

KECK-111

ANN KELLY AND LOUISE KORTMAN  
BIRTH DATE: APRIL 25, 1900 AND UNKNOWN  
INTERVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 18, 1985  
RUNNING TIME: 50:00  
INTERVIEWER: NANCY DALLETT  
RECORDING ENGINEER: A. RANDALL  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: DEERFIELD. IL  
TRANSCRIPT ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY; NANCY VEGA, 1986  
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TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

GERMANY, 1907  
AGES 7 AND UNKNOWN  
PASSAGE ON "THE KAISERIN AUGUSTE VICTORIA"

DALLETT: My name is Nancy Dallett, and I'm speaking with Ann Kelly  
and her sister Louis Kortman on Wednesday, December 18, 1985. We  
are beginning this interview at 12:30 and we're about to interview  
Ann Kelly and Louise Kortman about their immigration experience from  
Germany in 1907. This is Interview Number 111 and the beginning of  
side one. Uh, lets's start back at the beginning of your story, and  
could you tell me where and when you were born?

KELLY: Yes. I was born in Wykfohr, Germany, April 25th, 1900.

DALLETT: Okay. Could you help me spell that, Wykfohr?

KELLY: Yeah. I got it down here.

DALLETT: Okay. It looks like--

KELLY: A-Y-K-F-U-H-R, is it?

DALLETT: F-O-H-R, I think it says here.

KELLY: F-O-H-R.

DALLETT: Okay. Good. Thank you. Uh, can you tell me about your family in Wykfohr in 1900?

KELLY: Well, there was, uh, five of us then because, uh, she was born after I was, Louise was born after I was. And then there was, uh, two brothers born after I was. So there's only five of us at that time, when I was born.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. And that was, what did your father do?

KELLY: He was, uh, what do they call it? (Others in room speak off mike.) Breakwaters. On, on the ocean, hauling in sand, in a boat, he worked in.

DALLETT: And can you tell me, what's your earliest memory of, of, say, your house there, or, the sort of thing you remember there.

KELLY: Yes, right. I have a picture of where we lived in Germany. You'll find a little "X" there. That's, uh, and I can remember going to the pump in the middle of the street, bringing home water and then, uh, Louise and I, we used to go on the beach and play. Yeah.

DALLETT: And can, did you, uh, start school there?

KELLY: I went to school only about two months, and then we came to this country.

DALLETT: Uh, anything else you can tell me about what life was like there? Were your grandparents there? Do you remember that, or--

KELLY: No. We had no grandparents. They were already passed away. And, uh--

DALLETT: Was there any other family there? Brothers, or uncles and aunts?

KELLY: We had one aunt, but I don't know where she was in Germany at that time. Yeah. But I don't know where she lived. But we had no, just our immediate family.

DALLETT: It looks like, from this postcard, it was a cobblestone street.

KELLY: Yes. Yeah. Cobblestone street.

DALLETT: And how was it that, uh, you mentioned before that your father came to this country?

KELLY: He came on 1906 and went to, directly to Glenview, Illinois. I think he went through Ellis Island, too, but just, they didn't hold him, you see. He went through Ellis Island, too. And he went right to Glenview, Illinois, where he worked at the brickyard.

DALLETT: And do you remember when your father left Germany?

KELLY: Oh, I remember it was late at night. Do you remember when he left? No. It was just at night, and I was wondering why all the commotion and things. And he left, he was on the ocean a long time. He was like on a freighter. They had, uh, horses on the boat that he came over on. And it was a very rough voyage that he had.

DALLETT: And, uh, do you know why it was that he came to this country?

KELLY: Well, there were some friends of ours that came to this country and they were Sweetowers. They lived in Northbrook, Glenview. And, uh, they talked about it and, uh, so my mother and dad decided to, to come.

DALLETT: Uh, these friends, had they come back to Germany and, and told your parents about it, or--

KELLY: No, no.

DALLETT: Just in letters.

KELLY: In letters. Uh-huh.

