVINE: What-- tell me anything that happened that you were--?

DORR: Well even in-- the people that lived in Yorkville, some of them called you a lousy Nazi. That's just what they said when-- they were running around trying to collect sugar and stuff like that. They were hoarding it, only you wouldn't give it to them, you kept them for your customers.

LEVINE: Oh.

DORR: They had stamps in those days, too.

LEVINE: Oh, so they would use stamps in the delicatessen?

DORR: Oh yes, for certain of things they had to have-- for meat-- for certain meats they had to have a stamp.

LEVINE: So it must have been hard to buy things for the delicatessen.

DORR: Well, yes, but you had your people that came around every day-- every week-- and so--

LEVINE: And supplied you with what you needed. Yeah. Were you aware of people coming and taking Germans to these, uh, internment camps? During World War II, some Germans were called enemy aliens, and they were taken away, and put in camps. Were you aware of that at all?

DORR: Not much, no, there wasn't-- we didn't hear much about it you know, we just-- we just-- just stayed to ourselves [unclear], we didn't mix with any organization or anything, you know.

LEVINE: I just thought maybe some of your neighbors were taken away. Did you-- were you aware of that--?

DORR: No. I lived in an apartment with forty-- we had forty-eight apartments and forty-two were Jewish, but they were all nice.

LEVINE: Oh, good.

DORR: I must say, none of them was nasty, you know, that I was a German or anything.

LEVINE: Uh huh, good. Now were you religious-- was your family religious at all?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: In Germany?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: No. And here?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: Not at all?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: So would you have been-- so in other words you were never baptized or anything?

DORR: No, no, we didn't bother with anything. My husband was Catholic and I was raised Lutheran, so--

LEVINE: Yup, we're going to pause for a while.

DORR: Oh. I att--[not understood].

LEVINE: Oh, ok, we'll stop soon. So in other words your husband was Catholic and you were Lutheran, but you weren't religious.

DORR: [overlaps] Lutheran. Neither-- neither one of us bothered with—with-- I always-- my father said, "Do right and shouldn't [unclear] be afraid of anybody, that's a good religion."

LEVINE: Sounds good to me, too. Ok, so let's see, you became a citizen; did your husband become one too?

DORR: Oh yes, in-- don't remember-- he must have been a citizen already when we got married.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh.

DORR: He was here longer than I.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DORR: A couple years before.

LEVINE: Well, what would you say you're very proud of that you've done, that makes you feel satisfied that you did?

DORR: I made a good living here-- I never [not understood— "grown," "ran"?] into any trouble of any kind so, uh-- that's-- that's-- I don't know--

LEVINE: Wait, you want to take a little break?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: You want to take a little break? Do you want to stop for a little while?

DORR: It's all right. It's all right. Let's finish up.

LEVINE: Ok, we'll finish up. Do you think that coming here as a sixteen year old girl--

DORR: Yeah. [interposes]

LEVINE: --and living your life here--

DORR: Yeah. [interposes]

LEVINE: --do you think that made a difference, that you came from some place else, you became an American?

DORR: No.

LEVINE: Do you think it-- like the way you look at things or how you are, do you think the fact that you came and started over again in a way made a difference in you?

DORR: No, well, you-- that comes gradually, you don't feel the difference, you just live and forget this-- this is home, see.

LEVINE: Yeah, uh huh. Now, how do you think about being German and being American—how do you put--?

DORR: I never [unclear- “based,” “placed”?] that any thought.

LEVINE: Ok, ok. And when you went back-- you said you went back to Germany, and when was that?

DORR: In 1933 and in 1936. I went back twice.

LEVINE: And what was it like when you went back? How did it strike you?

DORR: (pause) It didn't feel home anymore.

LEVINE: Ah.

DORR: This was already the year— home.

LEVINE: Was your father still alive when you went back?

DORR: Yeah. Oh yes, in 1936. He died in 1937.

LEVINE: Uh huh, were you aware of any build-up to the war when you were over there?

DORR: No, we didn't bother with any politics or anything. There wasn't-- Hitler was then in power already in '36.

LEVINE: Right.

DORR: And my stepsister—she uh, she was for Hitler then. Well, they had no choice the young people.

LEVINE: Why do you say that?

DORR: (pause) If you were not a Hitler you couldn't get a job.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DORR: And then after the war they went to, um, to Australia. The English government wanted skilled worker-- workers and her husband was a-- an

electrician and they shipped him to Australia in 19-- must have been around the 50's. And she had a child, a boy that was sickish and everything in Germany, and they went to new-- to Australia and he blossomed like a flower. He's an architect. He has a business in Australia, in Sydney.

LEVINE: Yeah, well, did you feel you fulfilled your dream--

DORR: Yes, I— [interposes]

LEVINE: -- of being a baby nurse?

DORR: Well, I forgot all about that. I had my children and you forget about that then, you know.

LEVINE: Let's see, so now, why don't you say your children's names?

DORR: Huh?

LEVINE: What were your children's names?

DORR: Stephen Dorr and Thomas Dorr.

LEVINE: And do you have grandchildren?

DORR: What?

LEVINE: Do you have grandchildren?

DORR: One grandchild, yeah.

