

EI-248  
VERONIKA SCHIEGL SCHAEFER  
BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 1905  
INTERVIEW DATE: 2/3/1993  
RUNNING TIME: 1:02:38  
INTERVIEWER: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR.  
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: SHANDAKAN NY  
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 10/1995  
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: IRV SILBERG

GERMANY, 1922  
AGE 17

SHIP: "THE SEIDLITZ"  
PORT: BREMEN  
RESIDENCES:  
? GERMANY: TITTING, BAVARIA  
? US: SHANDAKEN, NY

Historian's Note: Mrs. Schaefer's daughter, Vera Klein, is present.

SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is February 3, 1993. It is Wednesday afternoon, about 4:30. I am here in Shandaken, New York, which is in the Catskill region in Ulster County, with Veronica Schaefer. Mrs. Schaefer came from Germany in 1922, when she was seventeen years old. Today happens to be Mrs. Schaefer's 88th birthday. Also present in the room, is her daughter, Vera Kline. There is a fire burning in a stove nearby, so that may pick up on the tape. Anyway, happy birthday, Mrs. Schaefer.

SCHAEFER: Thank you.

SIGRIST: Let's begin by you telling me your date of birth.

SCHAEFER: My birth date is February 3, 1905.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

SCHAEFER: In Germany.

SIGRIST: Where in Germany?

SCHAEFER: Bavaria.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the town?

SCHAEFER: Titting, T-I-T-T-I-N-G.

SIGRIST: And is this is the town that you grew up in?

SCHAEFER: Yeah. I went to school, we went to the stores.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the town for me a little bit?

SCHAEFER: It's, it lays into -- in a valley. We are, we actually lived by ourself in a house, like, away from the town. We had about twenty - twenty minutes to go to the - to school, and the stores, or church, whatever. And I was in the valley. You had to go down a mountain.

SIGRIST: What was the major industry in this town?

SCHAEFER: Uh, farming, farming. And, uh, people lived from other people coming from other towns to go to the store and buy stuff. And that's about, uh, the only income they had. You've been there a few times.

SIGRIST: Would you say that most of the people lived outside of the town, did a lot of people in town?

SCHAEFER: Lot of people -- most of the people lived in town, and some of the people lived on the outskirts.

SIGRIST: Can you describe your house for me?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: In words, please.

SCHAEFER: In words? It was a two-family house, upstairs and downstairs. And on, by the house was the barn. Next to the house was the barn. It was a happy house.

SIGRIST: What was the house made out of?

SCHAEFER: Stone.

SIGRIST: And, uh, what was the roof made out of?

SCHAEFER: Uh, also part stone, they dug that out of the ground in Germany. It was, whoever built a house had those stones. They were flat, and they laid them on top of each other, like.

SIGRIST: Like a slate roof?

SCHAEFER: Like a slate roof, that's right.

SIGRIST: And, um, this was a two-family house. Did your family occupy . . .

SCHAEFER: A one-family house. We had upstairs. We, we only occupied the house.

SIGRIST: You were the only family in the house.

SCHAEFER: We were a large family.

SIGRIST: I see. What was your dad's name?

SCHAEFER: Yohann.

SIGRIST: And what was his last name?

SCHAEFER: Schiegl.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

SCHAEFER: S-C-H-I-E-G-L.

SIGRIST: And can you describe for me in words what your dad looked like.

SCHAEFER: He was short, had a beard, and ordinary man.

SIGRIST: What was his personality like?

SCHAEFER: Good. He was a good father.

SIGRIST: When you think back to when you were a small child, tell me something that sticks out in your mind about your father when you were a little kid.

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes. I can tell you a lot of things about that. He played with us. He was not like a farmer. He, like, he used to, he would, uh, you know, that they had a way out there, they whistle for the Easter bunny. He would build nests in the -- nearby in the woods, and we had to stay in the house so the rabbit could come and lay the eggs in there. And then after a whi-- after he had put the eggs in the nest, he would say, "All right, children. You can go and look for the rabbit." And, uh, and come any, on Christmas he made a big fuss with the Christmas tree, so it was a big celebration. Any holiday that came around, he was really a very good father.

SIGRIST: He was kind of a big kid himself.

SCHAEFER: Yes, he was. (laughs) You could say that.

SIGRIST: What was your mom's name?

SCHAEFER: My mo-- mother's name was Krencestia-Krentzen-Kriszentia [ph].

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

SCHAEFER: Yes. K-R-E-N-T-Z-E-N.

SIGRIST: What was her maiden name?

SCHAEFER: Regler. R-E-G-L-E-R.

SIGRIST: And can you kind of do the same thing for me with your mother, just describe what she was like.

SCHAEFER: My mother was a hard-working lady, very good to the children. Whenever she had time, she would cuddle us, you know, when we were small. And, uh, very providing. She was just a good lady, a mother.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about what life was like for you as a small child growing up on this farm?

SCHAEFER: We were seventeen children. The gro—the bigger ones were always gone, but a younger, they were always some home that to help mother take care of the younger children. And, uh, we had a happy home. Went to school . . .

SIGRIST: Seventeen kids from this one marriage?

SCHAEFER: No. My mother, when she got married, she got married very young. She married my father with four children, but the rest were all hers.

SIGRIST: So your father had been married before?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yeah.

SIGRIST: What happened to his first wife?

SCHAEFER: She died.

SIGRIST: Do you know what she died of?

SCHAEFER: No.

SIGRIST: But that was before.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: So your dad was somewhat older than your mother?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: How many years? Do you know?

SCHAEFER: I think about ten years older, maybe even a little older.

SIGRIST: So that means your mother had thirteen kids.

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: And did they all survive?

SCHAEFER: They all survived.

SIGRIST: That's a big, busy household.

SCHAEFER: Yes, it sure is.

SIGRIST: Um, tell me a little bit how your mother fed all these people? What did you eat?

SCHAEFER: From the-- oh, whatever we grew in the summertime, and she would preserve for the winter. And the fruit she would dry and put in bags, hang it up, and whenever, had like a, she would make, like, pancakes or something, and we had that fruit, she would cook it. And, uh, we were well-fed. We didn't have, you know, too much, but we were well-fed.

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did you grow on the farm?