DALLETT: So, uh, what else can you tell me about that period? Uh, how long was it before your father sent for you?

KELLY: A year.

DALLETT: One year. And do you remember what life was like then once you,

once your father had left? How did your mother support the family, then?

KELLY: Well, my dad sent money. He worked night and day, practically, and he sent money. I don't know whether, I don't think mother worked, did she? My mother worked for the city some way, sweeping cobblestones. Yeah, while my dad was gone, and--

DALLETT: And, uh, do you remember, uh, he sent you money, did he also send letters?

KELLY: Oh, yeah.

DALLETT: Did he send you, uh, did he give you an idea of what life was like for him here in Glenview, Illinois?

KELLY: Well, he worked. He said he worked very hard and he had a home for us. He had the brickyard home, they supplied a home for him. And, uh, he never did come to New York to meet mother, you know. Nobody met us there in New York. And, uh, so we went right from Ellis Island to Glenview, Illinois.

DALLETT: Tell me what it was like. Do you remember when you actually left, uh, Germany? Do you remember when you packed up to come to this country?

KELLY: Oh, well, we didn't, we couldn't take very much. We were just allowed so much, and we had a wicker basket, oh, about the size of the chair, wasn't it, Louise? Yeah. That mother had all the clothes in.

DALLETT: So she packed up your clothes. Was, were there any special toys, or did you bring anything--

KELLY: No, no. We were very limited. What we wore was-- Yeah, we were very poor. (She laughs.)

DALLETT: And how was it that you, uh, what did you do? Did you get on a boat or a train, or--

KELLY: No, we got on a boat at Wykfohr there and went to Hamburg. And from Hamburg we got on this boat, Auguste Victoria. Yeah.

DALLETT: The Auguste Victoria. Kaiserin Auguste Victoria. (Other voices speak off mike.) Okay. Could, do you remember that boat? Could you tell me anything about it?

KELLY: Oh, yes. We remember the boat, all right, and we remember being down in the hull and we, we remember being sick all the time and running for the sawdust, because every time you got sick you had to grab some sawdust and put it in there. (She laughs.) I don't, she can tell you more about the boat part. You can tell them what you. (Sister speaks.)

DALLETT: Hold on one second.

KELLY: Wait, Louise. Now you can tell your experience from the boat.

KORTMAN: I remember mother because she always was crying, crying, crying, because we were hungry, you know, down in steerage. And I used to see, peek around out. There were sailors that swabbed the deck up on top, and I was waiting to see them, you know. So I thought, "Oh, I'm going to go see," because I saw they were eating something,

you know. And I had a big apron. So I got lost for half a day. And there they were with all these rolls and things and I thought, "Oh, maybe I could get some." So I asked him in German, "Ich kann singen, willst du mir Brot geben?", "Will you give me bread, I can sing," you know. So I get up and I sing something like--

DALLETT: Do you remember what you sang?

KORTMAN: Yeah. "Ist das nicht Berliner Luft, Luft, Luft? Oh ja! Das ist Berliner Luft, Luft, Luft" ["Isn't this Berlin's air? Oh yes! It Berlin's air!"] And they gave me, my whole apron was full of bread, no matter what kind of crust, what it was. And I was so happy, you know, to go down to mother. But when I came back down, it took a long time to get down the stairs--

KELLY: Big boat, you know.

KORTMAN: I thought, oh, oh, here I come and, "Mother, wir können essen. Guck mal was ich habe," look mother. And, oh, she was going to give me a licking because I was gone. But her tears left then and I was so happy because I brought them bread. And they all ate that. And those sailors that swabbed the deck, you can tell them about Heini [?] with the other one. It's, uh--

KELLY: You can tell them.

KORTMAN: That. that I'll never forget. Then we ate.

DALLETT: Oh, that's wonderful.

KORTMAN: I was missing more than once. I was with, some song to stop mother from crying. That's all she ever did, cry, cry. Well, you can imagine, with the seven of

us, you know, in a little cage, like, when we were down in steerage. It's just as bad as Ellis Island.

