

EI-539

**HENRY LORCH with his brother LOUIS LORCH**

**BIRTH DATE: JUNE 12, 1926**

**LOUIS LORCH**

**BIRTH DATE: APRIL 11, 1932**

**INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 1994**

**RUNNING TIME: 55:50**

**INTERVIEWER: ELYSA MATSEN**

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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: CHARLES MITCHELL/JANET LEVINE**

**GERMANY, 1934**

**AGES: HENRY, 8 / LOUIS, 2**

**PASSAGE ON: AQUITANIA**

**PORT: CHERBOURG**

**OLD COUNTRY RESIDENCE: DIEBURG, GERMANY**

**UNITED STATES RESIDENCE(S): HUDSON, NY; HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND,  
NY; CA**

MATSEN: Good morning. This is Elysa Matsen of the National Park Service. Today is September 11<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, 1993, '94. And I'm in California. I'm in Sherman Oaks, California at the home of Mr. Henry Lorch. And he is accompanied by his brother, Mr. Louis Lorch. They came through Ellis Island in 1934 when Mr. Henry Lorch was eight years old?

H. LORCH: Correct.

MATSEN: And Mr. Louis Lorch was two years old, from Germany. Henry, why don't you begin by giving me your full name and date of birth?

H. LORCH: I was--. My full name is Henry Simon Lorch. I was born June 12<sup>th</sup> 1926. I am presently residing at 15221 Magnolia Boulevard in Sherman Oaks, Unit A.

MATSEN: Okay. Can you spell your last name for me?

H. LORCH: L-O-R-C-H.

MATSEN: And your brother, Louis Lorch, can you do the same?

L. LORCH: Sure. My name is Louis Lorch. I reside at 7852 Bobby Boyer Avenue is Westhills, California. And I was born April 11<sup>th</sup> 1932.

[No sound.]

MATSEN: And your name was changed to Louis Lorch?

L. LORCH: From what I was told my name was changed to Louis Lorch when we arrived in, in, from Germany to the United States by our uncle who sponsored us.

MATSEN: And, Henry, your name when you came through?

H. LORCH: My name was Heinz, H-E-I-N-Z. And that was also changed immediately after landing in the States.

MATSEN: I'd like to start out by talking about where you came from, the town that you came from. Henry, why don't you start? If, if there's anything you can remember about what the town looked like when you were growing up, what size—

H. LORCH: Well, it was small. The town was Dieburg, D-I-E-B-U-R-G. It was about twenty miles out of Frankfurt. And it was near towns like Darmstadt. And I remember living in a house, a three-story house, with a very, very large backyard. And we also had an outhouse. We didn't have a bathroom in the house so we had to walk across the yard to get to the bathroom. My father owned, or had with his brother, a livestock business dealing in cattle where he bought cattle and brought them back home again and then took them to the slaughterhouse. And I still remember going to the slaughterhouse with him. And he let me even lead cows through the streets into the slaughterhouse and watch them get slaughtered, skinned and all. And, you want me to go through the whole process, or what?

MATSEN: Well what major industry was that town? I mean if there was one—

H. LORCH: That I don't know. There were a lot of butchers in town. A lot of people dealing in livestock that I know.

MATSEN: And your father would raise the cattle?

H. LORCH: No, no, no. He would not. He would go the market, like a place like I mentioned Darmstadt, and where they had large buildings I remember with stalls inside. And they would walk around where the farmers would bring in their cattle. And he would bargain, select cows that he would want to buy. And he had--. He couldn't drive because he only had one arm. So he used to rent, or lease, a truck with a driver. And he used to buy seven, eight, ten cows, put them into the truck and bring it back home again. And his brother, or his stepbrother, had a house—

MATSEN: What was his name?

H. LORCH: Hugo Lorch. They were in partners in business. And he had a barn in the back of his house where they used to store the cattle for three, four days whatever it was. Milk them every day. And then take them to the slaughterhouse to be slaughtered and then they sold, that's how they,

MATSEN: So he was kind of the middleman.

H. LORCH: He was more or less the middleman, yeah. He was in the livestock business, yeah.

MATSEN: What can you tell me about your father? What did he look like? Can you give a description of your father for the tape? And what his name was, as well.

H. LORCH: Well his name was Max Lorch. There were actually three Max Lorchs in town. Max Lorch one, Max Lorch two and Max Lorch three. He was Max Lorch three. That's how they distinguished between, among themselves. And he was average. He lost his right arm right above the elbow in the First World War. And I think it was 1919 that happened.

MATSEN: Do you know anything about that story, how he lost his arm?

H. LORCH: He, to my knowledge he lost it in France. And how he lost it he never really spoke about it. I know he, we very seldom saw the arm, saw the stub. You know you see it a few times. He never wore, he had an arm, an artificial arm, which he very rarely wore. And—

MATSEN: How tall was he?

H. LORCH: Maybe five eight. He was not a tall man but he was average. And he was not heavy in any way. He was never fat. He was always nice and lean, and very hard working man, very religious man. I mean his, he, the story that I got from people was that when he was wounded he prayed to God saying that if God would spare his life he would devote his life to the religion, to God, which he did. I mean he was, as I said, a very religious man. He never worked on a Saturday, never worked on the holidays, prayed every day. And but he never, I mean he was religious within himself. He never forced his religion on anyone else. You know you do your thing, I'll do my thing and you leave me alone, I'll leave you alone. That was his philosophy.

