

**RUTH WALLENFELS TWOMBLY**  
**BIRTHDATE: MARCH 4, 1930**  
**INTERVIEW DATE: JULY 9, 2004**  
**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 74 YEARS OLD**  
**RUNNING TIME: 1:44:36**  
**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**  
**RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME**  
**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: MONICA MCCARTHY**  
**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**GERMANY, 1930**  
**AGE: SIX MONTHS OLD**

**SHIP: UNKNOWN**  
**PORT: UNKNOWN**  
**RESIDENCES:**  
    **CELLE, GERMANY**  
    **UNITED STATES: BROOKLYN, NEW YORK; QUEENS, NEW**  
**YORK; BRIGHTWATERS, LONG ISLAND; NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**HISTORIAN'S NOTE: NIECE OF FREDRICH (FRIED) ERNST**  
**AUHAGEN WHO WAS INTERNED AT ELLIS ISLAND AS AN ENEMY**  
**ALIEN AGENT FROM 1941-1946. SHE VISITED HER UNCLE AT ELLIS**  
**ISLAND, WHO WAS THEN DEPORTED.**

LEVINE: Today is July the 9<sup>th</sup>, the year 2004. I'm here at Ellis Island with Ruth Twombly and Margarete—uh—Monod-Kelly, who is making a return engagement, having been interviewed with her cousin, Heidi Shirley at a— at an earlier time. And this interview, as the earlier one, will be concerned with Fredrich Ernst Auhagen, who was interned here as an enemy alien agent from 1940 to 1947 and—uh—as Heidi Shirley mentioned, she visited him with her mother in 1943. So now, Ruth Twombly, Heidi Shirley's sister, will talk more—and apparently you had more contact with your uncle Fried than—than Heidi did.

TWOMBLY: Right.

LEVINE: So—uh—okay. Why don't you say again, please, for the tape, your birth date and where you were born?

TWOMBLY: Well—um—my birth date is 03/04/30, and I'm the only member of us four children who was actually born in Germany. And—um—so, I was born in the town of Celle, which is the home of my grandmother and, of course, where Fredrich Auhagen also lived for quite a while.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Spell the name of the town, just for the tape.

TWOMBLY: Right, it's C-E-L-L-E. And I have just read a book, actually, where it's spelled with a 'z'—and—um—so evidently it has some different—different spellings. Right.

LEVINE: And how long did you live there?

TWOMBLY: Well, a very short time. I came back as a baby, for some reason I was born there—and—um—my mother being there. (Laughs) And I believe I was about six months old when I came here. But my father and—uh—lived here and—and the U.S.A, Brooklyn was their residence.

LEVINE: I see. Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: So—

LEVINE: And it was your mother who was the sister of your uncle Fried.

TWOMBLY: That's correct.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Okay—uh—why don't you talk about your earliest memories with your uncle?

TWOMBLY: Right. My earliest memories—um—a—are pretty continual. He was a constant visitor. And I think from my earliest—youth, I remember him dropping by. Now, I had—we had—I had come back to the United S—well, I shouldn't say back. I arrived at the United States when I was six months old. But—uh—this was at the time of the Depression, as you can tell. And I was two when my brother and I—my older brother and I—were sent back to Germany. And we stayed with our two grandmothers, but most of the time the grandmother in Celle. And so, we stayed there for about two and a half years, constantly wondering if we would be picked up again by our parents. And, but fortunately they came for us—two and a half years later.

LEVINE: Wow. Now was your Uncle Fried in Germany at that point?

TWOMBLY: From time to time. He was—he—was a traveler. And I recall him being there—from time to time.

LEVINE: As he was in Brooklyn from time to time, I guess.

TWOMBLY: As he would visit from time to time. And, in fact, I believe he lived in Brooklyn, too, for a while. And—um—but he, uh—he was a constant visitor 'til—for years.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Now, what were the circumstances a—as to why you—what is because of the Depression that you and your brother were sent?

TWOMBLY: Yes. And—um—my father had worked for several banks here— I think his ultimate—bank may have been the Chase Bank or City Bank. Anyway, for—large banks here; and he did lose his job, ultimately. And he had to go find other work, which was not easy for him. And, in fact, I've tried to quiz him on the subject and find out some real details, but he said, you know, we—tried to forget that time. And—uh—even though I had pointed out to him that many people made a great deal of money from discussing their hardships and the Depression time, I could never lure him into telling me very much about it. I do know that my mother had to go to work, and at those—in those days, women did not go to work if they were married. So, she had to—say she was single.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: And had to maintain that pose—until they came to get us back.

LEVINE: I see. Do you know what she did?

TWOMBLY: Yes. She was—um—a [unclear]. And—um—I know she worked for a family called the Kirks in Morristown—New Jersey.

LEVINE: New Jersey.

TWOMBLY: And actually, she remained friends with them. I got to know the children whom she took care of.

LEVINE: Wow. So it was just you and your brother? You were the only two children at that point?

TWOMBLY: At the time, right. And we were, as I said, sent to Germany—and it was quite traumatic for both of us. But we were glad we had each other.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: And, in fact, we have sort of—I think, maintained almost the relationship of twins because—we depended so much on each other.

LEVINE: And what is your brother's name?

TWOMBLY: My brother's name is Otto, O-T-T-O. And—actually, I called him after I'd heard that Heidi had spoken with you—to ask him what memories he had, and—uh—because we came here together to visit Uncle Fried—usually. I don't ever remember coming alone. That doesn't mean I didn't, but—I onl—really remember coming with him.

LEVINE: Did he have any—memories that—were salient to him?

TWOMBLY: Well, if I would tell him something, then he'd remember it, too, but he didn't offer it. So—uh—since he's older than I am, he may very well have more—if he puts his mind to it.

LEVINE: Do you think he might consent to be interviewed?

TWOMBLY: Well, I—I—talked to him about it. He may very well. He—uh—I think he enjoys being interviewed. (Laughs) I would expect him to be. So—uh—

LEVINE: Well, he's welcome.

TWOMBLY: He's welcome.

LEVINE: So let him know that if he—if he decides that he wants to, that would be great.

TWOMBLY: I'll tell him.

LEVINE: Okay, so, do you have memories of—those two years, two to four and half years of age?

TWOMBLY: Oh, I certainly do. I certainly do.

LEVINE: What—what are the things that—when you think about that time, what are the things that mostly come to your mind?

TWOMBLY: Well—um—for one thing, we both had Polio when we were there, so we—um—we knew we had that experience. I've pretty much locked it out of my mind. And—um—but we—we were both quite ill when we were there. We were also shifted from one grandparent to another—and—uh—we tried to—work things out so that we would stay with our paternal grandmother—if we were never brought back. If we were never picked up, we tried to figure out a way to stay with her instead of the one in Celle, because my brother had trouble getting along with her.

LEVINE: So that would be the mother of your mother and Fredrich?

TWOMBLY: Mother, right.

LEVINE: So—what—what was it about her—(Laughs)—that made you want to stay with the other one?

TWOMBLY: Well, my brother would say I was the goody-two-shoes, so I always got along with both of them. He disclaimed my—um—since I didn't mind either one. But I had to agree, I liked the other one better.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And—uh—she was simply a nice person.

LEVINE: Was the—was the maternal grandmother strict?

TWOMBLY: She didn't seem to be. Not to me. I think maybe she was a little bit more strict with my brother. Actually, we were happy in both places.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Yeah. At least I was.

LEVINE: And so what—what do you remember—uh—aspects of the—people around you, the town around you? The living—

TWOMBLY: Right, right. We—we liked it. She had a very large garden—and—if you were hungry, you simply could roam that garden and—eat strawberries, and fruits, and apples, and all of these things. They had dogs, they had chickens, they had—uh—

LEVINE: Now this—which grandmother is this?

TWOMBLY: This is now, Unc—Fried's mother. Yeah. And—um—she was a very good gardener and we definitely had a good time there. And—uh—it was my—I remember being in—you know, just playing games in the—in the field there and it was what they call a *hof*, which is a large—sort of a simply—

MONOD-KELLY: Called backyard.

TWOMBLY: Well, it was a—a bare area where you could—where you could play. You were not damaging plants or rooting things up. I know we killed a whole lot of chickens by mistake. (Laughs)

LEVINE: (Laughs) How— how did you kill them by mistake?

TWOMBLY: Well, we were loving them too hard. (Laughs) They were supposed to stay in little rooms and be our children. (Laughs) And we were told about this many times—about—you know— that we had done this.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Is there anything that you can say from your experience about— sort of, the child-rearing in Germany compared with—what you experienced here?

TWOMBLY: In the U.S.A., no, because I—the child-rearing when—between two and four was—just a lot of freedom and—a lot of chance to play.

LEVINE: Oh, mhm.

TWOMBLY: So it was—I just remember it as being pleasant. We did more things with our other grandmother. She took us on walks, and—then—we were learning things to recognize—mushrooms, and went to a beekeeper and talked to him, and so on. She was more educative. Our other grandmother just sort of—let us—be ourselves.

LEVINE: Uh huh. And were you learning to speak German then?

TWOMBLY: We spoke totally German.

LEVINE: Totally German.

TWOMBLY: We—totally German. So I went from speaking—I'm— I'm assuming I could speak English at two but probably not much. When I came back at four and a half, I spoke only German.

LEVINE: Hm.

TWOMBLY: And—uh—the grandmother in Celle knew no English. My grandmother in Frankfurt knew English. She had lived in England for a while, and she knew English, but my grandmother in Celle did not. So—uh—but I think I must've learned English before I came there, then thought I forgot it. Because when I came back to the United States—first day I went to school I—knew very little—could understand very little. But, it seemed to me within two weeks I was up to speed. Or in no time at all.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh. Now, do you remember any experiences with your Uncle Fried—uh—during those two to four and a half—those years—two to four and half, when you were in Germany?

TWOMBLY: No. Only that we were glad to see him and that he was always entertaining. That's about all. I think he—gave us—you know, took us to a store and had—had cakes. (Laughs) And—um—and that he called me *mause*, which means little mouse. But I never felt like a mouse. (Laughs) It was just his name.

LEVINE: Well, I guess it was a term of endearment.

TWOMBLY: I hope so.

LEVINE: Yeah. (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: He also called me Lotta—and—uh—I don't recall him actually calling me by my real name. But—that didn't matter either.

LEVINE: Mhm. What is—is Lotta—is that some—

TWOMBLY: I don't—

LEVINE: Significant?

TWOMBLY: I don't think so.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh huh, uh huh. Okay, so then you came back here and what—were you—were you sorry to leave Germany? Or were you—

TWOMBLY: We were very glad to be going with our parents. We had thought we would be abandoned. And—uh—we were very glad they came for us.

LEVINE: And they both came?

TWOMBLY: Yes, mhm. They both came.

LEVINE: Do you remember, by any chance, the—uh—leaving Germany? And going to the port? And—the ship, and—

TWOMBLY: Oh, I certainly remember the ship.

LEVINE: What was that? Do you know its name?

TWOMBLY: Uh— no, I don't remember the name. But it was certainly a very large ship and we had—we had—uh—a fairly stormy crossing and quite a few people got—seasick. We played—games. One game we played was

barber. I don't know if my mother liked that game because—we had less hair when we were through with it. (Laughs) And—uh—

LEVINE: You played that aboard the ship?

TWOMBLY: Yeah. (Laughs)

LEVINE: A de— what year was that then? When you were coming back? Must have been 1934?

TWOMBLY: It must have been thirty-four or thirty-five, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay.

TWOMBLY: And I do know it was a stormy crossing. And—I was extremely embarrassed that I couldn't read, so I spent a great deal of time pretending I could read. I would always—study the menu.

LEVINE: (Laughs) Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: But we had a good time on the boat. We met other kids and—the grownups were glad to be left alone.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Now when you first arrived—uh—in New Yor—in New York? You came into the New York Harbor?

TWOMBLY: Mhm.

LEVINE: Did you come to Ellis Island?

TWOMBLY: No.

LEVINE: No. Did—what were your first impressions coming as a four and a half year old to New York? Do you remember that?

TWOMBLY: The only thing I remember is that my father told me that I was going to have to have—a meeting with a doctor. Little physical exam, I suppose. And he asked me not to yell and scream. And I asked him why he asked me that, and he said, ‘well the last time you saw one you yelled and screamed.’ (Chuckles) I had totally forgotten about it, but when I saw the doctor I deliberately yelled and screamed. I knew I didn’t like him.

LEVINE: Where was the doctor? Was he on the ship?

TWOMBLY: I think he was on the boat or—I think it was just a matter of coming into the country. They looked at you.

LEVINE: So, in other words, you received an examination on board, probably. So you must have been traveling first or second class, I would think.

TWOMBLY: Probably. Yeah.

LEVINE: I see, uh huh. And so then you probably got off at Battery Park and—and then—what happened? Do you remember your first experiences coming into the—into New York?

TWOMBLY: No, no. It just seemed to be—I don’t remember any of it. I do remember a little bit of our life in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Okay.

TWOMBLY: But—

LEVINE: What section of Brooklyn?

TWOMBLY: I know we were close to Prospect Park because we used to go to Prospect Park. And—uh— kindergarten was imminent, but my brother was older, so he went to kindergarten pretty soon. Now, there went my companion. My comrade in arms was gone half the day. And he came back and I asked him, well, what is it like, you know, and he said, 'you wouldn't want to know.' And that was the end of the discussion. (Laughs) That's the same one who may come to visit you.

LEVINE: Okay. So— so—uh—what—how did your life change? Just—you know— those first—first months here—as compared with your life in Germany with your grandmothers?

TWOMBLY: Well, it was much more constricted because my parents only had an apartment in Brooklyn. And, we played in a—little cemented area that was behind our—building and—uh—I know once, when I, I had—was recovering from a cold or something, my mother had made a chalk line and I was supposed to stay within the chalk line. So, it was much more restricted. We didn't have this running around in a garden that was acres big.

LEVINE: Mhm. So your mother now had stopped working? Or—

TWOMBLY: Yes, she—she did.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So now, do you remember your uncle Fried's visits in Brooklyn— as you got older?

TWOMBLY: Not t— Not too much. I don't remember him actually coming to Brooklyn and things were not going swimmingly then, but they were simply good enough to have your two children back home. And—but it wasn't too long before my father bought some property in Brightwaters— Long Island. And Margaret and I actually just went and visited this old place of ours. And he started to build—on weekends—he started to build the number three model from the Sears-Roebuck catalogue. And that is actually still there.

LEVINE: Wow. Now did he continue to work in a bank or did he do something else?

TWOMBLY: No, he was starting to work in a pharmaceutical company— which was E.L. Patch and was situated in Boston—actually. And—um—he had a friend who was a scientist for the pharmaceutical company, which was, sort of an end for my father. And—uh—he worked there for a number of years. And in time we actually moved out to Long Island. And, what had started as a very small house, he put a couple of additions on, and became a little larger. So—

LEVINE: So, how old were you when you moved, roughly?

TWOMBLY: Well, I went to kindergarten out there.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: So—uh—

LEVINE: So it was within a year or so—

TWOMBLY: It must have been very quickly, yeah.

LEVINE: I see. So then, is that where you grew up then?

TWOMBLY: That's where I grew up until I was twelve—or eleven—and then we had to move back to the city, although we kept that house.

LEVINE: Uh huh, I see.

TWOMBLY: But I had another trip to Germany in between.

LEVINE: Oh, when was that?

TWOMBLY: And in 1939, this grandmother from Celle came to visit and—my mother thought it would be a very good chance for me to brush up on my German, which I had pretty much forgotten. And so, I went back with her in June—I think it was June—might have been May—of 1939. And—in retrospect this has totally puzzled me because—they were very political and discussed politics and—all the time—read the New York Times all the time. And—that I would be sent there so short before the actual onset of war—um—although I recall that the war was—a—an extreme surprise to all of us—when it happened.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: It was—uh—I had been sent to a German school there, which was very, very hard for me. And—uh—but I knew we were all surprised.

LEVINE: Hm. But the build-up had been happening, I mean—

TWOMBLY: Not really. I—it—not in Celle, it didn't happen.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Maybe it happened in Berlin, but my—point of view was from Celle and—so far as I knew, none of my classmates knew it. I was sent on a day to go buy some sugar—or—something—some errand for my grandmother and they told me I couldn't but it without ration cards and I didn't know what that was. I came home. Things were rationed overnight.

LEVINE: Wow.

TWOMBLY: And—the war was—a big surprise.

LEVINE: Hm. So you went without your brother? When you went back—

TWOMBLY: Without my brother. This time I went alone. And—uh—I had to get back from Germany alone. And—uh—

LEVINE: How long did you stay?

TWOMBLY: Well—um— from—from September on. I think it was a matter of trying to get back.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And I didn't make it until 1940.

LEVINE: Oh. But you were trying to.

TWOMBLY: Or the people behind me—my—I was only nine, so I personally wasn't trying a— a whole lot.

LEVINE: Right, right, right.