KELLY: Tell them about Heini [?] while he's got you going.

KORTMAN: My brother Heini, the oldest one, the oldest boy, he used to be up on deck where all the Polish people sat out on deck, too, you know, see. And he saw the sailors when they used to hose, to swab the deck, you know, to clean it. So he said, "Oh, I'm going to get a hold of that hose." He got a hold, and he lost control, and he got all those Polish men all wet, you know. Then one of them got a hold of him, and took a hold of his belt, what did he have?

KELLY: Turtleneck sweater.

KORTMAN: Turtleneck sweater, and held him over the top.

KELLY: Overboard.

KORTMAN: And let him look down at that water, see, for punishment, see. He never forgot that. That's another story he told all the time.

DALLETT: That's wonderful.

KORTMAN: But, anyhow, that was, uh,-- And the food, like I say, we got in line for that oatmeal, Ann.

DALLETT: They fed you oatmeal on the ship?

KORTMAN: Oh, yeah. They give you a little dipper, you know, then they slapped a bunch of it, and you stand in line to get that, you know, and you come back and that's your food, you know, down in steerage.

DALLETT: Yeah. And was it very crowded down there? Were there a lot of people?

KORTMAN: Oh, yeah. Packed. We just had a little corner with all of us--

KELLY; A little corner where mother was sitting with--

KORTMAN: We had a little baby. My brother was just a baby.

KELLY: Those were the days.

DALLETT: How many days were you on that boat?

KELLY: About eight days, I think. All of eight days.

KORTMAN: And remember getting on it, you know, in Hamburg, you know, you had to go over like a plank to go over, you know, on each side was water, to get into the, the big boat. And I thought, to get down on the bottom, where we went. And I thought, "Oh, boy this is, we're going to fall off and go into this water." This is not Ellis Island now. This is when we were leaving Hamburg, see? That I remember and also Ellis island, in those days.

DALLETT: How would you have been dressed at that period? You mentioned you

had, did you have clogs on? Different shoes?

KORTMAN: Not the wooden shoes.

KELLY: No. We had mostly knitted stuff. My mother knitted mostly all our clothes. My brothers had sweaters. They were knitted. And we had, we weren't no stylish show, I'll tell you. (they laugh.) But, uh--

DALLETT; And, uh, you mentioned that there were a lot of Polish people up on the deck. Were you hearing different languages on the boat that you hadn't heard before, or, were you meeting--

KORTMAN: Oh, no, because we didn't even know Polish.

KELLY: We spoke--

KORTMAN: Mother used to talk about the different nationalities. If there was somebody who spoke German we could understand.

KELLY: Or a different dialect in German or something we could understand.

KORTMAN: We understood what they called the Plattdeutsch.

KELLY: There's high German and Plattdeutsch German and--

DALLETT: One at a time. Uh-huh.

KORTMAN: We were the Plattdeutsche.

DALLETT: Plattdeutsche.

KORTMAN: The Plattdeutsche. That was altogether different. But it's easier to understand.

DALLETT: Tell me about when, uh, after the eight days on the boat you then came in to New York harbor. You didn't make any stops on the way, did you?

KORTMAN: No, no. After the boat docked, you know, out of the harbor, you know, before Ellis Island. That's when I told you we saw that Statue of liberty for days and days. And that's when we were all getting ready to go on and off, you see.

DALLETT: Tell me about when you first saw the Statue of Liberty.

KORTMAN: When we got to Ellis Island. When the boat was docked he put us on this little ferry to bring us to Ellis Island, which we saw there.

KELLY: It's still laying there.

KORTMAN: It's still laying down in the bottom of the water. Where they bring them, to go back and forth, to get them from the big boats. But that big boat, that we left, and mother with her seven, you know, we'd get in line, and she always used to say, the one word, the two words she learned in English, "Come on," and "go on," you know. And then she said, "Come on." And mother, they gave her about three children, you know. And one them, and they'd say, "Go on." She'd want the rest of my children, the rest of my kinder,

see. Frau Nielson. No one helped her. She got four more in the back seat. So then, the four more that come, see. Then, "Go on." See. those two words that she learned was, "Come on," and "go on. Ant then we get to, uh Ellis Island. You get on the little ferry there. That's another time we had to get on to this gangplank to get into this little boat to take us to Ellis Island. And the big one laid out there, you know? And boy that was a trip.