SCHAEFER: Wheat, turnips, potatoes, and like cabbage. And then we also grew, what would you call gersten [barley]? That were - they made for beer, and they . . .

SIGRIST: Like hops?

SCHAEFER: Hops, not actually by my mother's field, but they did in the neighborhood.

SIGRIST: Did everything that you grow, did you, did you eat everything you grew, or was some of it sold?

SCHAEFER: No, some of it was sold. And for that they would buy coffee or, and sugar. The necessities, we would buy.

SIGRIST: Where would your father sell . . .

SCHAEFER: In the city, next city.

SIGRIST: How, tell me, tell me what that procedure was? How would he go about selling his (?)?

SCHAEFER: There's always somebody in the town that would, uh, say, "You want to sell so-and-so?" Or my father would go and say, "I have that for sale." And then we would, oh, yes, another thing, we had chickens, and the eggs and the butter from, you know, when the mother made butter. We would bring to the city on the market, and then whatever we took in we would buy the coffee and sugar and stuff that we need, and then clothes, when she needed material for clothes, she would buy out of that income.

SIGRIST: I see. Did you have any other animals other than the chickens?

SCHAEFER: Chickens we had, uh, cows. And young, not steers, actually, but young cows that, uh. And, uh, well, we had rabbits, but, uh . . .

SIGRIST: Were the rabbits pets, or did you eat them?

SCHAEFER: We ate them.

SIGRIST: How would your mother . . .

SCHAEFER: And pigeons we had, too.

SIGRIST: And the same with the pigeons, they were eaten?

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: How would your mother prepare rabbit?

SCHAEFER: They would skin it to make like a hasenpfeffer [rabbit stew]. Did you ever hear of hasenpfeffer? Or she would put it in the oven and use, you know, bake it like you would do a chicken.

SIGRIST: Can you describe a kitchen for me in this house?

SCHAEFER: Yep. It was, what can I say, it had an oven that would heat the living room - the part, but the kitchen you fed it, to my time. And they had big-bellied pots, like. And they'd put them in, two on each side, and in the middle the fire would burn. And that's where they would make the soup or coffee, whatever. We used that. And when we had a roast, naturally, there was a part in the living room where the roast was put in.

SIGRIST: So the fireplace is sort of in the middle of the house.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, right, right.

SIGRIST: Which room of the house did your family spend the most time in?

SCHAEFER: In the living room. In the living room next to the kitchen.

SIGRIST: And was the fireplace the sole means of heat?

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What's the climate like in this . . .

SCHAEFER: Cold, cold. At night, in the wintertime, we would have bricks, and we put it in the bed, to warm the bed up, upstairs.

SIGRIST: With all those children. Tell me with whom you shared a bedroom.

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes. We had, uh, sometimes we had five in one bedroom, and two in one bed, and we had straw mattresses. They were warm.

SIGRIST: How did you get the straw mattress?

SCHAEFER: We had the wheat that we cut. We would, they thresh it. They had, what can I say? You know, something that they, to hit the grain out of, and they would preserve it, and we stuffed the mattresses with it.

SIGRIST: So did your mother make the mattresses?

SCHAEFER: The - the linen, you know, that - through it was pushed into.

SIGRIST: Did you have a chore that was specifically yours when you were . . .

SCHAEFER: Everybody had a chore.

SIGRIST: What was your chore?

SCHAEFER: Well, feed the chickens, help with the little ones, the smaller ones, before they came over here. Actually, before -- the last year when I was in Germany, after I finished school, I worked on a farm.

SIGRIST: Somebody else's farm.

SCHAEFER: Somebody else's farm. Yeah.

SIGRIST: I see. Well, we'll talk about that when we get to that point. Um, tell me a little bit about, um, let's see, family, other family in this town. Was there any other, were there any other family members in this town?

SCHAEFER: That we knew?

SIGRIST: That you knew.

SCHAEFER: No, in the next town.

SIGRIST: Who were they?

SCHAEFER: Oh, just friends.

SIGRIST: What about grandparents?

SCHAEFER: Oh, the grandparents were further away. We very seldom saw them, only when they went to the market, because they lived near the city where we went to the market.

SIGRIST: Do you have a memory that sticks out in your mind about your grandparents?

SCHAEFER: That they were very good people. Once year, the grandfather would go to his children from one to the other, you know, and spend a few days, and, uh, I only remember my - my grandfather, one time when he came. He was already bent. And, uh, well, he, naturally he cuddled all of his children. That's the only time that I remember him, seeing him.

SIGRIST: What kind of clothes did you wear?

SCHAEFER: Long skirts. We knitted our own stockings. But I had the sheep, and we had the yarn. She spun the wool herself to -- when I was small. And then, uh, she would dye -- have it dyed. And, uh, we would knit our own stockings.

SIGRIST: Was that something that young women were taught to do in the home?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: How to knit?

SCHAEFER: Yeah. My mother taught us how to knit.

SIGRIST: What about things like overcoats and . . .

SCHAEFER: We actually didn't have a co-- overcoat when I went to school. We just had warm dresses that mother made. And once a year, before we went back to school, she had a dressmaker come in for a week or sometimes two weeks, and she would make the dresses for us for school. But otherwise my mother made all our, and we wore aprons. Where is that picture? I have to look for it.

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me a little bit about the process of spinning the wool, what she had to do?

SCHAEFER: Yeah. She had, I remember, you know, a spinning wheel, did you ever see a spinning wheel? Well, she would go like this, you know, and . . .

SIGRIST: Sort of lick it?

SCHAEFER: Yeah, lick it, and, to go along. I remember distinctly when I was small.

SIGRIST: Was there a specific room in the house where she did this kind of work?

SCHAEFER: No, in the living room. In the living room.

SIGRIST: What other kind of domestic arts were you taught as a child in the house? You said you were taught to knit. What kinds of, what other kinds of things were you taught how to do?

SCHAEFER: Really nothing, just how to take care of ourselves. And it came to you naturally. You saw it from the bigger ones. And, uh, I can't say that I was taught anything special.

SIGRIST: Can you explain to me a little bit about the countryside around the farm, and do you have any memories of taking a hike in the woods or anything like that?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes. We had a, part of, a little further away from the house my father orig-- you know, when he, when they moved into that little house, he planted a -- not too much of a forest, but pine trees and leaf trees, you know. And we used to go there as children and play house, you know. We would pick moss and we'd play house there and so on. And, uh, it was a beautiful countryside. You could, in fact, when you'd been, went around that piece of woodland, you could count twenty-two church steeples. That's how far you could see around there. It was on top of a hill.