TWOMBLY: But—uh— I tried to get back and I know they were trying—uh—my grandmother mentioned it once in a while. And—uh—but by the time I— actually made it, I had to go through the Brenner Pass, and then go to Genoa.

MONOD-KELLY: By yourself.

TWOMBLY: Which I had to do (Chuckles) by myself. And then wait in Eng—in Italy until a ship came by to pick me up. So—I had a fairly adventuresome time there.

LEVINE: Would—you must have seen some effects of the beginning of the war. Did—or did you?

TWOMBLY: Well, yes. We had—uh—the moment the war started, we had— were told that we had to have a bomb shelter in the basement of the house. We were told what you had to have in the bomb shelter. Everyone had to fit their windows with black curtains. If your rode a bike, you had to fasten your light with a very tiny opening, so that you wouldn't cast lights around. We were told what to put into the bomb shelters, how much water to have, and so on. And we actually had an air raid. So, the British came over and—my grandmother refused to go into the—basement. And I said she had to, I just—she was pretty autocratic, but I pulled her. And finally she said, 'okay, okay. I'll go.' And—uh—but that was only one occasion.

LEVINE: Yeah. So were you fright— how—how did you feel when you were leaving? Was it—was it adventure, or was it fright, or was it a combination of feeling or how—

TWOMBLY: Well, it's— it was mostly the problem of—simply not knowing. People— don't fill you in and give you a whole litany of what may or may not happen, or what you can or should not do. You're sort of put on the train and sent—get out in Genoa. Some—somehow our—my adults were not very forthcoming. So—uh—

MONOD-KELLY: They couldn't go with you. They were forbidden to go.

TWOMBLY: Well, no. My one grandmother tried to come with me but she was taken off the train and—at the Brenner Pass. And so I went on alone. And—uh— I think I was one of those unimaginative kids. I didn't have a great deal of—worries didn't suddenly come in on me, although I certainly was worried. But, I wasn't panic-stricken.

LEVINE: Was there anything about that trip that you remember?

TWOMBLY: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. You remember many things about that trip on the— German soldiers coming and taking my grandmother off, I certainly remember that, and then—streaming through the train and—searching— everything. I had two *groschen*—*groschen* [unclear], yeah, *groschen*. They took those away from me.

MONOD-KELLY: Two German coins. Two German coins.

LEVINE: Oh.

MONOD-KELLY: Twenty cents. Two pieces. Two ten cents.

TWOMBLY: So I had literally no money. And with no money—and um—but I was used to that. My parents never had gave me much money, so we always traveled on dimes and nickels. And—uh—

LEVINE: Were there other children traveling?

TWOMBLY: No, no. I was the only child that I could see. And I was— I did notice when we got to Genoa I could, by that time, read. And, I did get off, but I was certainly concerned about what would happen then. But—uh— I was met by the Red Cross—in time, and I was taken to a hotel. And I was told to wait there.

LEVINE: And—and then what?

TWOMBLY: Which I did. And—uh— I was very lonely because everyone spoke Italian and I didn't know any Italian. Tried to find some people who, perhaps, knew English. And—um— I did finally find a book in German and I was very glad to be able to have something to read, 'cause I had nothing—to do. And I tried to get to the harbor to see if I could find any news about—the arrival of an American boat. And—uh—but the moment you set foot outside the hotel—all—there would be all this noise and racket—and I ran back into the hotel. And somebody said to me, "it's only because your blonde Italians do that. Don't worry about it."

LEVINE: Oh, God. (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: So I did—make—manage to make my way to the harbor. I still don't know how I did it, but it was in March of that time. And I remember people walking in sweaters and shirts. It was—really very pleasant in general in March.

LEVINE: Uh huh, uh huh. So how long were you at the port then? In Genoa?

TWOMBLY: Well, I was there for at least two weeks. And the people at the harbor—the Stevedores—were v—very nice to me, and they spoke very slow Italian, thinking I might know what they were talking about. But it wasn't much help. But they were nice. And—uh—I, it would have been much better for me if I had been told that there was somebody watching over me—that I was not going to be—perhaps, forever in Genoa.

LEVINE: Uh huh, right.

TWOMBLY: And that someone would come for me and see to it.

LEVINE: But no—but did that every happen? Did someone come and—

TWOMBLY: Oh, yeah. Somebody did come. But then—then I thought why I wouldn't—didn't have to worry all of this time.

LEVINE: Right. So who came—for you?

TWOMBLY: Red Cross.

LEVINE: Oh. Uh huh, uh huh.

TWOMBLY: A person from the Red Cross came.

LEVINE: And how—what—what happened? I mean, what did they do for you?

TWOMBLY: They said—well—that your—boat, which was the—uh—the boat—the President Polk. And that was a part-freighter and part-passenger—the President Lines. And—they said it was going to—come and I would go on the boat.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So—um—

TWOMBLY: I was happy to hear that.

LEVINE: And did a Red Cross person then go on that boat with you?

TWOMBLY: Escorted me—on the boat. But then they left me there.

LEVINE: But then they left you.

TWOMBLY: Right, right. So, we had a long crossing—extremely. The boat was crammed—crammed with people. And we stopped in Marce, and as I told Margaret, I just saw this film—Bon Voyage— did you see that?

LEVINE: I didn't, no.

TWOMBLY: It's a good movie, and they want to go to Marce to see if they can meet a boat. And—yeah—they're holding people off the boat. They couldn't take any more on. And—uh—the people in the movie decide to go to Nice instead of Marce and I thought, at the time, that was a good plan.  
(Laughs) 'Cause our boat was filled.

LEVINE: So did you feel that you were getting away from—uh—a dangerous situation? I mean, did you have that sense when you were—nine?

TWOMBLY: Um— well, we had that one—we had the one air raid—and, of course, I saw the soldiers in—at the Brenner Pass— and them inspecting our train. But Italy was perfectly calm and pleasant, it was—sunny and warm, and had no feeling of—of imminent danger there, although I had heard about one of the President Lines being bombed. And uh—but people were not filling me up with a lot of—dangerous thought, you know. And, of course, I

couldn't read—Italian. So—uh—people hoped, I think, they were hoping it would not be a long engagement.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: Right.

LEVINE: So, then, what happened when you reached New York again?

TWOMBLY: New York, mhm. And—uh—people were there snapping pictures—of me.  
(Chuckles)

LEVINE: Family?

TWOMBLY: The Daily News.

LEVINE: Oh the—the Daily News.

TWOMBLY: That's right, and—so on. And my parents were there, and they brought my little sister whom I was really yearning to see— same one whom you met. And uh— (Laughs) We went back home.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So you— I guess you felt relieved again to be back with your family, with your parents—

TWOMBLY: I was relieved. Yes, mhm. And then I was also relieved, when I got back to school, that I hadn't missed a beat, because when I was in Germany that was a hard school. They were—very much ahead of us—very much. Everything was in much greater depth—the—gym was gymnastics. We ran around in circles, you know. I was the star of the softball team

because I could hit. But that was the only real game we played. Math was way ahead, sewing was way ahead—um—music, way ahead.

LEVINE: So you didn't go to Germany just to study German, you went to school using German—as a language.

TWOMBLY: I went to school—as a— and which wasn't easy for me—

LEVINE: Yeah, I imagine.

TWOMBLY: Because I had been just speaking—

LEVINE: English.

TWOMBLY: English. But by the time I was there for six months, I thought I'd forgotten English.

LEVINE: Oh, mhm.

TWOMBLY: Because I did nothing but read and write German.

LEVINE: Right. Wow.

TWOMBLY: It's amazing how fast children adapt.

LEVINE: Children— yeah, yeah. Okay, so when you got back here, now, it was already 1941, right?

TWOMBLY: Forty. 1940 I came back. In the spring.

LEVINE: Forty. Okay, 1940. And—it was in 19—uh—40 that your uncle was interned here at Ellis Island. So when did you—

TWOMBLY: I don't think— I don't think he was here that early. He was not here that early.

MONOD-KELLY: He was one of the prisoners on the— If you read the beginning of the— timeline— when was this? He was apprehended in 1941 for sure.

LEVINE: Okay.

TWOMBLY: Now, they used to have a program which was called Town Meeting of the Air, which you could listen to on the radio, and—my parents being very political, would listen to this. It happened, I believe, every week. And—um—um—and then we heard that he was going to speak on it, too. So I recall listening, to some extent. I didn't really understand what he was talking about. And he came frequently to visit—he would bring other friends. He also had a house in Brightwaters. And—uh—he was a very constant visitor, again.

LEVINE: Did you have a—did you know, like, why he got arrested?