LEVINE: And what's-- what's his or her name?

DORR: H-- his name is Thomas.

LEVINE: Ok, and so now your husband has-- has died—so you're-- so tell about all the things you've done, the knitting and everything. Just talk about that, why you did it and--?

DORR: Well, I had a friend, a German woman too, and she always made stuff for churches where she lived at that time, in New York in Long Island. And I helped when they came to Florida. We both moved to Florida, and she made the stuff for the church anyway. Her daughter went to that church. And I helped her and that's how I gradually got into it and then the mitten business got started. Some relation of my husband's side came and I gave the children mittens. And the woman asked me then, the mother of those children, she says, "Could you make some more?" and I got gradually into it, that's.

LEVINE: So, why don't you say for the tape the extent of it, how many mittens you've made?

DORR: All in all, oh gee, it must be over a thousand.

LEVINE: How-- so you've been doing this for some years now.

DORR: Pardon?

LEVINE: You've been knitting mittens for some years now.

DORR: Oh sure, a couple of years now, but last year was the biggest; six hundred and fifty-five I made.

LEVINE: And where do you send them? Do you send them to the church still, or where?

DORR: I give them to the one party that started me off in it. She lives in Columbus, Ohio. Her daughter-in-- —her daughter-in-law is a pre-garten-- pre-kindergarten teacher. She uses the mittens as a project.

LEVINE: As a what?

DORR: As a project.

LEVINE: Oh, as a project.

DORR: For the school for her little ones. I get notices from people that I don't know that thank me for the mittens.

(both laugh)

LEVINE: So that must give you a lot of satisfaction.

DORR: Well, It does. It makes you feel good and the rest goes to-- like, in Columbus she gives them to some school for some poor children, you know. And she collects the wool from-- from her church. The people, she tells them, if you have leftover wool give them to me and I'll make a pair of mittens most of the time out of it.

LEVINE: Do you make them all different colors, and--?

DORR: Well, whatever color I have and whatever size it gets to be that I have enough wool for. And, I.

LEVINE: Nice. So what are you looking forward to now?

DORR: Nothing.

LEVINE: Nothing--

DORR: I wish I could die.

LEVINE: Oh, really?

DORR: I mean it. I miss my life, it's—it's finished.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Well, you keep giving, though-- you keep giving mittens to poor children and--

DORR: Well, you gotta do something. I mean, I don't see those children or anything, but I get a satisfaction out of it.

LEVINE: Good, good.

DORR: See. I knit them and I have it— up-- I have a room here. In-- this is the hospital section. I have a room, in-- the Westchester, they call it. They take me there once in a while for a couple hours and I knit.

LEVINE: Oh, that's nice.

DORR: See. And, outside of that, life is finished for me.

LEVINE: Well, I think it's wonderful that you keep giving to other people.

DORR: Well, you should-- we all should try. Because, uh— well, I don't know what to say anymore.

LEVINE: Well, is there anything else you can think of about coming to this country and living your life out in the United States?

DORR: Well, we did a lot of [not understood], some traveling, we went to Hawaii, we went to California after we had sold the business in 19-- when did we sell? We got to Yonkers in 1946, in 1960 sometime we sold the business, and in '72 we moved to Florida. See.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh, was that good? Were you happy to move to Florida?

DORR: Yeah, my husband wanted it. I wasn't so much for Florida in the beginning, but now I'm-- it's home.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

DORR: I'm here since 1972. So it's a long time.

LEVINE: Well, I know you were written up in the local newspaper about all the knitting and everything, so I'm going to put that in Ellis Island in your folder with your name on it. So when somebody comes and listens to your tape, if they want more, they can read what was written about you.

DORR: Yeah, well alright, I see.

LEVINE: And then I'm going to send this tape to your son Stephen.

DORR: Yeah, Stephen send it. I have no address anymore for myself. He takes care of everything.

LEVINE: Ok, and I'll send it to him and then he can hear it and you can hear it-- he can play it for you.

DORR: That's, well, I can't-- you know--

LEVINE: Yeah, well, it's a very nice interview and I'm very happy to have met you.

DORR: Thank you, it's nice to talk about it once in a while.

LEVINE: Good, good.

DORR: But as I say, it gets very tiresome now.

LEVINE: Yeah, I can see, you're winding down a little bit. Well, this has been a pleasure, and I've been speaking with Anne Dorr, who came here in 19--

DORR: 28. [concurrently]

LEVINE: 28.

In December she landed.

DORR: That's right.

LEVINE: And she has-- she was sixteen years old.

DORR: That's it.

LEVINE: And she lived here all this time, is ninety-two at the time of this interview.

DORR: Ninety-t-- I was ninety-two in January.

LEVINE: Wonderful.

DORR: Going on ninety-three. I don't know why I have to hang around so long.

LEVINE: (laughs) Why do you think you've lived such a long, long life?

(pause)

DORR: I don't know. I'm about the only one left of our whole crowd.

LEVINE: Yeah.

DORR: Of people that I knew, you know.

LEVINE: Well, you certainly have a lot of vitality still.

(pause)

DORR: Not really.

(pause)

LEVINE: Ok, you're talked out. I can see. This is Janet Levine for the National Parks Service, and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW