

**EI-831**

**HELENE PAUL**

**BIRTHDATE: NOVEMBER 16, 1913**

**INTERVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 1996**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 83**

**RUNNING TIME: 46:30**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: BEDFORD, NH**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: ALECIA BARBOUR**

**GERMANY, 1928**

**AGE: 15**

**SHIP: THE DRESDEN**

**RESIDENCES:**

- **GERMANY: BREMEN**
- **THE US: MANCHESTER, NH**

LEVINE: This is November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996. I'm here in Bedford, New Hampshire with Mrs. Helene Paul who came from Germany in 1928 at the age of fifteen, not quite sixteen.

PAUL: Right.

LEVINE: Today is November 30<sup>th</sup> and Mrs. Paul is eighty-three years of age at the time of this interview. Okay, well, if you would repeat again for the tape your birth date and where in Germany you were born.

PAUL: I was born in Bremen, Germany on November the 16<sup>th</sup>, 1913.

LEVINE: And did you stay in Bremen up until you left—

PAUL: Yes.

LEVINE: For the United States.

PAUL: Yes.

LEVINE: And did—what was your mother's name?

PAUL: Maria.

LEVINE: And her maiden name?

PAUL: Hagemeyer.

LEVINE: Maybe you could spell that, please?

PAUL: H-A-G-E-M-E-Y-E-R.

LEVINE: Okay, and your father's name?

PAUL: Schröder, Herman.

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

PAUL: Yes. Two brothers, Herman and four sisters, Anna, Wilma, Dorothy, Frieda and myself.

LEVINE: And they were all born in Germany?

PAUL: Yes.

LEVINE: And how about grandparents, did you—

PAUL: I only knew my father's father. My mother lost her parents at a very young age, so we never met her parents, but I met my grand—grandfather on my father's side.

LEVINE: And do you have memories of him in Germany?

PAUL: Very faintly. We did visit once in a while back and forth, but not too often.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: Because my father was in the tailor business. He had started his own business there as a master tailor.

LEVINE: Oh. So now does that mean he had apprenticed and—

PAUL: Oh, yes, he had quite a few apprentices.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, and he had—did he have a shop or how did he—

PAUL: He had—he had a shop where the men worked in the store where he sold material for the suits, also. And he had customers like the American Consul was a very good customer of my father, and after he left Germany, my father would make suits for him and send him to America yet. So he was very, very well known all over the city.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So he probably was pretty comfortable as far as—

PAUL: Yes.

LEVINE: As his finances.

PAUL: We were—yeah, he was comfortable. Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, did you go to school? And what school did you go to?

PAUL: Just—just as far as grammar school. Just until the age of fourteen.

LEVINE: Okay.

PAUL: My father—one of our—my sisters went to what they called at that time the lyceum, the girls, and she did not want to go back for the simple reason that she didn't like the girls that went there. So higher echelon, you know. In Germany the class was very—very—absolutely separate. Like the men, the young men that worked for my father were in no way allowed to even talk with me or if we went a fair that we'd be together yet, it was just, "Oh, no, that's the boss's daughter," you know, even though I was dying to have a dance or something with them. [Laughs] But that was just a taboo. So I went to work for a farmer outside of Bremen as a nursemaid, and they had a store, a post office, a big pig farm, which was as modern as anything is today. Running water all the time. And also a restaurant. So I was there for not very long because my mother found out that I did—I was only supposed to take care of the baby, but my mother found out that I had to get up early in the morning and do the laundry. Help with the laundry and everything, and said, "This is not the reason why I sent my daughter here." So then—

LEVINE: Was that typical of what a girl would do? I mean once they graduated?