TWOMBLY: No. In fact, I asked my mother about it—and uh—she told me that people did not give me full answers—that there wasn't a real reason for it. And—uh—he had taken the—line of the United States not coming into the war. That had been his point of view. He did not feel that the United States should join. But he was not alone in this, it was—you know, I did not know this at the time, but I know that Roosevelt had to work pretty hard on swinging the—intentions of the people to his position, which was to helping. But he had to work at it. And in 1940—it w—my uncle was not alone. I asked him once why he took that position and he said—even at

that time—it was far easier to get speaking engagements use—having being on that position than on the other.

LEVINE: (Laughs) Uh huh, uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And—uh—but I didn't really know a great deal about his politics, and I did not know why he—was picked up. Which was pretty close to the—I think it was in the state of Washington—I think he had crossed the country to—to leave.

LEVINE: So did he—did he travel around giving—speeches? Is that—what he—

TWOMBLY: Well, he did quite a bit of that in now—he—he—he in general traveled around quite a bit and he had, what we call, and interest in life. Eesen—even as a kid. I thought he had an interest in life.

LEVINE: What—what was so interesting in—a—as a kid?

TWOMBLY: Well, for one thing, as I told my cousin here, he—he would come and visit us—the convertible Lincoln Zephyr— I mean, I thought this was the most beautiful car in the world, and we were driven around with our hair flying in the wind and had a great time. He had—he—we knew he went on trips such as safaris—he was always just coming back from Europe or just going. And—and—uh—when my parents when to large parties, they were usually his parties. And—um—and—uh—as I said, we listened to him on the radio. If he brought—it—he has his—his wife would come over, she was a beautiful woman— if she wasn't there, there would be some other beautiful woman. My mother seemed more down-to-earth to me, I wouldn't put her in that category—of being a beautiful woman. But he—had the—glamour life.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And, as I've told Margaret, I would get interesting presents from him. One year I got a very nice typewriter—which I loved and proceeded to type right away, and it was better than my father's typewriter. Another year he gave me a monkey for a present. I liked that, too.

LEVINE: A live one or a stuffed one? (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: Yes, oh yes. I rode him around in my baby carriage, which I hadn't ever used for a doll but, it stunned the neighbors when they'd look in and see there was a real-live monkey there.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: But my mother got tired of this—companion in the house and—told my uncle he had to come and pick it up. (Laughs) So, he was always interesting.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did he—did he ever, like, convey anything about his philosophy, his values, his attitudes—uh—per se, or maybe indirectly?

TWOMBLY: Not really. Not—not really. But he—he had a sense of fun and—um—if any good pictures were taken of my brother and me, they were taken by him. He always had a beautiful camera. And—um—and—and he was just always interesting. He was also one of these people who talked to children very well. He could talk to anybody.

LEVINE: He—he himself did not have children?

TWOMBLY: Well, he did later. But he didn't at that time.

LEVINE: At the time.

TWOMBLY: Yeah. He had them quite a bit later, right? When was—Hendrik born?

MONOD-KELLY: Nineteen fifty—one, fifty-two.

TWOMBLY: Yeah, which was about when I started having children.

LEVINE: So, what was his—uh—I know we have it on the other tape—but what was his birth date?

TWOMBLY: Well that was in—uh—on Christmas Eve—in—1899.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And—

LEVINE: So he had children—in his fifties.

TWOMBLY: Yeah.

LEVINE: He was in his fifties when he had—uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Yeah, yeah. And—uh—as I said, we knew he was political. My parents had a lot of political discussions, and—

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about their political—views?

TWOMBLY: I just knew I could— I hope one day to grow up and be able to understand what they were talking about. It was—always hard to—fathom, and my

father used to try and lead us into many political discussions, which we did have ourselves—later. He was a big believer in dinner conversation and—I remember heatedly discussing problems with Egypt. And we would always become very heated in these discussions, and I really had no firm opinion on Egypt at all, but once you start talking about it and are egged on by my father, you became heated. (Laughs) You—he still has some of those characteristics—old as he is now.

LEVINE: Wow.

TWOMBLY: So—uh—and in fact, my brother still complains about him.

LEVINE: Would he remember much about your Uncle Friend and—uh—and his politics?

TWOMBLY: He might, but I don't—I don't put any value in it. I don't put any value in it.

LEVINE: Oh—you mean—

TWOMBLY: I think my father has—has—um—uh—has glossed over his history quite a bit. And we—we had a large family reunion a few years ago and my father decided to relate what happened to him in his life, and once he got to me, when I got in on the picture, it was impossible for me to sit still to hear this because I knew a lot of this didn't happen. And then he got [not understood] when my sister was involved. Now I can see her practically trembling, and—um—because he has a very narrow vision of what happened.

LEVINE: I see.

TWOMBLY: I do know that they were very good friends for quite a long time. And I have many pictures of the two of them together—uh. They once decided that they would wow a beach and both of them had bought bathing suits that only went to the waist.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: And they were both bounced out of the beach.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Couldn't do that in those days.

LEVINE: Right, yeah. Well—uh—is there anything else— Well, why don't we talk about your visiting him here?

TWOMBLY: Yes. Because once the war became immanent here and the rationing was—of gasoline—was a problem, we moved from—Brightwaters, and my parents bought a house in Queens.

LEVINE: Ah, because—because you couldn't really buy gas in order to get back and forth. Is that why?

TWOMBLY: Gasoline was pretty firmly rationed. And so we moved to Queens, and I knew also that my uncle's problems had increased, because—he was—had—he was now sent to prison. And I knew my mother was working very hard to try and get him out—of prison. Now, recently—when I have moved now from my house, where I used to live near Boston—I now live on the Cape—my mother had put several boxes of correspondence and things in—under my [not understood]. I had a big house. I never looked to see what was in these things until I moved a few years—right. And so now I have—these letters, and I have some of the letters which she wrote

to the judges, trying to get him released. And—um—I—didn't realize the extent of—

LEVINE: That she had gone to—to help him out.

TWOMBLY: Right. I knew to some extent, of course, but we were in school all day and so, I didn't know that she had—written, really very—some very good—letters for—persuasive letters to these—judges.

LEVINE: Can you say anything—just—uh—briefly about what the content—what her persuasions were—what the content of the letters were?

TWOMBLY: Actually, I should be able to do that because I—I—read—read couple of these—um—of course, her position is that he was not an enemy agent. It's true that he took that position that America should not go into the war at the time, but when you get right down to it, what do people really know about their siblings? You do not necessarily know everything about them at all, right? And—uh—and perhaps she didn't know, but—she—she—this was certainly her position, that he was not a dangerous—um—alien at all. And in—that he was in solitary confinement was an extraordinary sorrow to her, and seemed really over-extending, enormously. And he was there for quite a while—so far as I can recall.

LEVINE: And that was prior to his Ellis Island interment?

TWOMBLY: Yes. Yes, and he was in Lorton. L-O-R-T-O-N. You probably know Lorton.

LEVINE: So—so when you visited him, did you visit him there? Did—were you able to?

TWOMBLY: No, no, no. No. I think she went down once but I never did. It wasn't until he went to Ellis Island that—that we visited, and my brother and I visited regularly.

LEVINE: Well, now, it must have been something of a reprieve to be here as—as compared with solitary confinement in a prison.

TWOMBLY: I'm sure it was heaven compared to solitary confinement. And—um—certainly when we came to visit—uh—soon, we also knew the guards—said hello to them when we came in, 'cause we came so often. And I could tell that there was a very friendly exchange of—not large conversations—but you could tell that the atmosphere was not one of—

LEVINE: Punitive.

TWOMBLY: Right. That—that it was really quite a friendly—exchange that they used to have. They seemed to know everybody by name, and—and—it seemed to be sort of a happy aura, if you want to call it that.

LEVINE: And what do you remember about your uncle—during those visits?

TWOMBLY: Well, one of the things I remember is that he seemed to know everything. And, as I told Margaret, I had just entered a class of trigonometry, but—he certainly knew all about that—right away. And I don't know if my parents would have known the difference between cosines and tangents and cosecants and so on, but he did. And—uh—though we enjoyed going here, and enjoyed talking to him for the hour or two that we were here.

LEVINE: And so how long was he in the other pri— in the prison? Do you know?

TWOMBLY: Actually, I could look that up, because in one of the letters my mother mentions it, and I think it's for months.

LEVINE: Hm. Did you notice a—did you see him, like, before he was in the prison and then here, after the prison—did you notice—

TWOMBLY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Changes in him?

TWOMBLY: No, no. He was—as friendly and—and—uh—and he didn't act as though he had been through an enormous trial or seemed moody—nothing. He was his—his old self and—uh—as I said—we enjoyed visiting him.