SIGRIST: You're on top of the hill and the town is . . .

SCHAEFER: The town is in the valley, yeah.

SIGRIST: Oh, it sounds beautiful.

SCHAEFER: Oh, yeah. It's a beautiful. She was there several times.

SIGRIST: Tell me about, let's talk a little bit about school. How old were you when you started school?

SCHAEFER: Seven.

SIGRIST: And was the school out of town or in town?

SCHAEFER: In town at that time.

SIGRIST: So how did you get to school?

SCHAEFER: We walked. In the wintertime, my father would go ahead a little bit and shovel the snow for us children to walk on. But of course, by the time we walked there, you know, the snow drifts were in, and it was quite a ways to walk. But we walked, and we had no boots, actually, just the shoes. It was a way of life.

SIGRIST: Tell me about some of the subjects that you learned in school as a small child.

SCHAEFER: Reading and writing, arithmetic.

SIGRIST: The basics.

SCHAEFER: The basics, yeah.

SIGRIST: Is there a teacher that sticks out in your mind that you remember from your school days in Germany?

SCHAEFER: Yeah, a special teacher?

SIGRIST: A teacher that for some reason has always stayed with you, someone that you remember being your teacher, and a story, perhaps, associated with that person.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, we had a, we had a teacher, yes, that kind of sticks out. Because when he had a fight with his wife, he would let it out -- he was very good to the children. We always knew when he had a fight when he came in the classroom. ( she laughs ) It's funny that that's really the truth. And, uh, actually, it's a day, he took us on trips, you know, outings. And he was very good to the children.

SIGRIST: Do you remember his name?

SCHAEFER: Bablitsky [ph]. I couldn't spell it, but it was Polish, from Polish -- descent.

SIGRIST: That's interesting.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. Can you describe the school building for me?

SCHAEFER: It was a stone building, and the teacher lived in the building. He had one part of the building, and the school's rooms were upstairs. And we had four, four different schoolrooms, for all the children.

SIGRIST: Did you learn any other languages other than German?

SCHAEFER: No, no.

SIGRIST: Did, so when did you graduate from school?

SCHAEFER: When I was fifteen. But then you had to go a few hours on a Sunday. They called it, you know, I don't know actually how to translate it in English. But, anyway, a few hours on a Sunday you had to go to school. You didn't learn anything more. It was more or less I guess the age, or they had to go to a certain age, I don't know.

SIGRIST: Were your parents very supportive of getting an education?

SCHAEFER: Yes. They never let us miss school.

SIGRIST: Did your parents encourage, for instance, reading in the house? Were you read to as a child?

SCHAEFER: The older children had to read with us.

SIGRIST: Do you remember a story or something that you were read as a child that sticks out in your mind?

SCHAEFER: We had, in our reader, we had a lot of educational poems and stories in there that we after had to tell the teacher what we learned out of that. And to this day I knew a lot of them, and sometimes to myself I repeat them.

SIGRIST: They've stayed with you all this time.

SCHAEFER: They stayed, yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Well, let's talk about church life. What denomination were you?

SCHAEFER: Catholic.

SIGRIST: And, tell me, was the church in town also?

SCHAEFER: In town also, yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about the church, and . . .

SCHAEFER: The church was next to the school, right next to the school. And the parish hall was across the way, and we had once, once a week we had religious instruction. The priest would come to the classroom and, uh, it was a very good, a very good, uh, remembering I have of that.

SIGRIST: Who was more religious in your family, your mother or your father?

SCHAEFER: My father.

SIGRIST: And what, what do you remember about how he practiced his religion in the house?

SCHAEFER: When we came home, we had two masses on a Sunday. Early, he would go to the early mass, because he also then cooked at home. My father was very, he was not an old farmer, like. You know, he was, he came from a educated family, let's say this way. And he practiced that with us children, too, as much as he could. And when we came home for nine o'clock . . . ( a telephone rings )

SIGRIST: We're going to pause the interview just for a moment. ( break in tape ) We're now resuming after the phone call. Mrs. Schaefer, you were talking about your father and how he practiced his religion in the house, and how you would come home from mass.

SCHAEFER: He would, we would come home from mass, and he would take time. We had to sit down and explain what we heard in church, the gospel or whatever. You know, we had to repeat that, because he wanted to see whether we paid attention.

SIGRIST: And what if you couldn't repeat it?

SCHAEFER: We made sure we did repeat it. ( she laughs ) I don't remember any time that we were punished or hollered at for not knowing. We made sure that we knew something.

SIGRIST: If your, do you remember a time when you were punished for something?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about that?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes. My sis --sister and I went to town, and we had a very good family that always kind of took care, the women always saw to it when we got to town whether we had a shawl on in the wintertime, you know, when we went to school, or when we came home from school and went up the mountain. And then, uh, and I took the liberty of going to her drawer. I cut myself a piece of bread. And I said to my sister, "Don't say anything at home. Don't tattletale on me. I give you a piece, too." And she ate a piece of that bread, and as soon as we got in the house, she told my father. And my father, first he gave me a licking, and then he gave me a piece of bread - a piece of bread, and he said, "Now, you march yourself down, and you give that to the lady." And that was my punishment. I never touched anything any more. ( she laughs ) And my sister, to this, so many times we talked about it, she lives in Mt. Trembor, and she said, "Yeah."

SIGRIST: Never trust your sister is the moral of the story.  
( he laughs )

SCHAEFER: Another time I was punished from my father, but I think it hurt him more than it hurt me. I was supposed to bring something in the house, and we could reach in the window and put it in the window. The window was open. And I didn't know there was a mirror behind there, a little hanging mirror there. And the mirror fell down and it broke, and then I got it, too. ( she laughs ) But he was very good. He was a very good father.

SIGRIST: Is there a piece of furniture that you had in that house that sticks out in your mind?

SCHAEFER: Yeah. A piece of table, like I have in the kitchen. An old . . .

SIGRIST: Can you describe it for me?