DALLETT: Did you have to have some sort of medical examination on the boat?

KELLY: We were vaccinated more than anybody else, I guess.

KORTMAN: I got four on this side and three over there (she points and laughs).

KELLY: Before you left Germany, and on the boat, and, uh, here, when we were vaccinated in the United States it never took because I guess we had enough of it. Anyway, we didn't have to be examined at Ellis Island. All of us children didn't. But my sister, who was the oldest, she was lame. And, of course, she got a big chalk mark on her. "L" for lame and "E" for eyes and "H" for heart. You could tell see.

DALLETT: How did the doctor know that she was lame?

KELLY: Well, she was walking.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. Did you have to walk up--

KELLY: Big stairs at Ellis island, "A-lis." we used to call it.

Yes, and then they took her out of the line and she was kept there.  
We were all kept with mother together in a big cage.

DALLETT: Now, your sister was kept separately?

KELLY: My sister, no, was taken out and examined and then brought  
back again.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. So they put the chalk mark on her and moved her  
aside but then she was brought back to you.

KELLY: Yes. After each examination. And in the meantime somebody stole my  
mother's money and here she was with nothing. And she was telling her story and she was  
using such beautiful German and a banker from New York heard her story and took charge and  
got us out of there. Felt sorry for her.

DALLETT: Oh. Did he understand her language, or--

KELLY: Oh, yes. He was German.

DALLETT: He was German?

KELLY: And he was just there, there were a lot of dignitaries there on  
Ellis Island at that time, watching different things, because, uh, they didn't have it down  
in the government stage like they do now, like they did later. They had all these private  
people and they were just taking those immigrants like Grant took Richmond. You know,  
they--

DALLETT: What were they doing? Tell me.

KELLY: Well, you change your money from German money into American money, you wouldn't know whether you got the right amount or not. It was awful.

DALLETT: So you saw that happening to other people, yeah?

KELLY: Yeah.

DALLETT: How long after you had been there did this banker overhear your mother telling the story? How long--

KORTMAN: They were coming through for inspection, like they do, to see how things are going down in all those cages and how are you doing, they found out whether, you know, and everything. That's how, when they got to mother, they asked her why she was crying, and she told them they had got the money, popped it right out of her skirt, you know. So then he, he felt sorry for mother with all those children, and he was so nice, and gave her the money to get us all the way to the--

KELLY: Took us to Grand central Station.

KORTMAN: Grand Central Station.

KELLY: And got us on the train to Illinois.

KORTMAN: To Glenview, Illinois. For all of us. That was wonderful. In fact, he wanted to adopt the both of us. He couldn't. Mother wouldn't let him go. (She laughs.)

DALLETT: Tell me about this cage you mentioned that you were--

KELLY: Well, uh, to keep a family together, they didn't let you have a run of Ellis island. We had to stay together. And, of course, they kept the males and the females separated. But when there was a big family like that they had little places for, with out little wicker basket and the seven kids and mother, we stayed together.

DALLETT; And there were other families?

KORTMAN: Oh, yeah. It was awful.

KELLY: It was awful full. And all I can, I can't remember, I can remember sitting at a long table eating, but I don't remember the food. But I do remember the, the breakfast. They gave us this big piece of dark pumpernickel with stewed prunes on top of it.

DALLETT: Had you ever seen that before?

KELLY: No! And I didn't like it, either. And the milk seemed bluish. I suppose it was powdered milk or something, I don't know. That's all I remember about the eating. I don't remember having big meals or anything. We must have--

KORTMAN: Those long tables.

KELLY: Yes, I can remember those long tables and sitting there, and mother had a job just keeping us all together.