MATSEN: Louis, why don't you describe for me your mother? Can you tell me what she looked like, if there's any story you can remember about throughout your childhood here or before that you remember just being a small child with your mother.

L. LORCH: My mom, you know, it's been so, so long ago. And I lived such a short time with her. She passed away when I was twenty-two. And she was a good-looking woman. She was a—

MATSEN: How tall was she or the color of her hair?

L. LORCH: She was five five. She was a brunette. And she had a very distinctive wart on her cheek that eventually, I remember her by so much. And she was a great cook, a great housekeeper. Had, she was a, she liked, she liked having fun. She liked playing cards. She liked playing mahjong. She liked going to Hadassah meeting. She always was, she wanted to be on the go. Unfortunately, she had a very tough life. And she had very little time for us I would think during our small childhood. When we, when we came to the United States my uncle, who sponsored us, owned a factory in town in Hudson, New York. And as he was bringing, we were the first ones he brought over. And he rented a large house in Hudson. It was a four-bedroom upstairs, downstairs home. I would imagine it had to be two thousand square feet total with an attic and a cellar. And whoever came over from, from the old country, from Germany or wherever they came from, France, they would stop at our place and stay with us until they found their own

apartment or whatever. Since he was the sponsor he gave them jobs in factories until they found whatever they, their own niche. And mom had to, had to cook for them.

H. LORCH: And clean house.

L. LORCH: I can remember I think I was twelve years old before we sat down, twelve or thirteen years old, before we sat down at a table just the four kids and mom and dad. It was always boarders. We always had to eat in the kitchen and the boarders ate in the, in the dining room.

MATSEN: What did she make?

H. LORCH: Everything.

L. LORCH: Cakes. Ah, she was a great baker. And she was a good cook. I mean normal stuff. There was no fancy cooking. We kept a kosher home.

MATSEN: Can you tell me a typical meal, just describe a typical meal.

L. LORCH: Meat and potatoes.

H. LORCH: Soup, meat, potatoes.

L. LORCH: Soup, meat and potatoes. No bread and no drinks on the table except for, except for matzah to make the prayer over the bread. That's the

only time we had bread at the table. And no drinks on the table. And I remember that till this day, right.

H. LORCH: That my was father's philosophy. You eat what your mother cooked and nothing else. You don't fill up on any kind of liquid or—

L. LORCH: She was a good cook. I mean, we didn't starve in the house. But she worked very hard. I can remember the coal stoves and the wood burning stoves, and the coal furnaces. And then finally went to oil, oil stoves and we made it a little bit easier. And we had iceboxes before we had refrigerators. And—

MATSEN: And what was her name?

L. LORCH: Sophie.

MATSEN: Sophie. That's a pretty name.

L. LORCH: Sophie Lorch, yes. And she passed away in 19, New Year's Eve of 1953.

MATSEN: Okay. Henry, why don't you tell me the names of, I guess, your sisters that make up, we have the brothers here.

H. LORCH: Okay. I have one sister who lives in East Northport, Long Island. Her name is Ruth. Her name was not changed. And then I, we have a sister in Columbus, Ohio, that, her name is Margo or Margaret or, Her

original name was Margot, M-A-R-G-O-T. That was her, I don't know if she still goes by that name or not. I guess she still does. We all call her Maggie. So, and that's it. There was just two girls and two boys.

MATSEN: [Unclear] four children. Do you remember your grandparents?

H. LORCH: Vaguely, yes.

MATSEN: What do you remember about them? What sticks in your mind?

H. LORCH: My, my mother's mother, well naturally everybody lived close by in the small town. And every time we came in she always had candy for us. And her husband whose name was Maurice he was in the hide business. So everybody, and I guess in that town everybody was connected with cattle some way. And he had the hide business. And I remember he had a storage house in the back of his building, a big barn where he'd lay out all the hides and, to dry out I guess. And I don't remember too much. He, he reminded me of a thin Kentucky colonel with a, with a beard. You know a very distinguished looking man. I don't remember too much about him. I remember how he looks but that's about it. And my father had a stepmother. And I can't say too much nice things about her. That's the problem. [Laughs]

MATSEN: Well you can say what, what was she like? Tell me what she was like. It doesn't always have to be—

H. LORCH: She wasn't, she was, she favored, naturally she favored her two children. My father had a stepsister and a stepbrother.

MATSEN: Remember their names?

H. LORCH: One was named Jean and one was named Hugo. That was who he was partners with. She didn't like my mother too much, as mother-in-laws go, I guess. And they were always in each other's hair. And as I said, she, I don't remember her as, as being a nice grandmother.

MATSEN: What was her name?

L. LORCH: Minnie.

H. LORCH: No, not Minnie.

L. LORCH: I can't even remember her name.

H. LORCH: I, I don't know. I forgot.

MATSEN: Okay. That's fine. What else can you tell me? You talked a little bit about your father and that he was a religious man.

H. LORCH: Yes.

MATSEN: Can you tell me anything more about religion in your house?

H. LORCH: We had a kosher home, strictly kosher home. And as I said my mother abided by that. She, when she went out to eat she, if it was, if she wasn't with her father, with her husband, she probably would eat anything.