PAUL: Mostly they went into be—to become—my—my sister Dorothy that died, she went to Bremen to be a—a secretary, but most of the girl went into

either sales girls or—the education for women was not—didn't seem to be very important in those days. But my mother was very much enthralled by America. She just thought it was fabulous that, you know, anybody could to America. So my oldest, older sister who lives in Virginia came over first and she went to work for the Dusbergs who are—were from the IG Paint Company and the Bayer Company. The company that originally Bayer aspirins, and she was a governess for their two children. So then my sister Dorothy, who was a year older than I, she also came over, and then I said to my mother, "Well, if Dorothy's over there, I want to go, too," and she said, "Why? You're always fighting." I said, "I know, but if she's over there, I want to go, too." So my mother applied for me to get permission to come to America.

LEVINE: Do you remember why your mother thought it was so wonderful and what you knew about it—

PAUL: She—she just—

LEVINE: Before you came.

PAUL: Whatever—she was a very avid reader and anything, you know—I mean the fabulous things that you could—you must remember that this was after the First World War, and things were very down and poor in Germany. And America had all these fabulous things, you know.

LEVINE: Like what kinds of things would you have thought of in Germany?

PAUL: Arts. Art and concert. My mother was—loved operas. She loved the movies. She—every Sunday, if she could, she would go to the theater and have a special seat at the theater, and if she would go on Sunday, we would have go and say, "You don't have to save the seat for Mrs.

Schröder, she's not coming tonight." She loved all kinds of art. She was very—and very—all kinds of literature. Anything that—and, of course, she was crazy about the Queen and King of England, which we didn't have any more at that time. So it was just she had a deep love for America.

LEVINE: Hmm. Hmm.

PAUL: So I said, "But I'll be back in two years." So I went. I came into New York. My—a cousin of my brother-in-law had sponsored me.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: So then I went to work for—

LEVINE: Well, tell first about—about leaving and—

PAUL: I had a wonderful feeling when I got onboard ships because I lived directly on the river, you know, and I mean I saw all these big ocean liners and so on. So I was enthralled it, and being on—going on a ship was just a fabulous thing to do. We watched all these large freighters and luxury liners being christened there and so it was something I've—"Yeah, I'd like to do that. I want to go." So my mother said, "Well, all my children?" I said, "Mother, I'll be back in two years."

LEVINE: You really thought that? You really thought you would?

PAUL: Yes, I had promised her, but—you know, but I did immigrate because I had to have a job. So you can't—to come to America and not immigrate, you can't work here. Couldn't in those days, so I immigrated and after two years I—my sister said—I was taking—I'm running away. My sister

Dorothy who was a year older than I became very ill and she had a doctor that asked her, “Wouldn’t you—would you know of a German girl that would be willing to come and take care of my children?” and she said, “No, I really don’t know any,” but she said, “my sister’s coming in October, but she can’t go to work until she’s sixteen.” So I went to continuation school at night and during the day I worked in the department store with the daughter of my cousin there. And then I went to work for this doctor, who could not speak German and I could not speak English, and I took care of his children.

LEVINE: What was that like?

PAUL: It was—he was affiliated with the hospital, so she told me, “Now, if the phone rings, all my friends—I’ve told all my friends that I’m going to have a German girl taking care of the children, but just if she answers, just”—she told me, said, “The doctor’s at the hospital.” So I said, “Hello, the doctor’s at the hospital,” and hung up. And so I didn’t have any problems. I went out with the children and we played and they didn’t know what I was saying, I didn’t know what they were saying, but we had a glorious time, you know. It was November by that time, so we—I stayed there for quite a few months and then I went—I got a position a little further out in a nicer place of—it’s called Valley Stream, outside of New York. I went to work there.

LEVINE: On Long Island?

PAUL: Yeah, uh-hmm, and—and I worked—stayed there for, oh, about eight months. The salary was not too bad because you didn’t need much. We had every other Sunday off and every Thursday afternoon.

LEVINE: What would you do on your time off?

PAUL: We would meet my sister—my older sister, that one that’s still alive in Virginia, had met a very good group on her voyage over and they all settled in New York, and so we met different ones on Thursday afternoons. We went to the Metropolitan Opera. We went to the Carnegie Hall, which was not in existence then, but a beautiful—we went everywhere. We did everything. We went to 86<sup>th</sup> Street where all the German dances were. We had a fabulous time.