SCHAEFER: A round oak table was in the kitchen, and there were benches. We had two benches, so we could all sit down. Behind that, on each side, and my mother and father had sat here and here, to this day. The house is not standing any more, but to this day I know. And then we had, like, a hutch, similar to that, only not the top. That's where we kept the bread. We had loaves of bread, big loaves that mother would make once a month. And they were, we had a hall upstairs and father put like, a, like chickens would sit on there, and they were in there. And it lasted about four weeks, that bread. It never got stale.

SIGRIST: That was sort of like a storage area?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about how else you stored food. I mean, obviously you probably didn't have a refrigerator as such.

SCHAEFER: There was never anything left. ( she laughs )

SIGRIST: Well, I guess that makes sense with all those kids. Can you name all those children?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Would you do that, please, on tape?

SCHAEFER: Yes. Uh, Varley, Mathilt, Thea, Ayn, Yuli, Hans, Sophia, Decla, myself, Francis, Kitty, Bertha and Caddy.

SIGRIST: And how many years between the oldest and the youngest?

SCHAEFER: Most of them a year.

SIGRIST: Oh, just a year apart.

SCHAEFER: Uh-huh.

SIGRIST: That's a twenty year span.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. Very few are two years apart.

SIGRIST: Wow. What a, what an experience that must be.

SCHAEFER: And they have a thing here, the family, the names and all.

SIGRIST: When you were a little girl, what did you know about America? What did America mean to you?

SCHAEFER: Nothing, nothing. In school, we were taught about the African, uh, the mission children, they used to collect pennies for the mission children. And Africa was far away, you know, but we, I didn't know anything about America at all.

SIGRIST: Had any relatives of yours gone to America?

SCHAEFER: My uncle wanted to work the service in Germany, and he fled Germany and came over here.

SIGRIST: Was this after the war?

SCHAEFER: That was before the World War.

SIGRIST: What do you remember personally about the First World War?

SCHAEFER: I know that my father came home one time from the restaurant and then he, because he had been in the 1870 war, and he said they declared the war. And he used to tell us about the war that he had been in, so then, uh, we said, "Are they going to take our animals away? Are they going to do this, and are they going to do that?" And then he said, "Well, we'll have to see." And then my brothers, I had three brothers in the war, two, not three, two. They were one after the other, then had to go. And, uh, otherwise, and then that we would write to the soldiers, us

children, they, you know, the school made us write to the soldiers. But that's about all that I remember.

SIGRIST: So the war didn't actually affect . . .

SCHAEFER: Not the first one, no, no.

SIGRIST: . . . where you were living. How do you think your mother and father felt about the war?

SCHAEFER: Very bad, because father had been in the war and he was, you know, wounded, and he was shot at in the first - in the 1870 war.

SIGRIST: Did your brothers, were they okay?

SCHAEFER: They were okay. That -- they were in the Second World War, my brothers.

SIGRIST: Let's, um . . .

SCHAEFER: But . . .

SIGRIST: What, Mrs. Klein?

KLEIN: Only one was in the second World War.

SCHAEFER: Two. Sophia, Hans, Seth. The First World War. Seth was in the First, yeah. Hans, oh, yeah. Only one, two were in the First World War. I made a mistake.

SIGRIST: Tell me about the time that you got a job at a farm. How old were you?

SCHAEFER: I was sixteen.

SIGRIST: And tell me about what that job entailed.

SCHAEFER: I had to feed the chickens, the pigs, take, help take care of the children, and also work on the field. We used to get up sometimes in the summertime and it was haying time, and get up five o'clock in the morning and, uh, work all day in the field. But I enjoyed it.

SIGRIST: Did you get paid for this?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yes.

SIGRIST: And did, the noise that you hear is Mrs. Klein walking across the living room. Did you have to send that money back to your mother and father at all, or could you keep what you made?

SCHAEFER: I gave it to my mother, because she needed it. From there, I came over. My uncle, can I I?. . .

SIGRIST: Yes, go ahead.

SCHAEFER: My uncle came out, and my father had passed away, and he left the children, my mother with the children, the younger children. And then he wanted to help her. He had a little money. And Mother refused. She was proud, and she said, "No." Then he said, "At least send some of your children to America. They can work and they can help you." And that she agreed with. Because my father, he wanted to do that after the First World War, but my father wouldn't let anybody go. America for them was anybody that did something went to America, as far as they were concerned. But, uh, then my mother said, "All right." And he sent us the ticket.

SIGRIST: What was he doing in America?

SCHAEFER: He had a bakery.

SIGRIST: And when did he go?

SCHAEFER: To Germany?

SIGRIST: When did he go to America initially?

SCHAEFER: Oh, the First -- the First World War. I don't exactly know the year or time.

SIGRIST: So he had only been there a few years then?

SCHAEFER: Oh, no, no. He was here a long time.

SIGRIST: Before he came back to Germany.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What was your uncle's name?

SCHAEFER: Josef Riegler. That's my mother's brother.

SIGRIST: And, um, your mother's brother. And tell me a little bit about your father and how he died. What did he die of?

SCHAEFER: Consumption.

SIGRIST: And how old were you at that time?

SCHAEFER: Ten.

SIGRIST: Oh, so you were quite young then.

SIGRIST: What do you remember about your father's death?

SCHAEFER: He, that he didn't sleep in the house any more, that Mother had built a small cottage, like. And he, so the children, I imagine, wouldn't be in danger, in the summertime he slept outside.

SIGRIST: Do you remember anything about the funeral or anything of that nature?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yeah. He were -- we were, they brought him down with the horse and wagon, and we went, naturally, you know, we had to go down a big hill and it was sad for my mother, naturally, you know, to be left with the children.

SIGRIST: Well, yeah. It's an enormous responsibility for your mother. So your uncle comes back to Germany.

SCHAEFER: Yes, he did.

SIGRIST: And he had a conversation with your mother, who was visiting.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: And did you want to go to America?

SCHAEFER: I was a thrill, I think, at the time, when -- when I - when they said, my uncle said, "Get the younger ones, then they don't get married right away and they can help you." But my brother, he was in the verge of getting married. They knew, you know, that he was getting married, so he said, "Well, she's, he's - he's no help to you." He was a bricklayer, and at that time bricklayers in this country here were very well-paid. And that's what my uncle thought, you know, he'd make a lot of money and so on. And then, uh, he said, "All right, then I take the two girls." And my older sister came, and I. He picked us two. And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: What was your older sister's name?