L. LORCH: Even if she was.

H. LORCH: She was, yeah. She was, she was a great woman. I mean she, in later life she enjoyed life very short life that she enjoyed after us kids grew up. You know she started to smoke again, and go out to meetings and go shopping with the girls.

MATSEN: Do you remember holidays, holidays in your house?

H. LORCH: Holidays were strictly enforced. And we never went to school on holidays. Regardless of how minor it was, we were kept out of school. We went to temple. And it was strictly observed, all the holidays were. He was, that's—

MATSEN: Can you describe a celebration?

H. LORCH: Not really. I mean like Hanukah, which is a, a joyous holiday, a gift giving holiday and all that, we, we were poor. Let's put it that way. Material wise we were poor. We were a very close knit family. As Lou said, we never starved. Mom cooked. And she cooked not from cans, fresh vegetables. She made everything from scratch. Even baking, we never had a piece of cake from the bakery in the house. So she

did all the cooking and all the baking. And I remember on a Thursday night she used to knead the dough and put it into a large wash basin to rise, and Friday, Friday morning all she did was cook and bake. And she used to bake anywhere from sixteen, seventeen large pies, cheesecakes, crumb cakes, plum cakes, all kinds.

MATSEN: So she was a wonderful baker.

H. LORCH: Oh yes, terrific. And by Wednesday and Thursday everything was gone. We had company for breakfast that's how good the cakes were. And as I said material things we didn't have. None of us had a bicycle until my aunt came over from Germany later on and brought a girl's bike. And we shared that. I still remember not having a pair of roller skates. And we had a neighbor who was very nice to us. And she loaned me her roller skates so I could learn how to roller skate. And so we couldn't afford a pair of roller skates even then. And but we were happy with what we had.

L. LORCH: We didn't know any different.

H. LORCH: We didn't know any different. And we didn't, we didn't have it. My uncle who was a rich person even then once a year on the high holidays took us and bought us a pair of shoes. I remember going through Klein shoe store—

L. LORCH: Just before Passover.

H. LORCH: Just, and buying the pair of shoes. And he [unclear] too me to New York to a manufacturer and bought me a suit and a shirt. And so once a year if we were lucky we got a pair shoes, new pair of shoes.

MATSEN: Now this is your uncle—

H. LORCH: My Uncle Adolph who sponsored us.

MATSEN: Okay. When you came over, I just didn't have, I don't think we talked of his name.

H. LORCH: No. Well, his name was Adolph. And he and his wife, actually his wife was the person behind everything.

MATSEN: And what was his business here?

H. LORCH: He was a manufacturer. A textile, he had a textile manufacturing business in, up in Hudson, New York, a good-sized one. He had up to, I would say, two hundred people working there. He used to make the, the floorboards, the felt floorboards and the glove compartments for Chevy and Pontiac motors.

L. LORCH: He started off making ironing board covers.

H. LORCH: Yeah. Well, he was still—

L. LORCH: [Unclear] underneath the cloth they used to have the felt.

H. LORCH: They're made out of felt. So he, as I said he employed my father because my father couldn't get a job anywhere. He had one arm. Who would hire him? So when he, he, he brought us. That's how we got up to Hudson because he got a job there in the factory working in the mill.

MATSEN: Now, Henry, you, did you go to school when you were in Germany?

H. LORCH: Yes. I went for three years.

MATSEN: Can you describe your school? What did it look like?

H. LORCH: Yeah, okay. The school was a, well, to use a word segregated school. It had a one building on one side and a, and a building on the other side with a large courtyard in the middle. And the right side was the boys' school and the left side was the girls' school. And at intermission we all gathered in the little courtyard there and we played together. But otherwise the school was segregated with boys and girls.

MATSEN: Do you remember any of your teachers?

H. LORCH: The only thing I remember, not of the teachers. I remember in kindergarten, I think I was one of the few people that quit kindergarten. Because I came home one day and I told my mother they pray too much. The kindergarten was run by nuns in this town and every

morning they prayed and it just wasn't my style. So when I came home I quit. I don't want to go back because they pray too much.

MATSEN: What did your mother say? Did she say go back to school?

H. LORCH: Oh yeah, sure. But as far as the teachers go in the public school, that I don't remember too much of. I still remember going to school. I remember—

MATSEN: Do you remember any of your friends that you went to school with as a child?

H. LORCH: No, no. I remember going, I remember going to kindergarten. And in first grade I was sent home. My sister took me home because I couldn't see. And I had to get fitted for glasses. So that I remember.

MATSEN: What subject did you like the best?

H. LORCH: In school? There, I don't know.

MATSEN: You don't, it was too, you were too young. Did you learn any English before you came to America?

H. LORCH: No, not a word, not a word of English. We came over here and none of us spoke English at all.

MATSEN: Your parents—

H. LORCH: No, none of us. But then I was, you know, [unclear] start school. I started in third grade. And I just sat there like a dumbbell. I went to school every day and just sat there. I didn't know what the teacher was writing on the blackboard. I didn't know what she was saying. For six months I just sat there. But she was very nice. She kept me after school. She gave me books to send home and to study like, you know, Tom, run Jerry and all those books. And within six months I was, I was left back naturally in the third grade because I couldn't do anything. And then slowly but surely, you know, the first words you learn naturally are swear words. That I remember. But after six months I was left back. But I was ready to be part of the community. And we all learned English. My, even my parents went to night school to study and to learn how to read and write English. Because in those days you couldn't get anywhere, you couldn't do anything, you couldn't vote, you couldn't become a citizen unless you could prove that you could read and write. So they went to school. And we, and my uncle was one of these types where no German books were allowed in the home. You speak English. You're in America now. You want to do like the Americans do. You speak English. You learn English. After that, you're on your own. I mean then, you can do what you want to. But until then, you know, you do what the natives do.