LEVINE: Hmm.

PAUL: But then she said, ‘You know, you are so good with children, I think you’re two years are up and you’re going back and I think you ought to go to school and become a’—you know—

LEVINE: A childcare worker or—

PAUL: Yes. You know, like a governess.

LEVINE: Yeah, sure.

PAUL: So I did go back and when I came to—back to Germany, I said to my mother, “I can’t stay here. I can’t.”

LEVINE: Why did you say that?

PAUL: “I cannot stay here.” I said, “I’ve been gone two years and I think all my classmates are in the very same position they were when I left.” I said, “I just can’t stay here.” So I said to my father, “You have to buy me another ticket to go back to New York,” and then of course I had met

Herbert onboard ship. He—I left New York and Herbert got onboard in Boston. So—

LEVINE: Did you think you were going to be serious with Herbert?

PAUL: Not at—not really at that—not really that—that much, you know. We had a wonderful time. We were a marvelous group onboard ship, you know, and of course coming into New York Harbor is just a great experience. You see there's the Lady. That's—and the first thing was the Lady that impressed me, and then the dirt. Ha, how can New York be this dirty? [unclear] But then, you know, after we got into a taxi and I don't know where my sisters took me, and after that I just—everybody said "She acts as though she's been here all her life." I just flowed right into it. I loved every minute of it, you know. So—

LEVINE: How about learning the language? What was that like for you?

PAUL: This group that my sister was with, they did not allow any German to be spoken most of the time. And, of course, if they did speak German, then I said, "They're talking about me," and then all of a sudden said, "Gee, why couldn't I understand that before?" All of a sudden it's just like—and we went to the movies and that helped a lot because when you see the action and you can know. It didn't take—take too long before I could speak English.

LEVINE: Do you remember the—the sort of popular either movies or music at that time in New York?

PAUL: Not particularly, no. Really, I can't.

LEVINE: Would you go to dances?

PAUL: Oh, yes. Uh-huh, but mostly we went to the German halls and there was all the German music that we liked. Now—even now when we are together with Germans, they are amazed that we can sing all these old songs that Hitler forbid and so on, you know. They're no longer allowed to sing. So everywhere we went, we sang and we went to a lot of theater in New York.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-huh.

PAUL: Some German artists. One of the greatest German singers, she sang every Christmas Eve, "Silent night, Holy night," in German. It's still going on when Herbert and I were married. So we had a marvelous time.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: We really did, but I just couldn't stay there.

LEVINE: Now, did—was—was your feeling to maintain your German ways and German connections or was—was part of the feeling to become Americanized? Or how did you—

PAUL: No, I just—I just had to go back where people had more freedom. Where people were not—no, I was a nursemaid and people accepted that. It didn't make any difference what we did, you know, whereas in Germany—and then the poor girls that I graduated with, they—they didn't have any jobs. It was just—so I just felt I—I felt that better here in America.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

PAUL: And then of course after I met Herbert, we got engaged in Germany.

LEVINE: Oh, you got engaged in Germany?

PAUL: Yeah, uh-hmm. Bought me my engagement ring and my father thought he was absolutely out of his mind, because my father—

LEVINE: [Laughs] Why did he think he was out of his mind?

PAUL: Well, because—

LEVINE: He just met you?