LEVINE: Now did he—did he feel he was unjustly held here?

TWOMBLY: Uh—if he did, he'd never told me that. And, of course, I saw him much more intimately when he was actually let out in 1946, and he came to live with—my aunt and me. So—um—as Heidi told you in—in her conversation—she—um—we tried to finish our year of high school—that spring and I stayed two, three months with my aunt and—he came during part of that time.

LEVINE: Now, was your aunt your mother's sister?

TWOMBLY: Right, mhm.

LEVINE: And his sister.

TWOMBLY: So his sister, too. Yeah, mhm. And, in time, it—it didn't take very long for her to become irked with him because he smoked and—so on— (Laughs)  
And—

MONOD-KELLY: It was a one-room apartment.

TWOMBLY: It was a one-room apartment and—uh—I did notice that the women who lived in the house, when they came to visit, all of the sudden looked a whole lot nicer than they ever had before. 'Cause we had a few parties and—uh—and—uh—everyone liked to come and talk to him. And he had other friends who came from other places, so—

LEVINE: So—is there anything else you can think of about—about his positions or his—his—uh—the reasons that he might have been targeted.

TWOMBLY: As I said, he certainly gave political speeches. And that is—that is the one thing that I knew. Um—I know that he was always up on the war and what was happening—what ship had just gone someplace. I know—I remember him telling us about the new ship called the *Bismarck*, which had gone off in a—in one direction. He had showed it to me on a map where it had gone. And then where—British boat came and saw—and he—had a way of making things very interesting. But—um—if he did anything beyond making these political speeches, which he only did before America went into the war, he certainly didn't do it after that. Now, he did tell me, we did ask him what he did to entertain himself here, while he was at—Ellis Island, and they had started sort of a—intramural school here. And there were quite a few educated Germans who gave lessons and various different things in language, and history, and so on—and so did my uncle.

LEVINE: He gave lessons here?

TWOMBLY: He—he was a lecturer here in this little impromptu school that they set up for the members to—go to and spend the time. And he did once send me an outline of one of the classes that he gave here—in history—for his students. So—um—that was interesting to us.

LEVINE: That was, like, world history? Uh—do you remember?

TWOMBLY: Well, world history and perhaps what—uh—the future history of the world be.

MONOD-KELLY: Evolution, too.

TWOMBLY: Well, evolution. That takes thousands and thousands of years, but he—he had hoped for another—uh—League of Nations type thing, which, of course, did happen with the U.N. But I think he had predicted a little better and stronger U.N., which we may still get to at some point.

LEVINE: Um—let's see, I just had a question—I lost it. Uh— (clears throat) Did he say anything else about life here? Anything else about his—either the—the other people, I mean—were you aware of the Japanese and the Italians?

TWOMBLY: No, no. No.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So you only saw him and other German—uh—internees.

TWOMBLY: Yes, right. I would—I would have noticed if—if there were Japanese. I might not have noticed Italians. Unless I heard them speaking that language, I didn't know.

LEVINE: No. (Chuckles) Right.

TWOMBLY: Um—but he never spoke of Italians, and I kind of have the feeling they were segregated. I don't—think they necessarily mixed them at all. Do you know if that's true?

LEVINE: I don't know that—actually. I don't know if they were separated.

TWOMBLY: Yeah.

LEVINE: That's a good—uh—question.

TWOMBLY: I don't think they w—I think they were. I only saw people who seemed German to me. And uh—

LEVINE: Did he ever mention Hitler or his feeling about it—him or anything like that in your—

TWOMBLY: No, he didn't mention Hitler. I—when I was in Germany there was—um—Hitler drove into Celle—

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: When I was there. Yup. And—we were—we lived on a road called the—

MONOD-KELLY: *Hannoversche Heerstrabe.*

TWOMBLY: *Hannoversche Heerstrabe.*

MONOD-KELLY: Which comes from Holland, so he could have entered from there.

TWOMBLY: A—which is what he did. And he went right by.

MONOD-KELLY: [not understood]

TWOMBLY: That's right. And—um—

LEVINE: Do you remember people's reactions and—

TWOMBLY: Oh, well people were certainly very—eager to see him. Actually, I—  
thought I would go see him, too, because everyone was so keen on him.  
But I can't say that I remembered seeing him. But I do know that he came  
by. And—uh—but in general—in general—Celle is—a beautiful town,  
which is very peaceful—it's a small city. And—you could walk anywhere.  
It was beautifully attended with—flowers and—lovely trees and—and—  
um—and everything was—seemed to be very well run. As I said, the  
school was excellent. And—um—so that—there was one benefit that my  
grandmother had that I was there and after the war started and that was  
that she could get a liter of whole milk. Everybody else had to get skim  
milk. But that was about the extent of the war that I saw—general  
enthusiasm when Hitler was going to come through, but I don't think I—  
stuck the watch out—

LEVINE: Mhm.

TWOMBLY: I knew of him—and I knew people were going to see him, but—I don't  
think I stayed around for the event.

LEVINE: Did you—did you—were you aware of any pro-Hitler—um—attitudes of  
people here who were interned as enemy aliens?

TWOMBLY: No. No. No, I don't think—that would have been smart to get into any  
discussions about this kind of thing.

LEVINE: Here?

TWOMBLY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Now, apparently it—it happened.

TWOMBLY: It did?

LEVINE: Yeah—I mean—that's the—that's—what's—commonly—believed, yeah.

TWOMBLY: Yeah. If there was, I'm not aware of it. Uh—what was in that outline from my uncle was certainly not in that. And—um—as I said, I do think that Hitler did a lot for Germany. It was, after all, taken from being in terrible shape—to what I, as a nine year old, considered excellent shape when I was there. And—uh—certainly, as I said, the school was—excellent. And—um—it—it is true that kids were members of the *Hitlerjugend*. And I, as a girl scout, was invited to come to a meeting—

MONOD-KELLY: [not understood]

TWOMBLY: Whatever it was, I was not particularly thrilled with the meeting and didn't go again. It—didn't seem to be particularly interesting. But—um—a—certainly—uh—trains ran on time. Everyone could get anything they wanted and—and it—it seemed to be a—pleasant way to live when I was there. Brightwaters was a very small town. It was a very small town, very rural. And—uh—and, as I said, the school was nowhere near as good. So—

LEVINE: Mhm. Let me pause here. This is t—end of tape one and we are going to conclude with another tape.

END SIDE B, TAPE ONE. BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: I'm here with tr—tape two. Why don't you—uh—say what it was—first of all, how long and how frequent your visits were to Ellis Island to see your uncle, and then how you got here and all the particular details of that.

TWOMBLY; Well, my—my brother and I were devoted—devoted subway riders, and we especially liked the elevated subways, so—to go on the elevated train here—it's just a very pleasant Saturday excursion. And then a boat ride—(Laughs) at the same time. And then chatting with my uncle for an hour or two. Can't remember how long it was. And—uh—then we would have this lovely ride home. And we did this many-a-weekend. Now, we were also members of the Museum of Natural History, so we couldn't have done it every weekend, but if you were to ask me now, I would say we did it every weekend for quite a while.

LEVINE: Mhm. For like, more than a year?

TWOMBLY: Well, it seems to me. I don't recall actually going in the thick of winter because most of the time we just stood outdoors and watched the—Ellis Island approach and—enjoy the—wind.

LEVINE: And say something about the boat—that took you here.

TWOMBLY: Well, it looked very similar to the one we came on. (Laughs) It had the same—the same benches along the—

LEVINE: The Circle Line—that you came on?

TWOMBLY: Well, it had the same rather uncomfortable benches on—on the inside.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh. And did you say it cost a nickel?

TWOMBLY; It cost a nickel. Yup, mhm. And the subway cost a nickel, too. And you could spin the subway out to an hour and a half if—ride—if you were good at it. (Laughs)

LEVINE: Did it cost you a nickel to go back, or the same nickel brought you back? (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: (Laughs) No, I don't remember if that was—a two-way trip, but it was—a nickel. It was—very reasonable to get around town.

LEVINE: And then where would you meet with your uncle once you got to Ellis Island? Do you—do you know like—

TWOMBLY: In—in the hallway.

LEVINE: In the Great Hall?

TWOMBLY: They had—I don't know if it wa—it was—I don't know if it was that Great Hall that we came in. But it was certainly a large hall with big tables and we sat opposite each other. And there were other people, too, who came doing the same thing.

LEVINE: Do you remember—did your uncle ever talk about what was possible? In other words, did they have an active library here? Uh—did he ever talk about how he spent his days?