MATSEN: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about coming to America. Now I know we've talked vaguely about who sponsored you and who brought you here. But who decided to come to America and why?

H. LORCH: Well, okay—

L. LORCH: Hitler decided that.

H. LORCH: Hitler decided. My uncle who, who has been here since 1900, He left home when he was sixteen.

MATSEN: Why did he leave, do you know?

H. LORCH: I guess he just didn't like being home anymore. I don't know. I don't know the reason. I have no idea. But—

L. LORCH: He pursued a, I think he came here to go to school. And I think he became an accountant. And then he hooked up with a second or third cousin that he worked for that, that his parents had money and they owned, I think they owned that textile byproducts—

MATSEN: Now this is Adolph.

L. LORCH: This is Adolph, yeah. And he became partners with a fellow by the name of [unclear] Wiley. And Wiley's wife's parents had money that, I think, were invested in this. And it's—

MATSEN: How it started.

L. LORCH: From then he went on. Isn't that, isn't that what you understood, Henry?

H. LORCH: Yeah, right.

MATSEN: So for your family how did this all start?

H. LORCH: Well, the way I get the story, my uncle who wrote my father, he saw what was coming better than we saw what was coming.

MATSEN: Coming inside Germany?

L. LORCH: I think it was more my aunt than my uncle.

H. LORCH: Okay. Well, anyway, Yeah, okay.

L. LORCH: His wife, Adolph's wife.

H. LORCH: They, they were, As I said, the way I got the story was, they wrote my dad a letter, leave everything and come.

MATSEN: Now this was before 1934? How much—

H. LORCH: I have no idea how, how long before he wrote this letter or he talked to them. So my father, who had a business there, he had a house there. We even had a maid that took care of us children. I mean we weren't wealthy but we were comfortable. And my father he had the wisdom and I guess the guts to leave all that. He borrowed money from a, a relative who was in the banking business. And he borrowed money for

the passage. We sold our house for taxes. I mean Hitler was already pretty well entrenched. And we were still allowed to go to school. I still remember walking home from school one day and somebody from the second floor doused me with a pail of water and things like that. I mean little things that happened that I remember. And I still remember the kids in brown uniforms walking through the streets parading. But it wasn't that bad yet. But my father had the foresight, I guess the foresight, to see that what was coming. So he took my, his brother's advice and he left everything. Left the business to my, his brother, his stepbrother. Sold the house and borrowed money and that was it. I still remember going through Darmstadt in a large nine- passenger car twice to get the passports. The first time we couldn't. Then we had to go back. The whole family would pile into the car and off we went trying to get the passage going. And we got on a, a ship—

MATSEN: Do you remember the feeling within the family? Were people excited to go to America? Were they nervous, apprehensive?

H. LORCH: That I don't remember, no, no. I know they gave, they gave my, my folks a, I think, party. They gave them a set of dishes.

L. LORCH: That we, that we still use that we have left. My sister and I we split up the dishes, a set of twenty, they called it a tea set. And I still have the, the list of people that donated or gave towards that tea set, set of twenty-four with serving pieces.

H. LORCH: Rosenthal. Was it Rosenthal?

L.LORCH: Yeah.

H. LORCH: Rosenthal china.

L. LORCH: It was Bavarian china. And some of it was damaged in Europe. But that's—

MATSEN: That's wonderful to still have.

H. LORCH: Yeah. As I said, I don't remember the—

MATSEN: Do you remember how you felt? Were you excited or you were not wanting to leave your friends?

H. LORCH: I don't know if there was that much excitement. I really had no idea what really was going on. I had no concept of that. I remember getting on board ship. I remember being sick crossing the ocean. I remember the boat.

MATSEN: Do you remember this party, the goodbye party?

H. LORCH: No, no, I don't. I don't think we were invited. I don't think the kids were invited to the party.

MATSEN: How about luggage? Do you remember what you packed or took with you?

H. LORCH: Actually we took very little with us. We took just the bare necessities, clothing—

MATSEN: Was there anything special that you wanted to take with you?

H. LORCH: No, not that I know, no.

MATSEN: Okay. Well what port did you leave from?

H. LORCH: We went from Germany. We stopped overnight in Paris. Then from Paris we went to Cherbourg in France.

MATSEN: So you traveled by train?

H. LORCH: Yes. And I still remember being on the train. My uncle had given me a gold pocket watch as a going away present. And on the train going to Paris I became curious to see how the clock watch worked and I took it apart. [Laughs] I never got it back together again. And he also gave me a, I still have it., a catalogue with pictures in it that he had saved. Do you remember it?

MATSEN: Family pictures?

H. LORCH: No. You know the Raleigh coupons that they, the Raleigh pictures they used to have in back of Raleigh cigarettes.

L. LORCH: No, she's too young.

H. LORCH: Oh, you're too young to remember that. Well Raleigh cigarettes used to have pictures in the back of each package. And in Germany they had a cigarette where they had modes of dresses of period and customs and things like that. And he collected all of these and he filled up a catalogue.