PAUL: No, because, you know, he bought me a diamond ring and my father couldn't see that he should spend his money on a diamond ring. My father—my father didn't even think we should get engaged. So we did, you know. He just—I said, "Ask him if, you know"—he said—he—we went dancing in one of the beautiful hotels on the river and then he said—he didn't ask me if I would marry him, he just said to me, "You wouldn't marry me anyway, would you, huh?" [Laughs]

LEVINE: [Laughs]

PAUL: So I had a ring on and I just turned it around like that, see. So then we got engaged and we had a—my father said, "No!" I said, "Well, do him the courtesy and ask him," and he said, "No, I can't give you any money," and Herbert said, "Well, Mr. Schröder, I'm not asking for your money. I'm asking for your daughter." My father had quite a bit of money, but he had loaned it all out to different people that—mortgages and so on, you know. Then he lost it all. So we did get engaged and then Herbert had visited some friends in Northern Germany and on his

way back to his home town, he stopped over in Bremen and met my parents and my sisters and my brothers that were there and everybody. My mother said right off, "Don't let him go. He's a wonderful person, you know." So—and it turned out he is. So then we was—I was—I went to New York State and I thought I was going to work there, but then we both—we got lonesome, you know, and he wrote to my sister and my sister came, said, "Well, if you're really going to get married, why wait?" So I—we packed up. I packed up my stuff that I had in New York. My sister and I had had an apartment. I started to become a beautician then in New York, but I ran out of money, so I didn't get vary far. And then, well, we—

LEVINE: Where were you living in New York with your sister?

PAUL: Ah, at the time that I—I lived with my sister, we had an apartment in the Bronx. Somewhere in the Bronx. We both went to beauty school then. The one that--Dorothy that passed away.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

PAUL: And then she went to Philadelphia and worked for Strawbridge Clothier.

LEVINE: Oh,

PAUL: And then I decided, well, I might as well—oh, I was a manicurist. Massaging and manicuring and shampooing, that's as far as I got. Then I had no more money. [Laughs]

LEVINE: So you got on a train and came to Manchester?

PAUL: No, on a bus.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: And the bus had a flat tire and it was a beautiful ride coming up from New York to Manchester because I never had been out of Staten—Staten Island and Fire Island and so, but not really anywhere else, you know. So I thought it was just beautiful, the drive up here. It was beautiful weather in April, and then the bus broke down and we didn't get to Boston in time and Herbert and his brother was there to pick me up and they went, "All the busses are in and she's not here." So I—the bus driver that was on the bus, he said, "Well, I've gone to every bus station where we stop and there's nobody here," but one lady on the counter said, "There were two young men here. They were looking for a young lady. Could that have been you?" I said, "I don't know, but did they tell you their names?" Said, "No, but they were looking for." Well, anyway, it was me so the bus driver said to me, "Have you got any money?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I'll take you to the YWCA," and he was very nice. You know, I mean in those days you—he took me there and he went in with me and he said "This young lady has to go to Manchester and would you send a night letter for her to this address?" And the lady at the YW, she said, "Sure, I'll be happy to." But then—the letter never got here. So when I got to Manchester, I had no Herbert.

LEVINE: Oh, dear, what did you—how—you must have felt terrible.

PAUL: Well, you know, when you're young, I mean, you can handle almost anything, you know. So I asked somebody, "How do I get to Blaine Street?" and the bus driver said, "Well, you go here to Elm Street and then ask the—watch for the bus that says 'on west side,' or whatever it was," and I asked the bus driver, "Would you please let me off on Main Street?" and he said, "Sure." So then I got off with my suitcase and I

walked to where he was living, and the bell wasn't working. So I sat on the front porch on my suitcase and rang the bell and rang the bell and I said, "Gee, there's got to be somebody here. He knows I'm coming." So then I went—the house was kind of slanted. I walked down the—past that kitchen window and the mother and—and one of her daughters was in there. "There she is!" So when I got in, she said, "Quick, hide." Because he'd gone over to pick me up at the Carpenter (ph) and then I wasn't at the Carpenter hotel anymore. So then she said, "Well, is she here?" And Herbert said, "No, she isn't here. I don't know where she is." "Well, go in the bedroom and hang up your coat," and I was hiding behind the door. [Laughs] So we did find each other.

LEVINE: So then what did you do? You—did you get married then right away?

PAUL: Eh, huh. Uh-hmm, in his brother's house.

LEVINE: And was it a German wedding?