TWOMBLY: Well, I told you, we—we did—he—we did talk with him about his time here to some extent and he told of us the school they had started and some of the classes that were being taught. And then, he'd—took enough trouble to make copies and send me a copy of one of the classes he was teaching.

LEVINE: Mhm. Do you think he made fr—uh—he had friends here?

TWOMBLY: I'm sure he did. I'm sure he did.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: And the general aura was—convivial—in my view. And, as I said, the guards were all nice to us. We soon knew them by name, too. We would always say hello to them, like they're always waiting for you. (Laughs) So, it was a friendly atmosphere. If you had to be detained, it was a friendly atmosphere.

LEVINE: Were you aware of people leaving?

TWOMBLY: No.

LEVINE: Uh—being repatriated or—or—being set free here or?

TWOMBLY: No. No. He—he never talked about—missing somebody or that a good friend went off. He never spoke of that. And—and even when he came out, he—um—did not complain of his time. He was—not a complainer. I would have never known he was in solitary confinement, certainly. And—um—the only thing he did mention was, at his trial, he said that there were quite a few people who lied—at the trial, regarding him. And—and he, of

course, felt that was very unjust. And that is about the one thing that he talked to me about—that he felt was very unfair.

LEVINE: Did he say what they lied about?

TWOMBLY: No, no. Not specifically, he didn't tell me. But he did tell me that witnesses lied and got him into trouble.

LEVINE: Trouble.

TWOMBLY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Did he ever give you any indications, like, why he thought the United States shouldn't get into the war?

TWOMBLY: No. No. And—uh—of course, I have since read a great deal about it, certainly—the First World War—many people feel we shouldn't have gotten into that war. Many people who feel we shouldn't have gotten into the Spanish-American War—never mind our most recent war—many contrary opinions. And, in fact, you seem to be much more able to have contrary opinions now than you did at that time. At that time, for World War II, it was a gung-ho effort and—there were no contrary opinions. Once—once it had all started.

LEVINE: Hm. Good point.

TWOMBLY: Right. So, times have changed—uh—so far as war is concerned.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, I've interviewed some people who were interned here—some German people—and they said the worst thing was that they—that they didn't know what was going to happen to them. Did—did your uncle ever talk that way, that—you

know—here he is, his life in interrupted, he's—detained someplace—and—and didn't know what would happen?

TWOMBLY: I'm sure it was a worry for him. I'm certain it was a worry for him, and—um—let's say even soldiers weren't told where they were going to go and where they were going to be sent. And—just one day you get orders. And, of course, the same thing would be happening to detainees. And—um—I'm sure it was a worry for him.

LEVINE: Mhm. But he probably didn't talk about it because he didn't—do that?

TWOMBLY: Well, we were—we were kids.

LEVINE: You were kids.

TWOMBLY: We were—we were young kids. And—uh—

LEVINE: Do you remember the Christmas party? What do you remember about the Christmas party here at Ellis—

TWOMBLY: Well, we do remember that it was festive, and that it was—a very nice dinner and that people seemed to be—in very good moods. So—um—and, for a change, my little sister came, too, plus my parents. Normally, we seemed to go alone all the time to visit our uncle.

LEVINE: I see. Uh huh and they had turkey.

TWOMBLY: And we got dressed up. Yes, we got dressed up. (Laughs) And it was—and—and I had the feeling at the time that—the guards who were here and so on were trying to be nice to everybody. There was a convivial feeling. So, as I said, if you had to be detained, it was a good place to be detained. They played ping pong a lot, you know that.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Do you—were you aware when he was released? Were you—can you say anything about—that? I mean, it was what? 1946?

TWOMBLY: 1946, when he suddenly was released and he came and stayed with my aunt. And I was there. We were already tight, just my aunt and me in a one room apartment. Now adding him to it made it even tighter. But, I was going to school. I was busy all day long, and, of course, she was going to work all day. So that—um—I—we spent evenings together. We had parties—I know—uh—he—as usual—he had gave some talks of his travels, he had slides and we had talks and so on and friends of my aunt would come. And then he had people visiting. We immediately had visitors from Buffalo, from various different places, who came to see him. And—uh—he still didn't quite know what would happen to him. I think—since his divorce had been final, I think some of these visitors were—sort of thinking of marriage. (Laughs) But it never happened.

LEVINE: Oh. So was he married when he was here?

TWOMBLY: No—

LEVINE: No.

TWOMBLY: I don't think so. I think the—I think the divorce was final. What was the date of the divorce?

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, it's [not understood].

TWOMBLY: 1941 is it?

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, 1941.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: I think his divorce was final at that time,

LEVINE: Just about when he came here.

TWOMBLY: Yeah. And—uh—I think some of the visitors were thinking of that.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So di—do you have a sense of whether ha—having been here for a number of years, he—was he able to pick up his life—uh—in other ways? In other words, his working life—did he work anymore?

TWOMBLY: He did not work when he was there—with us those—that two month time period. And—um—

LEVINE: What did he do for work? Did—he taught? He—

TWOMBLY: Well, he—he had been teaching, yes. And he—he did do quite a bit of writing.

LEVINE: Writing, mhm.

TWOMBLY: And—um—I still have some of the articles that he wrote, and—uh—in fact, as I was telling Margaret, I—took one of them to my father and I asked him if—my father—if he'd like to hear an article about—[not understood].

LEVINE: What was the topic?

TWOMBLY: Huh?

LEVINE: What were they written about?

TWOMBLY: Well, this was—this was an article about the future unification of Europe. It happened to be the one that I took that was an American [not understood], and I was reading it to my father, but I didn't tell him who wrote it.

LEVINE: Oh.

TWOMBLY: And I didn't tell him that when it was written, so I'm just reading to him and editing out references of Churchill making a speech or something, which would give it away.

LEVINE: Would date it, uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Then my father said—he said, 'you know, I don't know whom you're reading, but he's truly out-of-date.' (Laughs)

LEVINE: (Laughs) Well—

TWOMBLY: I was reading this in nineteen—no, in nineteen—yeah—in the year 2000, I think I was reading it, and the article had been written in 1937. So he said—

LEVINE: See, your father's sharp.

TWOMBLY: Oh, yes. He said he is truly out of date, this person. He said, 'where did you find him?' But—it was just fun to read it to him.

LEVINE: So—uh—can you say anything else about—or anything about the rest of his life? In other words, he—he got out of here, and he came to stay with you, and then what happened after that?

TWOMBLY: Then—we went—my brother and I, we had to meet up. Heidi said my brother stayed with us, too, but he did not. He stayed with a friend of his—who is living in Queens at the time. We were both going to Jamaica High School. And—um—my brother and I went to—New Hampshire, which is where my parents had moved to. And—then my mother told us that Uncle Fried was going to be deported. And—he did not want to go back. He had—made a life here, and he had certainly had—much of his life had been very pleasant here. And—I think he wanted to stay.

LEVINE: And what year was this roughly?

TWOMBLY: Well, I expect it was in 1946. It seemed to me not too long after I left that he would—had to be deported, but I could be wrong in that, but not too long afterwards. And—um—

LEVINE: So, was he picked up again then to be deported?

TWOMBLY: No, I think he was simply told that he had to return and he did.

LEVINE: And he did?

TWOMBLY: And he did. Sure. You didn't argue then. And—uh—

LEVINE: I wonder if he was deported out of Ellis Island, actually. Like, because that was a deportation place.

TWOMBLY: Was it?

LEVINE: Mhm.

TWOMBLY: Well, it's possible that he might have come back for a short time here in order to—to do that. But how—it went and which boat he took or—I don't know.

LEVINE: Well then, Margaret, you—did you see him then when he came—went back to Germany?

MONOD-KELLY: When he arrived in Celle, yeah.

LEVINE: In 1946 or so?

MONOD-KELLY: I—would assume it was more forty-seven. I was eleven or twelve when I saw him and I was born in thirty-six, so that was around forty-seven, forty-eight, I would say—for the first time. And we were also anticipating that he was coming. I remember that he was coming.

LEVINE: What was—what was the family—uh—did the family have like, an expectation of—of him?

MONOD-KELLY: Oh, as a child, certainly I had expectation of an uncle coming to Germany, yes.

LEVINE: Yeah. And can you remember your first impressions?

MONOD-KELLY: My first impression—um—I don't know if I'll really make this up now, that he was very tall, which actually was. And for me as a child, maybe it was important that he was even taller than my father, but my father wasn't there, so—um—no. I don't know too much, no. When is our grandmother's birthday? Do you remember? Was that at Christmas time?

TWOMBLY: I don't remember her birthday.