KORTMAN: When Mr. Kelly took us to Ellis Island then we walked, when I saw

the boat first, it was sunk under, you know, the one that we came, the little ferry that brought us there. Then when we walked into the front door we ended up, "Oh, my gosh, there's the cages, and the ceiling is breaking down and the big stair going up, you know, it was down." Everything comes back to mind.

DALLETT: Was that cage, uh, up on the second floor, was that?

KELLY: Yes, where we stayed, yes. Where we slept. Downstairs was just, they were just coming in, you know, benches and big stairway going upstairs, big wrought-iron stairwells. I can--

KORTMAN: Long, winding stairway. I can remember that.

KELLY: Half the size of this room, you know.

KORTMAN: You know, when we went to visit Ellis Island, when, when my son took us over, we were in a quite a big group. And this young fellow that, the guide that was taking us around, he says, "Has anybody in this group been here before?" And several raised their hands, and we did too, and he says to me, uh, "How long ago?" I says, "Seventy-four years ago." Well, I'll tell you, everybody turned around and looked, you know. He said, "Well, you can take my place. You know more about this place than I do."

KELLY: This is really interesting.

KORTMAN: Oh, it sure was.

DALLETT: What, what was in that cage? Was there, were there cots and blankets?

KELLY: Just little cots. Not enough, not seven of them. We had to take turns sleeping.

DALLETT: And did your mother stop crying once you were at Ellis Island?

KORTMAN: At times.

KELLY: At times, but it must have been terrible for her.

KORTMAN: It was terrible for us. I never liked it much. What's this coming?

DALLETT: Sorry. (Sound engineer speaks.) Can we fill in any more details about what the building was like? Uh, do you remember the white tiled walls, or--

KELLY: You mean on Ellis Island?

DALLETT: Yes. Ellis Island itself. Anything about the physical details of, of the big building?

KELLY: I remember the outside of it was a great, big, red brick. That I remember, but the inside it was so crowded, awfully crowded, every place you went. And I can remember when we had to go to the toilet. At the end of the hall there was a toilet and it had a big, wooden box on top, you know, those old fashioned, and we were scared to death to pull the chain. We thought the Atlantic ocean was coming back in again. Never saw a toilet before.

DALLETT: Oh, so that was, that was the first toilet you had ever seen, on Ellis Island?

KELLY: They had different ones on the boat. I don't even remember. But they weren't like flush toilets, you know. I guess it went-- And then my brother and, uh, an sister, they took a walk one time and they saw, they came running back to mother saying that they were cutting a man's throat. They saw a barber shop. The men wearing white coats and they were shaving them and they thought he's cutting the man's throat. "Mother, come quick," they hollered, you know. "They're cutting a man's throat." Isn't that awful.

DALLETT: So all of this must have seemed very strange to you as young children, all these new things.

KELLY: And not a word of English could we speak.

DALLETT: How would you, how would your mother know it was time to go have your, your breakfast, or lunch, or--

KELLY: Well, they'd say, "Come on" and "Go on." That's all you ever heard there.

KORTMAN: Drum, you know, with food and stuff in it. Like, feeding the horses.

KELLY: It was awful. Thank God for LaGuardia. He straightened that place out.

DALLETT: So how many days in all were you there?

KELLY: At Ellis Island?

DALLETT: At Ellis Island.

KELLY: Four days.

DALLETT: Four days.

KELLY: Uh-huh.

DALLETT: And so you were really just waiting.

KELLY: Waiting for them to--

KORTMAN: Release.

KELLY: Release my sister.

KORTMAN: Otherwise they'd ship her back.

KELLY: Yes. And that's another thing. My mother instructed, well, the older ones, you know, the oldest daughter and, and, uh--

KORTMAN: Son.

KELLY: And my brother, the oldest son of hers. "Now," they'd say, "if they do not pass Clara, you--" She said to my brother, my oldest brother, "You see that you get to Glenview and get to your father." And she says, "I'll have to go back with Clara." And

she told my brother, "I'll never go back. I'll jump off the boat," she says.