PAUL: Yes, by a German minister.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: The last—one of the—not quite the last one, but you know, there was one of the churches, the Presbyterian Church was German and his brother and his sister-in-law, they belonged there, so that's where we got married.

LEVINE: Were you raised Catholic or Protestant?

PAUL: Protestant. Lutheran. Actually Lutheran, yeah. North Germany is all Luther—Protestants.

LEVINE: Now, how would you—what was it about the wedding that was German in character?

PAUL: Actually, it wasn't because it was done in the living room. I—I only attended one wedding in Germany, my older sister and it was beautiful. You know, the church was decorated and she was—and a carriage and horses picked her up in front of the house and took her. The church was only a little ways up the street. And that's the only wedding I ever attended in Germany and she wore a bridal dress, and—but one thing I remember about the wedding is the bride had to dance and we would rip her veil. She—everybody that—that was there, got a piece of her veil. That's—they didn't save the veils in Germany. At least not at my sister's wedding. Of course, I was very young yet. I only was junior bridesmaid. My mother had made me a beautiful raw silk dress, pinkish white. Oh, I felt like a princess. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Was your mother a good—good seamstress? Did she make your clothing?

PAUL: Ahh, you should have seen the dresses. White voile embroidered on the sleeves, on the collar, around the bottom and many people said, "Mrs. Schröder, with all those girls, how beautiful they look every Sunday," because we went down to the river into the beautiful hotel garden and had coffee there, and when we went to church, we had these big white bows. Of course, I always lost mine and I blamed my older sister. But we always—my mother was a beautiful seamstress. Could do—she made practically all our clothes.

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LEVINE: And when you came to New York at first, did you—did you trade in your clothes for American clothes or how did you—how did your dress change?

PAUL: I really didn't change at all, but the—the daughter of the people that I—that sponsored me, she took quite a few of mine and I didn't realize at the time how valuable they were, you know, all hand embroidered.

(Off Mike Conversation)

LEVINE: Oh, thanks. Yeah. Okay, I think we're going to pause here and I'll turn the tape over so we're not right in the middle—

END OF SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: Okay, we're continuing now with Side B. So when you got here, you didn't feel like you needed to change your dress in order to—

PAUL: No.

LEVINE: Be—

PAUL: I don't think so, no.

LEVINE: Were you ever treated like a greenhorn? Were you ever treated, you know—

PAUL: I heard the word 'greenhorn,' but I never was—because, see, in Manchester we associated practically with Germans most of the time, you know. So it really didn't make any difference. And we had a good time. We enjoyed ourselves here in Manchester.

LEVINE: Well, now, where did you move after your wedding? Where in Manchester?

PAUL: We had rented an apartment just—our honeymoon was from walking—walking from his brother's house to the apartment that we had rented, and we worked in there and, oh, God, did we work in there. We had a big black stove. We bought an old one, and it was full of grease and I spent my two days—two nights or three nights before the wedding cleaning that stove and Herbert painted everywhere. And then afterwards I bought materials and I made curtains for every room and we bought—did we buy one rug or did we—we didn't even have rugs on the floor, huh? Not until we—

(Voice from off mike)

PAUL: And everybody was in the same boat, so it was—you know, I mean—and then a friend of Herbert's said, "NO, you don't want to live here." So we moved to another apartment, which was in a little nicer neighborhood. And my sister came to visit me once after the wedding, said, "Is this always so clean in here?" I said, "What do you mean? Of course it is." Some of Herbert's relatives had given us a vacuum cleaner for a wedding present. Then we moved to [unclear] and then we bought

the house on McDuffy Street which was a [unclear] up and downstairs. Bedrooms upstairs and the rest of it downstairs.

LEVINE: And did you—how did you feel about being in Manchester? How did that strike you?