MONOD-KELLY: Because I remember the big thing was that he was there for her birthday for the first time and— uh—he choose not to stay with all the ladies. He just came for a short while.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

MONOD-KELLY: But, as I said on the other tape, he talked to me more personal.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MONOD-KELLY: But I thought it was interesting that you had this book without covers.

LEVINE: Oh, yeah. Let's talk about that.

TWOMBLY: He a had a fair number of books without covers because they were always removed when my—when they were given to my uncle and he was in solitary confinement, so evidently my sister had Anna Corinna and, well I had War and Peace. (Laughs)

LEVINE: You mean they were removed so he wouldn't hurt—do anything with the covers? Is that?

TWOMBLY: Well, I think perhaps you can hide a knife in a cover or something like that. I'm presuming that's why it was taken off. But they also had comments of his along the edges and that was sort of interesting—

LEVINE: Oh, great. Yeah..

TWOMBLY: —for me to see so—um—I read his copy—of Anna—not Anna Corinna, but War and Peace.

LEVINE: (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: I—I still have it.

LEVINE: Wow, uh huh. Maybe Margaret, or actually, from different perspectives—can you say anything about his mother in—in relation to him? Sort of—

MONOD-KELLY: She was very, very happy that he came initially. And—uh—so I was always under the impression that this was a wonderful homecoming. That was my thinking. But I can see now why he really didn't want to come home, because he had been away for too long from Germany, right? Since twenty—1923? So most of his adult life, professionally-wise, had been in this country, and that's when you make your important friends. I know this from my first husband. So—um—uh—and, but I now know through his son, who has the letters, that he wanted to come back and try to come back in the fifties—uh—to this country.

LEVINE: Mhm. Did he ever come back?

TWOMBLY: No.

MONOD-KELLY: No, no.

LEVINE: He never visited?

MONOD-KELLY: His son—uh—one thing I can remember—I was thinking of—when Ruth was talking about him talking to childr—him talking easily to children, or when she talked about him having two sons in the second marriage to

our Aunt Johanna. And—uh—the first son is called Hendrik and the second son is called Peter. Uh—and my—the great—uh—surprise was that when the son, first son, learned how to speak, which I assume was when he was two or two and a half, that Uncle Fried taught—taught him the capitols of the world.

LEVINE: (Laughs) That's right.

MONOD-KELLY: So—uh—he could—uh—he—this little boy—you know, by that time I guess I was—how old was I in fifty-two? Well, sixteen. That he was asked, what was the capitol of Iceland, and I didn't know it, but he knew it, this two and a half year old boy. He knew it was Reykjavik, and then, naturally, I never forgot that was the capitol of Iceland.

TWOMBLY: But this was a whole characteristic of that family. Now, my mother had to learn the three highest mountains in Mexico.

MONOD-KELLY: Oh. (Laughs) Her father made her learn that?

TWOMBLY: So they are [not understood] and—we—we all did that. I forced my children to learn the difference between isosceles triangles and equilateral triangles and so on when they were two and three.

MONOD-KELLY: (Laughs)

TWOMBLY: They always had their bread cut—according to the triangle of their choice. And—

LEVINE: So this is a family—characteristic?

TWOMBLY: It's a family trait, right. It's a family trait.

MONOD-KELLY: Well—

TWOMBLY: Margaret didn't seem to join it—in forcing her daughter to learn inconvenient things.

MONOD-KELLY: And I think when I talk to my—uh—I mean he lives in Germany, he's far away. We are in contact, but not regular contact. When I talk to Hendrik, he didn't know that he knew these capitol of the world so—at the age of three or even younger, so—

LEVINE: Yeah, yeah. So what about—um—your Uncle Fried's life after he returned to Germany? What—can you—sort of put it into perspective?

MONOD-KELLY: Well, he had lots of books in room, but I may have mentioned that before—books and magazines. And—um—he was not complaining. I didn't know that he was trying to come back to this country. I—um—I did not—I had no notion that he was unhappy. He did not appear unhappy to me. But I can see why on the long run to live with my grandmother was a—uh—little difficult for him. I mean, she was into gardening and into church, and none of these things were his interest, so—um—but I also didn't notice that they did not get along. That did not come across to me.

LEVINE: Mhm. Did he have—

MONOD-KELLY: Also, wasn't there that much. I was not in the same house. I lived in a small town and now and then visited my grandmother.

LEVINE: I see. Do you know if your uncle had a social—group? A social—network of people that he—

MONOD-KELLY: He certainly tried, I think. Uh—because he made also there in, as I said before, he gave these speeches in different towns about his life.

LEVINE: Mhm, right.

MONOD-KELLY: And that was a—one way of—um—being—keep have an interesting life, right?

LEVINE: And—

MONOD-KELLY: And that he was thinking and reading and writing, I assume. And then—um—he married. But, you know, where was his study? Where could his family live? It was all a problem because of the small rooms and few rooms where one could meet each other. But—um—he had—at least he had his own room, but I don't know where [not understood] room was. But anyhow—

TWOMBLY: Did he get a job teaching or any—during anything?

MONOD-KELLY: No, I—as far as I remember, he got a job with his brother and they worked for—

TWOMBLY: Wit his brother? With Hubert?

MONOD-KELLY: With Uncle Hubert?

TWOMBLY: Doing what?

MONOD-KELLY: Uncle Hubert, Karl Hans, the—cousin, and I think also Uncle Fried got a job in the laundry for—uh—the British occupation forces?

TWOMBLY: In the laundry?

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, I think they worked in the laundry. One thing they had, they had soap. (Laughs) So it was not to eat, but you could use it, I guess to get something to eat with, so, you could go to the black market. Where everybody had to exist until the money exchange was better again. You couldn't buy anything for money, really.

LEVINE: So—so do you have a sense of how long he persisted—um—in trying to get back to the United States? I mean, did he—did he stop trying at some point that you know of or—

MONOD-KELLY: I cannot tell you that. I just found out recently, when we came from the first interview with Heidi, that I did call up Hendrik in Germany and we were talking, not about the same subjects. I was interested in letters that refer to Ellis Island and he was talking about letters that he wrote in 1950, fifty-one, fifty-two, or even later, that he wanted to come back to this country. That is—uh—so I only found out about that. He wanted to come back—uh—two months ago. And then I read this—um—paper there, and there it is—mentioned also. So Hendrik has the letters that he—uh—trying to see [not understood] have him—I mean that—to establish that there was nothing wrong with him, or having—uh—lived in this country. I mean I wanted to be whitewashed off.

TWOMBLY: Whitewashed?

MONOD-KELLY: He wanted to be—things to be put right. Whitewashed maybe a wrong expression.

TWOMBLY: Yes, it is. But I had the feeling, too, he wanted to come back and I was writing him at the time, so—I—I knew he wanted to come back.

MONOD-KELLY: But he did, in the end, get a teaching job in—um—secretarial school, not at a university level.

LEVINE: Oh, uh huh.

MONOD-KELLY: Teaching English. This is an assumption now.

LEVINE: Uh huh. So I—I wou—

MONOD-KELLY: In Hannoufa. That's where I had to travel every day, from Celle to Hannoufa, and he was either on a motorcycle or on a [not understood], which is an even more flexible, insecure—um—vehicle. And there was some street repair done or new building of a street between Celle and Hannoufa, and that is where the accident occurred, that he died in uh—immediately. You know, when the street becomes more slippery and you're not aware of it, or sand was on the street. I don't know why I think of that, but there was—um—repair work doing—being done on the road that he took every day. And that is where this tr—uh—the—callamous accident took place, where he died.

LEVINE: Uh huh. And how old was he at the time?

TWOMBLY: Well, it was about in 1953—so he must have been about fifty-four.

MONOD-KELLY: And having his [not understood].

TWOMBLY: Because I was at Harvard. I know when I was at Harvard, and that's when I heard that he was—

MONOD-KELLY: And Peter was half a year old, I think.

TWOMBLY: Well, you know that better.

MONOD-KELLY: And Hendrik maybe two and a half.

LEVINE: Do you remem—did you go to his funeral?

MONOD-KELLY: Yes, I did go to his funeral.

LEVINE: Do you—is there any—

MONOD-KELLY: It was a very, very sad funeral in comparison to the funeral of my grandmother, which was not very much later. And I—coming home thinking, ‘oh, we were happy at the second funeral.’ I mean, I don’t know why that was so, but uh—it was just so tragic. Nobody thought that this would happen.

LEVINE: Yeah. Were there—was there any—um—particular—uh—eulogy or anything at the funeral that kind of—spoke of the, the unusual and many faceted life that he had?