SCHAEFER: Annale, Anna.

SIGRIST: This wasn't the sister that squealed on you with the bread?

SCHAEFER: No, no. ( she laughs ) No, no.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: So what do you remember about the process of getting papers and that sort of thing?

SCHAEFER: And then my - my uncle sent us the ticket. And he had to, and he sent us each twenty-five dollars so we could buy the necessities, because at that time the inflation had set in in Germany already. And then, uh, we had to go to Ellis Island. First we had to be in Bremen for two days.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about the inflation in Germany at that time. What do you remember about that?

SCHAEFER: That you, today you got so much money, and the next day it was no good any more. Because when we left, my, I wanted a pocketbook so badly, and my sister said, "No, we going to save the money, and when we get to Bremen then we going to pack up a package and send it home to mother." You know, just - just to show that we still were in touch with them or something, I don't know. But anyway, that was her thing. And when we sent it, the money was no good any more. They used to have baskets with the money in when they went shopping, and very little they got for it. I, in fact, when I got over here I sent my brother twenty-five dollars, my first pay that I had, and he got a bicycle and a suit of clothes for that.

SIGRIST: Did your mother want you to go?

SCHAEFER: Uh, in a way I think it was a relief to her, probably, but she was very sad when we did -- for a fact that, uh, I think she thought, too, maybe we wouldn't amount to anything, you know, people are bad, you know, something. Anyway, it was a, it was sad for her when we left. And I - towards the end, I didn't want to go any more either.

SIGRIST: Because it just, the sadness just kind of . . .

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Did your mother give you a special dinner, or . . .

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

SCHAEFER: She baked, she made us a special dinner. She made chickens, fried the chicken, and she made, that was always her specialty. You would call it donuts here. It isn't actually donuts, it's a, uh . . .

SIGRIST: What's the German name for it?

SCHAEFER: Uh, it's a - it's a Bavarian name -- keichle [ph] a, they call it, you know. It's that same kind of yeast dough and you, uh, you know, roll it out and you fry it in butter fat. That's a specialty, you know, when we had that. Once a year they would make that. But she made it for us before we left.

SIGRIST: What time of the year is this?

SCHAEFER: That was in November.

SIGRIST: You left in November. Do you remember what you took with you?

SCHAEFER: Very little. ( she laughs ) Uh, as far as clothes?

SCHAEFER: Well, just what exactly were you carrying when you left? What did you . . .

SCHAEFER: I carried an umbrella, because I have no pocketbook. And the suitcase, you have to send it ahead with your clothes. At that time you didn't carry a suitcase. You had to send it ahead to Bremen, because it had to be examined.

SIGRIST: Did anyone give you any kind of a little gift as a remembrance of Germany to take with you?

SCHAEFER: No, no. They had nothing to give. ( she laughs )

SIGRIST: Do you remember saying goodbye to your mother?

SCHAEFER: Oh, yes.

SIGRIST: Can you describe that for us, please.

SCHAEFER: We left at three o'clock in the morning. Somebody in the next town took us with horse and carriage. And, uh, when it - when we went away from the house, you know, you go through that part of the woods, I told you about, and I looked around and I thought, "Will I ever see it again?" It was sad, you know. We cried. My sister sure did, too. And, uh, then we had to be in Bremen two days. You had all kinds of examinations.

SIGRIST: Did you take the horse and carriage from your town to Bremen?

SCHAEFER: No, to the city, and then we took the train to Bremen.

SIGRIST: How long of a ride was that?

SCHAEFER: To the city? Oh, about an hour with the horse and wagon.

SIGRIST: And then from the city to Bremen, how long did it take?

SCHAEFER: To Bremen? I imagine it was about five, four or five hours with the railroad.

SIGRIST: Did, so it's you, your sister . . .

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Your uncle's in America, right?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: So it's just you and your sister.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And that's it, just the two of you.

SCHAEFER: That's it.

SIGRIST: So it's Anna . . .

SCHAEFER: And Veronica, yeah.

SIGRIST: Tell me, was this the first time you'd ever been in Bremen?

SCHAEFER: The first time I'd ever been on a railroad.

SIGRIST: Oh, well, what do you remember about that?

SCHAEFER: Uh, impressive. ( she laughs ) I fell up on a steps on the railroad. We left very early in the morning, and I was still asleep. And so on. And it was quite impressive. Naturally, to me it was something special. My sister, it wasn't, because she had been in Munich for quite a few years.

SIGRIST: So you stayed in Bremen for two days?

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Where did you stay in Bremen?

SIGRIST: In, they had a special house or hotel, whatever you call it, where the people that left the country would stay, you have to stay, because you had all kinds of examinations.

SIGRIST: What kinds of examinations did you have to undergo?

SCHAEFER: The special, they examined you completely. And then the hair, the eyes, a regular examination.

SIGRIST: So, is this Bremen or Bremerhaven?

SCHAEFER: That's, uh, Bremen.

SIGRIST: It's Bremen. What was the name of the boat that you took?

SCHAEFER: Seidlitz.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

SCHAEFER: S-E-I-D-L-I-T-Z.

SIGRIST: And do you know what the name of the line it was?

SCHAEFER: North German, North German Lloyd.

SIGRIST: The Lloyd Line. And can you tell me what you thought when you saw the boat for the first time?

SCHAEFER: Well, I was impressed. ( she laughs ) It was a regular, you know, you go on.

SIGRIST: Describe your accommodations on the boat. Where did you stay?

SCHAEFER: Can I, can I say the whole thing? You know, you're what they call a greenhorn, and we had all kinds of, uh, the people that were working on the boat, they looked for those kind of people, you know, innocent, dumb people. And my sister was seasick all the time, and we didn't, all she could have is like a little whiskey, you know, that would settle her stomach, and fruit. And we had a head steward that was after the girls, the green girls. He would give me, and the narrow halls they had there, very narrow. It was an old boat, and he would give me fruit, you know. And I was so glad to have it. At first I thought he was, you know, he was sorry for my sister. And then all of a sudden I, somebody put me wise to it, watch out so-and-so. And, well, the fruit, I didn't get any more fruit. ( she laughs ) And, uh, we were on the boat twelve days.