PAUL: Absolutely mortified. I said, “Of all the cities in the United States, you had to pick Manchester?” They rolled the sidewalks up. Nothing to do in the evening. Sunday was just you walked to the Puritan and had a cup of coffee, walk home again. But we went to the German clubs and the German clubs after Prohibition were the only ones that were allowed to bring their children. There were three German clubs. See, where there was alcohol served, there were no children allowed, but the German clubs, the liquor commission allowed the three German clubs that we had to bring their children and they had German bands there and so it was, you know, entertainment for them. It was really nice and well, we bought—then when Herbert went into business, we bought a truck, a Ford truck, and that truck just didn’t need gasoline, but, oh, it needed oil. Then we bought a bigger truck and Herbert wanted me to learn how to drive, and I got—because this was all manual. I got in there and almost landed in my neighbor’s living room. I said, “Here, we only have the one truck. I can’t drive it anywhere,” and there was bus service and streetcars in Manchester yet, so you were not tied down, you know. So we didn’t buy a car until 1940 something, huh?

(Voice from off mike)

PAUL: Yeah, I forgot what year it was, but bought a beautiful big Oldsmobile.

LEVINE: Did you work at all in Manchester?

PAUL: Yes, I worked first at a dry cleaning firm, and then I went to work in the Amoskeague [PH] Mills as a winder, and we had long, long machines where you took the colors of one—from one cone onto another. They were called winding. Beautiful colors, yellow, pink, blue and that—then they all—all of a sudden changed to khaki and looking back, I said, “We should have known that they were preparing for a war because all the beautiful colors were gone.” There was nothing but khaki. So then I became pregnant and that’s when Herbert—we were married just a little over four—four and a—four years. Now, we were married five years when our daughter was born. So he said, “No.” He said, “Now I’m not going to work for anybody else. We’re going to start our own business.” So we went to—you heard the story from him, and then when we came back, and I was in the hospital having a baby and my husband had this big business and he didn’t have a driver’s—driver’s license. And he came to visit me. I was in labor for almost two days. I said, “Did you go and get your driver’s license?” I said, “You’ll be out of business before you’re in.” But then one day he came, he said—see, in those days I had to stay in the hospital eleven days. Can you imagine that now?

LEVINE: So, now, how many children do you have?

PAUL: Three.

LEVINE: And their names?

PAUL: Wilma, Herbie—Herbert and Maxwell. His name was actually William Fritz, but he didn’t like it, so it’s WF Maxwell Paul: and there are five grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm.

PAUL: So we've—we've had—we have been exceptionally lucky. Like Thanksgiving we went to one of our granddaughter's and our daughter was there and our son went and all the grandchildren and the great grandchildren with their husband and wives are going to be at our daughter's house in West Newton. Now, how many people can say that, that they have all their children around them on one—and we've been doing that ever since our children were little. Every Christmas we'd gather because I'm too old to have them here anymore. I used to move the couch over there and set the dining room table this way so everybody could get around and then our son—our oldest son lived here, so he could stay overnight. Didn't have to stay overnight, but our daughter from West Newton, some of them slept in the other two bedrooms and some of them we had a playroom downstairs, they slept there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Well, how do you—how do you think about your life? About growing up in Germany and—and coming here after the war?

PAUL: I cannot actually say that I grew up in Germany. You see, I just—we had a marvelous—I had a marvelous childhood because my father was a great sportsman and we always went swimming and we went skating. These wooden skates that you tried on and bath—we went bathing. I mean, my childhood was—was enjoyable.

LEVINE: Did you miss anything about Germany when you first came here?

PAUL: I think if I—no, I can't say that. I—I really wasn't even that homesick because I—I had promised my mother I was going to be back in two years, so, you know. I was homesick. I worked for one of the—for a

very little time I worked for one of the Guggenheimers, but I didn't like that.

LEVINE: Was that doing the—caring for children?