MATSEN: And he gave that to you as a present?

H. LORCH: And he gave that to me as a present.

MATSEN: Before you left. What was the name of your ship?

H. LORCH: Aquitania.

MATSEN: What do you remember about that ship? Can you describe when you first saw it?

H. LORCH: Being sick.

MATSEN: What did it look like?

H. LORCH: I was very [unclear]. It was a four-stacker. It was a Cunard line, four-stacker. And I remember we're being in the room it was very noisy. I guess we must have been right next to the motor. It must have been the cheapest room on board.

MATSEN: Where, do you remember where you stayed? Was this in a first class, second class, steerage—

H. LORCH: Oh, no, no, no, believe me. Maybe, probably the lowest class available. I really don't know. But I, all I remember is hearing that thumping noise with the motors. And being sick.

MATSEN: And where did you sleep? Do you remember your room or—

H. LORCH: No. That I don't remember. No.

MATSEN: Do you remember how you felt?

H. LORCH: I remember how I felt. And I remember the boat, you know, being on top, on deck. And we have pictures of my father holding him up with one arm.

MATSEN: Do you remember the weather? Do you remember how, whether it was cold or warm or—

L. LORCH: It must have been cold for what the clothes they were wearing on the ship.

H. LORCH: Well, in those days you didn't dress the way you dress today. You, you put on a suit when you got up in the morning. Like dad, you know, he put on a suit and a tie, and that's how you, You went to eat and—

MATSEN: Do you remember what you ate on the boat? You were sick but—

H. LORCH: No, no. I ate very little, [Laughs]

L. LORCH: Gave it all back.

MATSEN: Do you remember the dining room where you went to eat?

H. LORCH: No, just a large place where they had lots of tables and chairs.

MATSEN: Do you remember meeting anyone on the boat, small children or—

H. LORCH: No, no.

MATSEN: No? You didn't make any friends while you were—

H. LORCH: No, no, none at all.

MATSEN: Do you remember landing?

H. LORCH: Yes. At Ellis Island—

MATSEN: Can you describe that for me?

H. LORCH: A lot of people. A lot of people being herded into a very large room and just sitting on benches. That's about the—

MATSEN: Statue of Liberty, do you remember seeing the statue?

H. LORCH: Yeah, well, yeah. That's when everybody was screaming and hollering. And everybody ran up the, on the deck to see what was going on—

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

MATSEN: How long did you stay at Ellis Island?

H. LORCH: Actually we stayed overnight. They kept us there overnight because of dad's arm. They felt that if he, in those days if you couldn't prove that you had a job or weren't being sponsored by someone you just, you just weren't allowed in. I mean the, the country didn't want any responsibility. I mean, you know, there was no freebies. So we had to stay overnight. We had to stay overnight. And we were afraid they were going to ship us back.

MATSEN: Now how did your father prove that he had—

H. LORCH: Well, my uncle came. I don't know what arrangements he made. But my uncle came with, I don't know what, with money or whatever it was to prove that he was going to be, that he had a house and that he was going to get a job. And but he bailed us out the next day.

MATSEN: Do you remember where you slept at Ellis Island?

H. LORCH: No. That I don't remember.

MATSEN: Do you remember eating at Ellis Island?

H. LORCH: No. I don't.

MATSEN: What--? Tell me what you remember about this place? If it's a feeling, if it's a—

H. LORCH: Feeling for an eight-year old? Just clinging to your parents, not knowing what was going on—

MATSEN: Lots of people.

H. LORCH: And lots of people all around. And I guess they didn't know what was going on. We just sat there and waited, I guess, for our names to be called. And to be written out or written down or being interviewed or whatever they do there. But just, I was just sitting there not being able to do anything.

MATSEN: Were you examined medically, do you remember that?

H. LORCH: No. I don't think so.

MATSEN: Do you remember your father being taken off or—

H. LORCH: That's, not taken off but he probably was examined. I, I'm not sure. I couldn't vouch for that.

MATSEN: So you were detained there one night and then you left the next morning.

H. LORCH: Yes. Correct. Yes.

MATSEN: And it was your uncle who came to meet you?

H. LORCH: Yes. He took us to his apartment in New York.

MATSEN: How did you leave Ellis Island? How did you get—

H. LORCH: By car.

MATSEN: Okay. So he had a car.

H. LORCH: He had a car. And he took us to his apartment. He lived on 79<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side right by the park.

L. LORCH: At 171 West [unclear].

H. LORCH: And we stayed—

MATSEN: Do you remember what it looked like, the apartment?

H. LORCH: Yeah, yeah. It had an elevator with a, with a doorman. And when you walked in there was a small hall and you walked into a living room. To the left was a dining room and a kitchen. And I still remember he sitting there while we're eating. And under the rug by his foot he had a, under the rug he had a bell, a bell. He used to ring the bell for the maid to come out and serve you.

MATSEN: So he was a pretty wealthy man to be in New York at this point.

H. LORCH: Yes, he was, he was. And we stayed there for a week. And then he drove us up to Hudson.

MATSEN: Well there was enough room for all of you to stay?

H. LORCH: Well, one slept on the couch, one slept on the cot and, you know. So we slept all over the place. And he took us up to Hudson and he had a—

MATSEN: And that's when you had your house.