SIGRIST: What else do you remember about the boat ride? Were you sick?

SCHAEFER: No, I wasn't.

SIGRIST: What were you doing during the day?

SCHAEFER: Oh, I met a girlfriend, and we had, they played games, they played, like, Bingo, and we helped with that. And we were busy all day.

SIGRIST: Can you describe the dining room for me in the boat, or where they fed you?

SCHAEFER: A dining room, a regular big hall, a big room. And, uh, the food was good.

SIGRIST: Did they have to have any kind of, any kind of special contraptions because the boat moved?

SCHAEFER: No, no. They didn't.

SIGRIST: Do you remember, was it a smooth ride or a stormy ride?

SCHAEFER: It was stormy, it was November. But, uh, not, we were on deck most of the time. I wasn't, it wasn't bad.

SIGRIST: Did you have your own cabin, or were you with your . . .

SCHAEFER: My sister.

SIGRIST: Just the two of you.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: So what class are you traveling, then?

SCHAEFER: Third.

SIGRIST: What did the cabin look like?

SCHAEFER: A little room, just two beds in there, and a little dresser. And they had a, like a clothes hanger there on the side, just enough so you could turn around.

SIGRIST: Very no-nonsense.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: So you said the boat went for twelve days.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Was your sister sick through the whole thing?

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Were you worried about your sister?

SCHAEFER: No, no. ( they laugh ) No . . .

SIGRIST: She was having whiskey, I mean . . .

SCHAEFER: No. One time, yeah. No, one time, we had one dollar left, and the girl and I wanted to have candy so badly, and my sister naturally didn't know the money. By that time I knew -- I could tell whether dime or a quarter or so on. And there was sourballs used to come in jars. They were ten cents a jar, and I wanted one so badly, and I couldn't because my mother had, when we left my mother had said, "You listen to Anne. Whatever she says, you do." ( she clears her throat ) So whenever I did something wrong, she would say, "I write, I write Mother." You know, she would threaten me. Well, anyway, I wanted to have the sourball so bad, so I said to the girl that I met on the boat, "I would like that so much." And then she said, "You know what we do? You get a dollar change and get all dimes. She wouldn't know the difference." So we did, and we bought ourselves a jar of sourballs. ( they laugh ) We were so happy, and my sister never knew. I told her later on.

SIGRIST: When it was safe.

SCHAEFER: Yes, yeah.

SIGRIST: So, actually, the boat ride for you was a pleasant experience.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah.

SIGRIST: Do you remember when you arrived in New York?

SCHAEFER: In Ellis Island, yeah.

SIGRIST: Well, do you remember the Statue of Liberty?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me about seeing that?

SCHAEFER: Yeah. Oh, we called it the Freiheits Statue, you know, the Freedom Statue, we called it. We were impressed.

SIGRIST: Did they bring you up on deck to see it, or how did you see it?

SCHAEFER: We went on deck, yeah.

SIGRIST: What time of the day did you arrive in New York?

SCHAEFER: In the morning, early in the morning.

SIGRIST: What did New York look to you, look like to you?

SCHAEFER: I looked at the buildings, and I said, "How can they get air?" Because the buildings were so high and, you know, so close together. And I said to myself, "How do they ever get air here?" And then we were taken off the boat, and we went in, you know how sheep get counted off? Well, we were counted off. We went through a gate, you know, and we were counted off if everybody was there that they brought in. And then there was another examination.

SIGRIST: This is all at Ellis Island.

SCHAEFER: All in Ellis Island, yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you describe Ellis Island to me, what it looked like to you?

SCHAEFER: Yes. That was we, first we went in one hall where we were counted off, and then we were in a big, big hall. In fact, we were in there when we were over there. And at that time they had a fountain in there. I was looking for that fountain when I was over in Ellis Island, but it's not there any more. And the people that went out west, they could wash in there and bathe their children in there. It was, oh, immense hall.

SIGRIST: Were there a lot of people?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: What was it like for a young girl from Germany, a young woman from Germany, to be with all these different kinds of people?

SCHAEFER: I guess you so involved in yourself that you don't even think about that. It was just, to me it was just a vunderland, like. You know, you see all these different people and different-dressed people.

SIGRIST: And did you see anything at Ellis Island that you had never seen before.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What?

SCHAEFER: The black people.

SIGRIST: Would you tell the story, please, on tape?

SCHAEFER: ( she laughs ) We had to wait for my uncle to pick us up, and he never came until the last boat came over from New York. So, naturally, they gave us something to eat at noontime. And I had never eaten a sandwich before. And they bring the sandwiches along. And I look up at the man that serves me the sandwich, and I said, "I'm not going to stay. If it's so hot here that they get so dark, I'm not going to stay in this country." ( she laughs ) And, uh, then, anyway, you know, you sit, we sat on line, and everybody got those sandwiches. And then the - the porters, I think they were, they went away then. And I thought, "I'm not going to stay here."

SIGRIST: Do you remember what you were wearing when you got off the boat?

SCHAEFER: A long dress, like you see sometimes, you know, that Russian . . . ( disturbance to the microphone )

SIGRIST: That's okay. Just describe it in words for me.

SCHAEFER: I have a book here from there.

SIGRIST: Yeah. It was a long dress . . .

SCHAEFER: A long dress, yeah. Plainly, plainly made, with long sleeves, high neck. ( she laughs )

SIGRIST: Did you have a hat on?

SCHAEFER: Oh, I'm sure I had a hat on. At that time you wouldn't go out without a hat.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about your sister's personality?

SCHAEFER: Oh, she -- she was citified. She had a, she was dressed modern. I came from the country.

SIGRIST: What was her personality like? What, I guess what I'm driving at is tell me how she felt about this whole experience going across the ocean. I know she was sick.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: But, I mean, did she want to leave Germany also?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yeah.

SIGRIST: She did want.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. I'll tell you why, mostly. She got to know a French fellow during the war. He was in love with her, and she was in love with him. Being he was an enemy al--, you know, everybody looked down on them. And then she went to America, and I think that's why she was anxious to leave.

SIGRIST: So she had, she had her own agenda leaving.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: You said your uncle came to Ellis Island to pick you up.

SCHAEFER: To pick us up.

SIGRIST: Tell me, tell me, were you close to this uncle at all?

SCHAEFER: No.