PAUL: No, it wasn't, see. It was more or less like a maid and I—I just didn't feel comfortable there and it wasn't—and beside, it wasn't the rich Guggenheimers. It was one of the poorer ones. [Laughs] So then I—after we got married, I worked in the Amoskeague and I worked in the dry cleaning and then after Herbert went in business, I just worked at home. And we have never been short of money since then. It's—even the four, five years before we had a child, I never felt poor because everybody else, you know, was in the same boat. But when my husband went into business, now, he was telling you about the other painter that he ran the business. Now, the stores closed here at twelve o'clock and I said, "When you're business," said, "your men will get paid before I do because there's nothing worse than your husband works and then come Saturday, you—you haven't got any food. You have money." So he—his bookkeeper would get the time slips on Thursday and Friday she would pay all his men. I said, "This is awful, when you work and you don't get your money for it." So then we had our children. Sent—the only one that didn't go to preparatory school is our daughter. Two boys went to preparatory school. One to Kimball Union and one to Holderness. They all went to college and—

LEVINE: Did your mother ever get to come here?

PAUL: Oh, yes!! Herbert's—sadly, Herbert's father was—we had—they were going to immigrate, Herbert's father and mother.

(Herbert's voice is heard off mike)

PAUL: We had bought a house that we lived in. We had bought another one on the corner, five, four apartments, and his father died just before Christmas, but we didn't get to know this until after Christmas. So then, and Herbert had to have a very serious operation, so we canceled the immigration of his mother because we didn't think that we could handle her alone. But then in 1951, my mother and father and Herbert's mother came, and they came on the Kupsland [PH], the Swedish ship and only parents of American citizens were allowed to come from Germany at that time. So they came in January and stayed until August and they—my mother didn't like it in New York. She was absolutely frightened out of her wits. My father said, "If I had known you were coming over here, I would have never let you go," because the cars going fast and the subways and, you know. We—it was nothing like Germany. Then they came here to Manchester and we had formed a nice German group, seven of us, along the [unclear] River. We bought a peninsula and we built our cottages and we called ourselves the Jolly Seven.

LEVINE: Seven cottages?

PAUL: Seven cottages. Seven men, seven women, seven children, until I had him. That made eight children, but we didn't [unclear]. So—and they were so nice, you know. They would come, "Herr Schröder, Herr Schröder, coffee. Come on down to the"—to the area under the trees where they had benches and chairs and drank coffee, you know. So they were happy here. And then my—then my sister and her husband came to visit. My sister—he died and he was a First World War veteran. He had lost a leg, but he came once, and my sister came three times, huh.

(Voice is heard off mike)

PAUL: Hmm. We went to Germany the first time in 1953, both of us home. After 1951 my mother—we wanted to go the next year and she said, “Oh, no. You can’t. We haven’t got anything to eat. We wouldn’t be able to feed you.” Because it was just not—the things weren’t good yet, you know, and my father had lost all of his money and they—they started—everybody in Germany started with sixty marks, no matter how much they had.

LEVINE: What year was this then?

PAUL: Well, right after the—the war. Germany just took—in order to build, start building up again, see. So—and they had to pay so much for people that had to rebuild. So much of their money, whatever they made, the city taxed them for the houses that were bombed during the war, and then they had to find the Jewish people that had. We didn’t have very many Jewish people in our little town, but they had—you had to keep the property for them or rebuild it for them. So I think it took a long, long time. My father built a big house with six apartments in it and three stores downstairs and even that house was taxed. Every piece of rent he took in, he had to give so much to anybody that had to rebuild their house. So it was pretty hard, but he still left me a nice inheritance. [Laughs] We sold—my sister and I here, we were here. Three of us here. We sold our shares of the big house to the ones that were left in Germany. So I really—I mean, I—we went over in 1953, 1960, 1964, 1970—69, ’73 and ’78, huh? Went in ’76. I think we—we went by ship four times and the rest we flew. The first time we went for three months.

LEVINE: Well, now, how about like—coming from Germany, then when you were in New York you associated mostly with German people.

PAUL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And Manchester, too.