H. LORCH: He already had a house rented for us in a make shift, he bought it. Somebody donated a couch and somebody donated a kitchen table. Somebody donated chairs. So we had a make shift house but it was livable. And that's where we moved in. It was a great house.

L. LORCH: I'd love to have that house now.

MATSEN: Now who are these people, Louis, who came to stay with you? Do you remember?

L. LORCH: Oh yeah. I remember.

MATSEN: Okay. Well tell me a little bit about them. Who were these people and—

L. LORCH: You know—

MATSEN: Were they relatives? Were they friends?

L. LORCH: They were relatives. They were, they were relatives of, one was a second cousin, third cousin, sister of my mother.

H. LORCH: Who stayed for a year?

L. LORCH: Who stayed for many years. All's I can remember about these people is they were arrogant and I really didn't care too much for them. They treated my mother like a maid.

MATSEN: Now these were people coming from Germany who were staying with you and getting a house of their own eventually?

L. LORCH: Right.

MATSEN: Surprised. Where, why do you—

L. LORCH: Surprised at how they acted?

MATSEN: Yes. Why do you think they're—

L. LORCH: Because they thought they had it coming to them. Most, you've got to, you've got to realize that even my, our folks, from what I was told that in Germany my mother had a housekeeper that came in and took care of the kids. And over here she became the housekeeper and took care of the kids. So these people that came from Germany expected this kind of a treatment. They expected to be taken care of. I remember one, a brother-in-law of my uncle that did not stay with us but ate with us, was a boarder. And he came over for breakfast. And my mother had to make him lunch that he took to work with him. And then he came back for dinner. My aunt, who's my mother's sister, used to—

MATSEN: What was her name?

L. LORCH: Julia, Julia Hirsch. If you interviewed, If you interviewed my sister you probably heard about Julia. [Laughter] And I can still remember that they used to have the bedroom upstairs and walk in with their boots in the wintertime. And they would never take off their rubber shoes or boots or, just walk through the house. They were arrogant. I, I just, I, I didn't have too much use for them or care for them that much.

MATSEN: Do you remember them bringing stories about what was happening in Germany back to you?

L. LORCH: No, I don't.

MATSEN: Do you remember?

H. LORCH: Well, the one thing when one of our cousins came over that they were not allowed to go to public schools anymore.

MATSEN: I can imagine things are getting progressively worse.

H. LORCH: Oh, yes, definitely. But the thing, the good thing about this was, my uncle and his wife brought everyone over from our side of the family and from my mother's side of the family. None of us were left back. He brought everyone over.

MATSEN: Sounds like his last name should be Schindler.

H. LORCH: Yes. He was better than Schindler. He was much better. He brought everybody over. And he brought not only our side of the family and my mother's side of the family but strangers who used to ring his doorbell years later and say, Mr. Lorch, you don't know me but this is what happened.

L. LORCH: There is a story to this also that I [unclear] bringing this up at this point. We were at my cousin's place that she lives upstate New York. And

we saw files where my aunt and uncle had brought people over and finally got a letter from President Roosevelt saying he's not allowed to bring anymore people over, not allowed to sponsor any more people. Asked him to stop and he was not allowed to sponsor any more people. That he had to give it up. And this was in 1939 I believe, he got the letter.

H. LORCH: Oh yeah, hundreds of, he sponsored—

MATSEN: What was the reason that he would get a letter like that, can you speculate?

H. LORCH: No, he was, he was bringing too many people. Not too many people but—

L. LORCH: [Unclear] From what we hear now of President Roosevelt, yes, I can speculate.

MATSEN: Okay.

L. LORCH: Because President Roosevelt was the savior supposedly of all the foreigners and all the, especially the, the Jews that came over. And from what we hear now that President Roosevelt wasn't such a nice guy.

MATSEN: That was the image but maybe it isn't very truthful.

L. LORCH: From what happened with the ship Exodus, was it Exodus? Ship Liberty, I'm sorry. Ship Liberty that he sent back to Germany that one of our last survivors from Dieburg was on that ship, Jewish survivors from Dieburg was on that ship. And Roosevelt would not accept that ship. And it was sent back to Germany and everybody was gassed. So that's, I just wanted to put that in there that that letter is available. And I can give you the name and address where you could find that letter if you so wish.

MATSEN: Okay. Thank you. When you came to this country do you remember any kind of bigotry or persecution in this country when you got to America?

H. LORCH: Oh yeah.

L. LORCH: Oh, God, yeah.

H. LORCH: First of all, the first thing I remember was my aunt who was very good in one way—

MATSEN: This is Julia?

H. LORCH: No, no my aunt who brought us over here, Adolph's wife.

MATSEN: What was her name?

L. LORCH: I'll think of it in a minute.

MATSEN: Okay. Whenever you think of it just—

H. LORCH: She was very good in one way and in another way she was, I thought she was very mean. But she was high society. And—

L. LORCH: She also treated my mother like a maid and not like a sister-in-law.

H. LORCH: And I remember when we first came to Hudson it was early afternoon. We drove up. We all came into the house all in awe that a stranger and didn't know a word of English. And the first thing she did was take us four children, shove us out of the house and lock the door. You can't come in. Your mother has work to do. We have work to do. You stay out. And she locked the door and wouldn't let us in. And we sat on the front lawn of the house, all four of us, and, you know, just looked around. Cars going by, people going by, you know. We had no idea where we were, what was expected of us. And we couldn't talk, we couldn't even say thank you in English. We didn't know, that's how stupid we were. And finally at suppertime she finally let us in. And that's the first thing I remember about America. [Laughs]

L. LORCH: But there was, there was a lot of discrimination going on.

H. LORCH: Oh yes, definitely.

L. LORCH: Nobody could understand when I was going to school [unclear] finally went to school. Nobody could, nobody could fathom or understand that you could be a German Jew.