SIGRIST: Not particularly.

SCHAEFER: No, no.

SIGRIST: Where did . . .

SCHAEFER: But he was good, he was good to us. ( disturbance to the microphone )

SIGRIST: I might just want to ask you to not play with the . . .

SCHAEFER: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

SIGRIST: The napkin. It will sound like potato chips on the tape.

SCHAEFER: I'm sorry.

SIGRIST: That's okay. Uh, where did your uncle take you?

SCHAEFER: To, do you know New York?

SIGRIST: Well, you can just tell us where . . .

SCHAEFER: He took us in the subway. And I looked at the people in the subway, and everybody was chewing, you know. And I thought they had buttons in their mouth, you know, because they were chewing. I didn't know of, we didn't have chewing gum in Germany. And then he took us up to (?). And my aunt in Germany bought a cereal set, you know, those cereal sets that they have with flour, sugar and that? And we had to take that to America to give to my uncle. And he was so embarrassed because the paper had fallen off, you know, and so on, because he was a landlord, and he had to take that in his house and take it upstairs. He was afraid of people seeing him, naturally, in the subway. He was very

embarrassed. And then, uh, anyway, we finally got there. We had to change subway two or three times.

SIGRIST: What did you think? You had never been in a subway before.

SCHAEFER: No, right.

SIGRIST: What did you think about this?

SCHAEFER: Well, to me, the wonderment was the chewing, the chewing, that they chewed buttons, I thought.

SIGRIST: Are you talking like a kitchen canister set?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: All sugar and flour and . . .

SCHAEFER: Not the canister, just the pieces.

SIGRIST: And you had to bring that from Europe?

SCHAEFER: We had to bring that to America.

SIGRIST: And did it arrive unbroken?

SCHAEFER: Unbroken. We made sure, because we didn't want any trouble.  
( she laughs )

SIGRIST: You talk about your uncle being embarrassed by this. Was he embarrassed by you?

SCHAEFER: Maybe he was and he didn't let on, but he didn't never showed it.

SIGRIST: Because, you know, he would be bringing these two women . . .

SCHAEFER: Yeah, sure.

SIGRIST: Who, you know, obviously probably were fresh off the boat, so to speak.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. And he didn't, uh, make any, you know, he didn't show that he was embarrassed, I think. He was just glad to have us in the house.

SIGRIST: Were you greeted warmly by him, treated warmly?

SCHAEFER: Yes, yes. We didn't stay too long. My sister, he had already promised his lawyer that here's somebody coming from Germany and she was going to work for him. So she was only there, I think, two days and she went. Then I asked him to please find me a job right away. And, uh, because I wanted to pay off my ticket, too. And, uh, he got me a job in the bakery, like an errand girl. I had to help with their child and

in the store a little bit and wash the dishes and stuff like that. And that woman was, she was Irish and he was German. So it was kind of hard, too, because she didn't understand me and I didn't understand her. But they were good to me.

SIGRIST: Do you know how much your passage was, how much it cost?

SCHAEFER: Yes. A hundred and sixty-five ma--dollars.

SIGRIST: And how much did you get paid in the bakery?

SCHAEFER: I got twenty dollars a month.

SIGRIST: So out of that money you're paying your uncle . . .

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: Did you send any money back to Mom?

SCHAEFER: I sent my mother money when -- as soon as I had paid off my ticket.

SIGRIST: How long did that take?

SCHAEFER: Well, I think it's about a year. It must have been about year, because in the meantime, then, I had to wash the floor on my knees, and they had a wooden floor in the bakery. And I got a splinter in my knee, and I had to leave work and stay with my aunt until my knee had healed up. And that was about a month. And then my uncle went in business on his own again, and I worked for him.

SIGRIST: That was afterwards.

SCHAEFER: That as afterwards. And he paid . . .

SIGRIST: You were living with your uncle during this?

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to be someone who didn't speak the language, being in a place like New York City alone, really. I mean, how did you feel? What were you feeling at that time?

SCHAEFER: I, um, my uncle would bring me to, um, Times Square. I had to go out to Corona. 46th Street, Corona, used to be the last subway stop, and I worked out there. And I had to go out there. MY uncle then brought me to 42nd Street, and he would say, "Now you go, the red light or green light," you know, and so on, and, "Do you know your way?" You know. Oh, yeah, I was embarrassed to say I didn't, and I knew right away that I didn't. But I let him go, and then I looked around, which way to go. Naturally, I lost myself so many times until I found somebody that could direct me.

And then one time I, uh, not the conductor, a change, on the change booth, when I went down in Corona, I said to the man, "Would you make me a note, so I could show it who . . ." He was German descent. I told him in German, "Would you write me a note that I could show it to the conductor where I wanted to go?" And then he said, "Oh, yeah," he would do that. Whatever he wrote on the note, I don't know, because every conductor I showed it to, they looked at me and laughed. They thought that greenhorn or something, whatever, I don't know.

And then one time I got so lost on 149th Street, I had to change for a different train, 149th Street, and then I was so completely lost that I downstairs, I went down, that was the elevated subway. And then I asked a policeman, you know. I showed him where I wanted to go. And then he called over somebody in a car to bring me to that address where my uncle lived. My uncle already waited on the window, looked down the window, if I wasn't coming, and when he saw a man drop me off at the house he was furious that I would go in a car, until I was able to explain to him that a policeman put me in the car. And, uh . . .

SIGRIST: This is very difficult, isn't it?

SCHAEFER: Oh, it was hard. It was . . .

SIGRIST: Did you miss Germany?

SCHAEFER: Yes. A whole --I was so homesick for a whole year. ( a telephone rings )

SIGRIST: We're going to pause the tape just for . . . ( break in tape ) We're now beginning the interview again. Mrs. Schaefer, tell me how you learned English.

SCHAEFER: Like, you listen to it and you try to practice yourself. And then it, they had to let you go to school. And we went to, in New York on 12th Street that time, we went to night school. And there you learned the basic. Most, most of the time we went to a movie, you know.

SIGRIST: It was silent, so you really didn't learn any English.  
( she laughs )

SCHAEFER: No, no.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about what night school was like. Who were the other people, who were the other students in that . . .