PAUL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And how about now as—as—

PAUL: Oh, we got friends from all nationalities. Yes. The Doberts. Well, you probably don't know, but Dobert Chevrolet, they were good friends of ours. We had some other friends that had a big estate—well, in Santa Belle Island in Florida. No, we—Herbert went to the [unclear] and you know, we went to their affairs. There was no longer any—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So—how—when you look back on your life, what do you feel satisfied mostly about? What makes you feel really satisfied?

PAUL: My family. Yeah. My family. They are all just so wonderful. Our daughter sadly lost her husband, but they're all wonderful. They're just great and our grandchildren there, oh, God.

LEVINE: What—what do you think the German ethnic groups—I mean, how do you think your grandchildren, are they connected with that? With the—the—

PAUL: They've all been to Germany.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: All our grandchildren have been to Germany. Our son's daughters did it, studied in Warwick, England. She was at Colby and Colby doesn't—

didn't allow a semester study. She had to stay over there a whole school year and we bought all our grandchildren Euro Rail passes. So she traveled all over. She was there the longest, and one—our grandson, his brother went to outside of Paris and he had to speak French. Our youngest daughter's youngest daughter, she went to Stroudsburg. Jennifer's the only one that didn't go, but she went over to Germany before she went for her Master's at Amos Tucker, Durham—at Dartmouth. So they all—they all been to Germany, all the grandchildren.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Is that important to you, that—

PAUL: It is because my sister's son, who's actually the only close relative that they have over there, has been over here quite a few times and, you know, they come over here and spend their vacation. And our daughter, since—after her husband died, she got a—oh, anyway, the school.

Mr. PAUL: A commission.

PAUL: I can't—I can't—no, I can't—I can't express what I'm trying to say. Sabbatical.

LEVINE: A sabbatical.

PAUL: She went to Africa.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: And then she went to Germany and spent a week there, and they all love Germany. They all love Germany. Yeah, uh-hmm. And now one of our granddaughters lives in England.

LEVINE: Wow. So how is this time in your life, when your children are grown and you're—

PAUL: The time is fine, but I wish I wouldn't be getting so old. [Laughs] But I can't complain. I mean I—we have nothing to complain about.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: We have—we have worked hard, but our work has paid off. We have accomplished what we wanted to accomplish. We wanted our children to have our good education and their children. We gave each our children stocks, our grandchildren, to the parents, so they could get through their colleges. And then a few of them have their Master's, which is nothing to sneeze at for thirty-six thousand dollars. You know, it's—so I—I think we—we have accomplished a lot in our life.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAUL: So I'm very satisfied.

LEVINE: Oh, good.

PAUL: Hmm.

LEVINE: Well, before we close, I—I don't know if you would—Herbert sang some song that he remember from his childhood.

PAUL: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Would you want to sing something that you remember?

PAUL: Gee, I can't think of anything right now. What did you sing?

Mr. PAUL: You sing something last—

PAUL: What?

Mr. PAUL: Oh, I sang a Christmas song.

PAUL: Oh.

Mr. PAUL: [unclear]

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: You said something about the folk songs, the German songs?

PAUL: [sings in German] That's a real folk song.

LEVINE: Now, what—what is that? What does it say?

PAUL: [unclear] the heather. The heather of—I was walking up and down looking for my sweetheart and she found—he found his sweetheart and oh—oh, how nice. You know, the heather in German is—there's a certain area where the heather grows.

Mr. PAUL: Up in North Germany.

PAUL: Hmm.

LEVINE: Okay, well, is there anything else you would like to say before we close?

PAUL: I thank you for the interview.

LEVINE: Well, I thank you. It's been really a real pleasure. I'm so happy that it was Mr. McCaffree from the University of New Hampshire that—

PAUL: Oh, uh-huh.

LEVINE: Had interviewed you [unclear].

PAUL: Yes, right. Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. PAUL: What was this?

LEVINE: Let me just turn off—this is Janet Levine.

PAUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: From the National Park Service and I'm signing off on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996.

END OF INTERVIEW