MONOD-KELLY: No, no. There was—I’m—I’m—I have the feeling that I really don’t remember that my father did do the service, but as a brother, I assume that he did the service in Celle for him. And you asked me where his grave was, right? We have to call up where it is, because my assumption was that he was put next to his mother. And—um—in this town of Western Celle, which is right—goes into Celle.

LEVINE: And his mother died after he did?

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, yeah. And this was what my observation, that I saw the same people practically few months later think it was half a year apart.

TWOMBLY: But she had been very ill, and in one way it was a blessing—

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, for two years she had been in—inside the hospital, out the hospital, and—she—uh—

TWOMBLY: It was a blessing that she had died.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, she was in a wheelchair. She could o—occasionally she was in a wheelchair, most of the time she was in the bed. She stayed with us for the past two years—of her life.

LEVINE: I see. And—and his father? Was his father also buried there?

MONOD-KELLY: Yes. He was—uh—I remember the—you remember the—your—

TWOMBLY: I remember the cross.

MONOD-KELLY: Our grandfather's grave better than I do.

TWOMBLY: Yes, 'cause we went every couple of weeks—

MONOD-KELLY: Every Saturday to clean it and bring flowers.

TWOMBLY: To take care of it, mhm.

MONOD-KELLY: And water it.

TWOMBLY: Yup.

LEVINE: And then did his wife and children stay in Germany?

MONOD-KELLY: They did stay in Celle. Oh, yes. Yes, definitely. And—uh—then—the house was sold, so she had to move out. And—uh—actually for the first time, I think, she had her own private life with her two boys in a sm—newly built small house. Small house, but it was her house because she—living with my grandmother, in her grandmother—in that house upstairs was not that pleasant for her. I don't think so. So—then my father was—uh—took—didn't take care of the family, but whenever he was in Celle, he would go and visit his wife and the two children. And whenever he could incorporate, he made trips for the parish once a year. He had a busload of people and brought them to an interesting place in the area, and he incorporated the two sons of Uncle Fried. They accompanied him on these parish trips.

LEVINE: Now, your father was a minister?

MONOD-KELLY: Right, yes.

LEVINE: And was—was your Uncle Fried religious in any way?

MONOD-KELLY: I don't think so. Not that much, no. No, he was not. Uh—but—um—one thing I want to say about his son, his younger son who visited me a year ago—one of his first statements was, 'did you know that—your father was my most preferred uncle?' So, you know, I mean—they tried to invite them as much as they could, especially when they, again, lived close to Celle. My father had another parish in the meantime, but—um—we were all grown up and then my parents invited them—our cousins. So they could pick cherries in the garden and things like that.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh huh. Well—um—I thi—

MONOD-KELLY: But it's no—I don't know if—uh—we have to talk to the sons with—  
came across through their mother. There was a diary in their [not  
understood] but—uh—we don't know how many are left.

LEVINE: And do they live in Germany now?

MONOD-KELLY: One of them lives in Berlin, yes. And the other one lives in  
Constance, which is in the South of Germany. Constance. *Bodensee* is  
in the German name, also, of the same lake.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

MONOD-KELLY: And on this lake is the city of Constance.

LEVINE: Well—um—just a question to each of you—how do you think your—your  
thinking about your uncle has changed over the years? I mean, from the  
time that he—that you knew him and—and then he died and now—years  
and years later. Do you think your thinking has changed about him or—  
your memories or your—attitudes or anything?

TWOMBLY: I think—I think my impression of hi—him has been pretty constant—the  
same thing. My father now is—keeps trying to change my opinion on this  
and I—told him he's barking up the wrong tree.

LEVINE: (Laughs) He wants to change your opinion of your uncle?

TWOMBLY: Yes. Well, he want—he has notions all the time.

MONOD-KELLY: Well, we are women and that, I guess, has something to do with it.

TWOMBLY: It—um—they were good friends at the time, and he never said anything—much about my uncle—uh—until many years after he died, and my mother had died, too, so there was no one to contradict him anymore.

LEVINE: But he seems to have—have put a—a lesser light on your uncle over the time, or—

TWOMBLY: Well, he would say that—um—‘oh, no, he didn’t really like to work, he really liked to have a good time.’ Statements like this, and—um—but it—it’s not true. He was frequently—busy.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

TWOMBLY: Right. I’m sure.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, he has things to prove it, right?

TWOMBLY: That’s right. He does have things to prove it.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: And—um—and point of fact, when you talk about my—with my father about what he did the first few years he was in this country, he enjoyed my uncle’s company a great deal and the two of them did many things and seemed to enjoy each other, and certainly my—father en—joyed my—uncles sister. (Laughs) She’s my mother. And, as I said, he was a constant visitor and I know that my father enjoyed it the whole time—that he came. So—

LEVINE: Mhm, yeah. So you—so you pretty much feel—as far as you can—so your—your thinking hasn't changed.

TWOMBLY: I haven't changed my opinion on him and everything I've seen and things that I've read and—unfortunately, his handwriting isn't that easy for me to read. It's—um—I have letters that he's written and I would like to read them but—they're quite a job, so I have to—always say, 'well, if I have four, five hours, maybe.'

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: I'll do that, and it hasn't come out.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: So—um—

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, Heidi and I read three letters in two weeks.

LEVINE: Oh.

MONOD-KELLY: Which we deciphered. And in one of them—it was a not Uncle Fried's letter, but it was a letter of our grandmother, and it refers to the time that you want to go back to the United States in 1939, 1940. [Not understood] went with you to Hamburg—

TWOMBLY: Hamburg [not understood].

MONOD-KELLY: In order to see that you could get the—

TWOMBLY: Passport.

MONOD-KELLY: The vi—the visa or the passport.

TWOMBLY: I had to get a passport.

MONOD-KELLY: And she did not manage. I don't know it was managed in the end, but—uh—she—[not understood] could not manage it for you in Hamburg.

TWOMBLY: I know she couldn't.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah. But this is sort of—Grandmother Auhagen—talks about our grandmother, talks about [not understood] coming to visit to get you.

TWOMBLY: Right. And I remember it clearly.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah. And then she talks about you doing homework and how hard she tries that you spell correctly these German words. She's over-anxious and she made you copy it again, you know? The work you—

TWOMBLY: I remember that, too.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah. That is in that letter. And, so you see my grandmother there—uh—here is this girl from this country who has to do a second language, and she makes her work and work and work that this nine year old or ten year old—uh—does her work neatly with good handwriting, so—my—it's very fussy, you know, if you have to go through that.

LEVINE: Uh huh.

MONOD-KELLY: Yeah, so sh—if somebody like that has—uh—a son like Uncle Fried, it doesn't match, really.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: No the—the point is, Margaret, I came over no—hardly knowing German.

MONOD-KELLY: I know, but—

TWOMBLY: I knew a little baby German, which was a little embarrassing, but they had a son who was extremely bright and they did not—I'm sure grandmother could tell him practically nothing and that was what irked her. While me, she could tell anything to.

LEVINE: Yeah. But the kind of relationship would be—obvious that they—they weren't simpatico.

TWOMBLY: No, I don't think either one of them. It was very interesting to me when I would talk to my mother about her father and she just—loved her father and he was—the most wonderful person in the world. And I had asked my uncle about his father—the same one—and it was a totally different person—totally different. His father was nothing but a thorn in the side to him.

LEVINE: Uh huh, interesting.

TWOMBLY: I couldn't believe that there could be such a different opinion about a father between—the brother and a sister.

LEVINE: Yeah.

TWOMBLY: So—

LEVINE: Okay, is there anything else you can---

TWOMBLY: Anyway, it was great fun seeing you. It's uh—

LEVINE: (Laughs) I guess we're at the end.

TWOMBLY: I hope you have a lot of time to see all this over again. (Laughs)

LEVINE: I do, I do. Um—I'm going to put this—uh—I'm going to make a copy and this is the Fredrich Ernst Auhagen Collection that's at the Northwestern University Library. It tells what's in it. So we'll have a copy of that in—in our file. And—um—and—is—and I guess we've concluded—if there's anything else you wish to say. Okay, well I thank you both. This is really quite an extraordinary—uh—interesting—

TWOMBLY: Well, it's been nice for me. I'm glad you liked it. It's been fun coming here.

LEVINE: Yeah, very good for you, too. Good, good. And maybe you'll look around and remember certain parts of the building. Okay. Okay, this is Janet Levine for the National Parks Service and I've been—I've been speaking with Ruth Twombly and Margarete Monod-Kelly.

MONOD-KELLY: Well, you can also say 'Mono-Kelly,' but it's alright.

LEVINE: Mono—Mono-Kelly. Okay. And—uh—today is the—uh—July the ninth, the year 2004, and I'm signing off.

END OF INTERVIEW