SCHAEFER: All different languages. Spanish, we had, and all different nationalities. And the teacher was very good to us. I mean, you know, tried to teach us to pay attention and so on. But I didn't go too long, because I worked for my uncle and he needed me in the evening.

SIGRIST: Why in the evening? What were you doing?

SCHAEFER: Because we were -- I had to work in the store. The one girl that worked in the store left, left. And then she -- he needed somebody.

And then I learned through the customers, you know, I would learn. I could tell you something very funny, but I don't think it would look good on tape.

SIGRIST: Well, I was going to ask, do you have a story about when you were learning English and you made a mistake.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: And I'd love to hear it. We have wonderful stories like that.

SCHAEFER: Yeah? It wouldn't sound too bad on - on the tape?

SIGRIST: Oh, we hear all kinds of things.

SCHAEFER: This one special customer we had, he had it that - they called -- they used to call the foreigners greenhorns, especially the ones that came from Germany. And he was -- would come in, and he said, "Oh, Greenhorn," and so on, and I couldn't understand why greenhorn, always the same thing. OR he would tease me, and then he would say, "Do you think you'll ever go back?" And then I said to my uncle one time, "Why does he always," he was a regular customer, "Why does he always repeat the same thing?" I really didn't understand all the words that he mentioned, and so on. He said, "Yeah, they do that to foreigners, you know, when you come over." And he taught, he taught me to say something. He said, "If he says that again, you tell him - " I don't know, should I say it?

SIGRIST: It's all right with me if it's all right with you.

SCHAEFER: He said, "You tell him, 'When they make jackasses like you, they ride on back on.'" Until I learned that, you know, it took me a while, but I did learn it. And he, one day he came in the store, and he said, "Oh, Fra -- Franika, you think you ever go back?" And then I said that to him. He never said it again. He look at me, you know. He never said it again. ( she laughs ) And different things. They tease you, and so on. But if you take it, you hear, and you take it and, from whom it comes.

SIGRIST: What did you like about America the most in those early . . .

SCHAEFER: My freedom. I didn't have to say, you know, in Germany, like I said to you, my father came from a more educated family. And when we went to visit that family, we always had to bow down. We always had to bow down. And you couldn't say, like, you know, they do, see and do, they have, you have to honor them, like, you know. And that went against me, you know. Why do you really have to do that? When they had a birthday or so, we had to almost kneel down. And anybody higher than yourself, you know, had to, and I couldn't take that. And here in this country, you know, everybody was the same. That impressed me the most.

SIGRIST: What, was there something about America you didn't like? Was there some aspect of life in this country that you just couldn't acclimate yourself to?

SCHAEFER: No, I can't say that I could mention anything.

SIGRIST: Were there any other great discoveries that you made? I mean, you discovered chewing gum.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. ( she laughs )

SIGRIST: Was there anything else that you were just amazed by that you saw in New York in those days?

SCHAEFER: The houses. ( disturbance to the microphone ) How they get air. And the different people, how they were dressed, and how they acted, and how they acted.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Uh, were you writing back and forth to your mother?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: And what kinds of things were you telling her?

SCHAEFER: That we were all right. The main thing for her was that we were good, and that everybody was all right. And then during the war we could, not during the war, but after the war, we could send her packages, could help her. And . . .

SIGRIST: What kinds of things did you send your mother from America?

SCHAEFER: Clothes that I bought in a second-hand store. You could buy a dress or something in that store at that time for twenty-five cents, good material, and they would remake it. In fact, my, uh, husband's cousin thought it was confirmed, and she wrote to me, she don't know where she's going to get a dress, you know, for her, and so on. And I found a very nice evening gown for seventy-five cents that I sent her, and I, after maybe a few years or so she sent me a picture, and she said, "This is the dress that you sent me." And whatever we thought that she needs, we sent her.

SIGRIST: Did your mother ever want to come to this country?

SCHAEFER: No, no.

SIGRIST: Did you try to get her?

SCHAEFER: We tried, we tried, yeah.

SIGRIST: You, um, you say?.

SCHAEFER: I was over there. All my sisters, you know, they would all contribute and, you know, we would have, I was over there one time.

SIGRIST: You went over to Germany to visit.

SCHAEFER: While I was over there more times, but that one time that I thought my -- I could persuade my mother to come over and see how we live here, because she was always a little afraid. And, uh, so that I almost had her persuaded to come along, and then my brother said, (and she lived with my brother in Germany in the house), and then she said, "What am I going to do? Who's going to take care of my children?" And then my mother changed her mind. Because I had promised her I'd take it over, and then we would -- somebody would bring her home, and she could see how we lived here and so on, and it would be, you know, good on -- for her mind to know that everybody was all right. And then she changed her mind, and she didn't.

SIGRIST: That's too bad, actually. Uh, my final question for you is this. Are you glad that you came to this country?

SCHAEFER: Yes.

SIGRIST: Because, I mean, you had your doubts at that time.

SCHAEFER: Yeah, yeah, I had, I had.

SIGRIST: How do you think it . . .

SCHAEFER: I found my, I found my luck here. I found my husband here.

SIGRIST: What was your husband's name?

SCHAEFER: Leonard, Leonard Schaefer.

SIGRIST: And what year did you marry?

SCHAEFER: 1920, 1929? No? Yeah, 1929.

SIGRIST: 1929. And just name your children, please.

SCHAEFER: Uh, Vera and Leonard.

SIGRIST: And how do you think your life, quickly, would have been different if you'd stayed in Germany?

SCHAEFER: Poor. I mean I'm not wealthy, but, uh, poor, really poor, I think. In my, in my situation. Oh, no, I'm glad. I found my future here. I'm glad I'm here.

SIGRIST: A good life.

SCHAEFER: Yeah. Because the first time I was over there, I was glad to, when my time came, to go back home. I called it home.

SIGRIST: You were ready to go.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Mrs. Schaefer, I want to thank you very much for letting me come out to your house on your birthday and everything. ( Mrs. Schaefer laughs ) And just record some of your reminiscences. I suspect, actually, we could be here a lot longer than this.

SCHAEFER: Yeah.

SIGRIST: But anyway, this is Paul Sigrist signing off in Shandaken . . .

SCHAEFER: Shandaken.

SIGRIST: . . . New York, with Veronica Schaefer, and her daughter, Vera Klein. And today is February 3, 1993, on a Wednesday.

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