H. LORCH: You were either or.

L. LORCH: You'd be either German or Jewish. There was no—

H. LORCH: Which are you?

L. LORCH: Which are you, German or Jewish?

MATSEN: I think that still is a perception sometimes when they don't have a historical background or, or don't know.

L. LORCH: Ignorance. But that's, and, and there was a lot of discrimination, a lot of, I can remember walking home from synagogue with my dad that the kids from St. Mary's used to sit on the front stoop in front of a drugstore and holler names out. And throw things at us and these kind of things. It was a lot of discrimination going on. Jews could not, back then Jews, the banks and insurance companies wouldn't hire the Jews. That's why it is today you see the salespeople, the sales force of insurance companies are Jewish. And the people in the, in the upper echelon are not, very few Jews are in the upper echelon of insurance companies. So, and banks the same way. So that, that was large department stores just—

H. LORCH: Well, engineers couldn't, couldn't get a, couldn't get a job. I know my cousin had to join the army as a civilian. He was an engineer because he couldn't get a job on the outside. Well, you know, but you get that in all walks of life I'd say.

L. LORCH: My sister was left out of college because of a Jewish quota. She wanted to go to college. Imagine.

MATSEN: And they had a quota for how many Jews they would accept?

L. LORCH: They had a quota for Jews. That's right. So when it was good to be a, when it was bad to be minority we were a minority. Now it's good to be a minority. We're left out of it.

[Laughter]

MATSEN: Sounds like a catch-22.

L. LORCH: Yeah. But anyway it was, it was, we were a minority and we were treated as such.

MATSEN: Henry, what was your first job when you were in America, got through school.

H. LORCH: Well, actually I got a job while going to school. I got a job in the grocery store.

L. LORCH: First job was delivering papers.

H. LORCH: Oh yeah. I bought, I bought a paper route.

L. LORCH: I know that because I bought it from him after.

H. LORCH: I bought a paper route with, remember those little red wagons that they had with the sides on it? Okay. I bought a route and I delivered Sunday papers. Made two and a half, three dollars on a Sunday morning. That was big money. And then I sold it for ten dollars.

L. LORCH: To me.

H. LORCH: To him. But it was, you know, getting up early in the morning. It took maybe three hours to push, pull my wagon through town and deliver papers. And in high school I got a job in a grocery store working from three to six in the afternoon and from eight in the morning till ten at night on Saturdays for five dollars a week. And then during the summer I worked all days and Saturdays and I got eight dollars a week. Then when I quit that job I got a job in the shoe store selling shoes. And until I got into service, which was, the war was almost over when I got into service. So I didn't see any action.

MATSEN: Were you in the army or the—

H. LORCH: I was in the air corps.

MATSEN: Okay, in the air force.

H. LORCH: And I got, eventually I got stationed in California on March Field. That's how I got to know California. And then when I got back to the States when I got married I always, I constantly told him about California. Well he came out first. And finally after twenty-five years I decided—

MATSEN: And you were living in New York?

H. LORCH: I was living in New York. I got into the retail business with my father-in-law.

MATSEN: What were you selling?

H. LORCH: I had a tobacco shop, pipe shop, tobacco and—

MATSEN: And that was in Hudson, New York?

H. LORCH: No. That was in Long Island.

MATSEN: Long Island, okay.

H. LORCH: I, I left, after I got out of service I left, I came back to Hudson for a little while. Then I left Hudson and went to New York and I got a job in a bank as a teller for Manufacturers' Trust Company. And that was, and

I just stayed in New York and I got married and went into the retail business. Here comes the bus.

MATSEN: We're going to pause this tape for just a second.

[Recording is turned off and then back on.]

MATSEN: Okay. We're back with Mr. Henry Lorch and Louis Lorch discussing the careers of Mr. Henry Lorch.

H. LORCH: And so I got into the retail business, tobacco business. And I was, we had the store for approximately twenty-two years when one year I decided to come to California for a visit. And my family liked it so much we came the second year for a visit. And when we got back we decided that the town we were in, Hempstead, Long Island, was going downhill. We decided it was time to move on so—

MATSEN: Now you were stationed out here, too. Was this after that or—

H. LORCH: No, no, no. I was stationed here while I was in service when I was nineteen years old.

MATSEN: So that was much earlier. So you'd been to California before.

H. LORCH: Yeah. Yeah. I was, that was before I was married. I was stationed out here in March Field.

MATSEN: Now when did you get married?

H. LORCH: When I was about twenty-three, twenty-three.

MATSEN: And your wife's name.

H. LORCH: Joyce. And she passed away in '86. Married what twenty, thirty-seven years, thirty-six, thirty-seven years.

MATSEN: Do you have any children?

H. LORCH: Yes, I have four children. I have three boys—

MATSEN: Can you give me their names?

H. LORCH: Three boys and one girl. The girl is first. Her name is Ellen. Then came Bruce David. Then came Scott and then came Gary. My daughter is a housewife. Son number one is in the computer business. Son number two is in the insurance business. Son number three is a lawyer.

MATSEN: Very successful children.

H. LORCH: Well, yes and no. I mean right now the one that's worked for, is in the computer business, he's been working for Digital for twenty years and he just got laid off. They cut him back and everything else so he's out

looking for work. The one in the insurance business he's, pretty, doing very well for himself. And the lawyer is, is doing all right, too.

MATSEN: That's good. Now back to your career. When you came to California—

H. LORCH: I, I came to California on not so much on my own. When I, when I came for a visit my brother kept nudging me and pestering me. Why don't you come out? Why don't you move out here? Why don't you come out here? There was nobody out here. Why don't you come out here? So one day he called me up and he says how would you like to open up a store. I said all right. He said why don't you come out. I get leases for you. So I flew out one Sunday morning. He showed me a store, an empty store. He says, hey, this would be ideal for you. I says I can't run it. I'm in New York. He says, I'll take care of it. So I signed a lease and flew back the same night. And he and his mother-in-law, who used to be in the same business, opened up the store, got it ready and put a girl in that he knew and ran the business. And they had it for about a year, year and a half when I decided to move out here. I sold the business and I came out here. And they took me around to about six, seven months before I found something. The place down by the, that he had opened up, was still being run by the girl but it was too small for me and it wasn't making that much of, I couldn't make a living with that. So I sold that. And he got me, through a friend of his, got me another lease in a larger place in Westwood. So I opened that up, a gift shop, in Westwood. And I ran that for fifteen years. In the meantime, I also had another store that I

opened up that my family ran. And I also bought a new route that serviced 7-11's and AM/PM stores that my son wanted. So he ran that while he was going to school at night. He ran that during the day to give him something to do. And about five, six years ago I finally, my wife passed away. And I ran the store another year. And I said, what for? The kids are grown up. I'm all by myself. I don't need the business anymore. I'll go to social security. And I sold the store. And that's it.

MATSEN: Now your brother—

H. LORCH: That's another story.

MATSEN: I'm going to ask you some, some other questions about you came to California. You were here before your brother.

L. LORCH: Yes.

MATSEN: And what you're doing and, and maybe a little bit about your family.

L. LORCH: Well, I have a, I was married in 1957 to a lovely lady by the name of June. And we had two children, Wayne David, who is a CPA, works for an appraisal firm. That's the younger son. And then Stewart Allen is my older son who is a partner with me in business. And he has two lovely children. I came out to California as kind of a—

H. LORCH: A lark.

L. LORCH: A lark. I was, I just bragged about coming to California. A cousin of mine said, anytime you want to come to California, I had just gotten out of the service in 1954. Contact me, I'll have a job for you and so on and so forth. And sure enough, I contacted him, never heard from him. And I was bragging to all my friends hanging around, you know, the bars or wherever it is. You know you hang the guys and I'm going to California. [Unclear] And I never heard from him. I finally took off. A friend of mine and I drove to California and ended up in Los Angeles and stayed in Los Angeles. Got a job at General Motors on the assembly line in 1955, worked the night shift. And from there, I couldn't get a leave of absence to back to get engaged to June. She was in Brooklyn. So I quit that job and went back and got engaged and came back out here and drove a truck delivering wholesale groceries for my sister's sister-in-law, Maggie's sister-in-law. And then did that for a while and hurt my back. And had a back injury and couldn't find any work. I was out of work for about ten weeks. And finally went and got a job as a claims' adjuster because of my experience working before I came to California at a body shop. And they thought I had experience with automobiles. So I went to work as a claims' adjuster. And then went to another company and got a broader field of claims' adjusting. In 1964 left that field and became a solicitor working, an agent, an insurance agent working for a couple of guys. And did that off and on. And in 1974 opened up the business I have now in its present form. And we have an insurance brokerage. And we employ several other people. My wife is my controller. My son is my right hand, sometimes both hands. And we're surviving.

And our business is in Chatsworth. So I've done a little bit of everything. And that's where we're at now.

MATSEN: Are you happy that you came to America? I'll throw this question out to either one of you.

H. LORCH: Of course we're happy. We're alive.

L. LORCH: Yeah. We, we—

H. LORCH: We wouldn't have been, we wouldn't be alive today if we didn't leave.

L. LORCH: I always, you know, I always when I look at, when I look at what's happened over there, when I see the picture "Schindler's List" as you mentioned—

H. LORCH: And visiting there, also.

L. LORCH: And I don't know if you've, have you ever seen "Schindler's List"?

H. LORCH: Yes.

L. LORCH: The scene in there where they take that fantastic worker, the guy that was real productive with one arm.

MATSEN: Right. Right.

L. LORCH: Took him out and shot him. That, that, that, that portion, that, that scene hit me I think between the eyes. I mean dead between the eyes. Just, I just couldn't handle that. And there all but for the grace of God there go I. You know, there goes my dad, whatever. And it wouldn't have been any different.

MATSEN: Okay. Well, I want to thank you both for agreeing to do this and, and for being in the same place so that we could do this as a joint interview. Thank you for talking to me about your experiences. And this is Elysa Matsen. I'm signing off with Mr. Henry and Mr. Louis Lorch on September 11<sup>th</sup> 1994 for the Ellis Island Oral History project.

L. LORCH: Thank you.

H. LORCH: Thank you very much for coming.

END OF INTERVIEW