DALLETT: Hmm. She was determined to, to stay.

KELLY: Yeah. She didn't.

KORTMAN: Everything worked out right when that banker come along.

KELLY: And then this banker heard her crying and telling one of the inspectors about, that she'd been robbed, you know. And, uh, he took charge of everything and got us out of there.

DALLETT: So he actually got your sister released.

KELLY: Yes. Quicker than, than, you know it, maybe she'd have been released anyway, but it took time, see. And, but he hurried it up. He went right to the front.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. And then how long was it before they said, "Okay, you can all be released."

KELLY: Oh, he came right back that same afternoon, told mother to get things together and, and to follow him. Then, of course, we had to take the ferry back to, to the mainland again, but we were happy then.

DALLETT: And then, uh--

KORTMAN: Bus station people. To get out of town. Parmalee Bus Station.

DALLETT: Just one person. Keep going. Tell me that story, how you got, he took you up to Grand Central Station. Is that right?

KELLY: Yes.

KORTMAN: Yup. Parmalee bus we were in. And then we had to go to, to go to Glenview from there, see. But our tickets followed through. And, uh, when we got, wasn't until we got to the train to Glenview, you know, how to the conductors years ago, they used to pass candies through the aisles, and put it there on your lap. And on his way back he would collect what you wanted. Well, we were so dumbfounded, we thought, "This is--America's wonderful." We were eating like mad and when he comes back-- it was gone. (She laughs.) But she had money enough to pay for it, that the banker left her, you know.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. The banker had given her some American money?

KORTMAN: Yes. To spend on the train and get us all to Glenview.  
Yes.

DALLETT; Enough to send the whole family?

KORTMAN: The whole family. That was really something. And then to get down to Union Station in Chicago. Glen (?). Mother used to call them Glen (?). She couldn't say Glenview, you know. Boy, we got off that train, I'll never forget, when we got off in Glenview and we run down by the tracks to go where the house was, you know, through the fields and oh, my, we thought it was heaven, you know.

DALLETT; Why did it seem so nice?

KORTMAN: Free country, or something. And oranges, we got oranges.  
We never tasted anything like that before, you know. We were just,  
uh--

DALLETT; And that's when your father met you, then.

KELLY: He met us at the Glenview railroad station, and he had a hayrack for all of us kids to drive from the station to where our house was and my, my mother went in a, what do you call those, top buggys, like a surrey, oh, a fancy, she went in that. But we kids all went in a hayrack. (They laugh.)

DALLETT; And where, tell me about the house that you went to, your first American house that your father had for you?

KELLY: Oh, it was right on the, uh, uh, brickyard property and it was, uh, a three or four bedroom house, a big old, old fashioned house. Wonderful, as far as we thought. And it was right along the railroad tracks. We had all the tramps in there to eat and everything else. They had that house marked, because we didn't know what a hobo or a tramp was, you know. And they had it marked. They mark, you know, the houses, years ago, when tramps did--

DALLETT; They did.

KELLY: Chalk marks. or red paint or white paint. They'd mark the side of the house. Good stopping place. And they used to come in and get something to eat, maybe a few cents and they'd be on their way. We didn't know what a hobo was. We thought, "The

poor fellow, just out of luck," which is true. But, uh, then, you know, they ride the box cars and the coal cars and we had to go out on the tracks to pick up coal for heat and you know what those tramps did? They'd get on a coal car and just throw it all out. We didn't have to go very far for coal.

KORTMAN: And, you know, my dad used to keep his money to send over to the old country in a big can, like a, see, a--

(TAPE ENDS WITHOUT SLATE.)

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

DALLETT: This is the beginning of side two of Interview Number 111 with Ann Kelly and Louise Kortman. Uh, how did you begin to pick up the English language?

KELLY: Well, we played with the children around there and, of course, they could speak English.

DALLETT: Were there other German children in that community, or--

KELLY: No.

DALLETT: No.

KORTMAN: There were some, though, back by the Hollanders, on that rail where we lived. Where (?), Anna Lived.

KELLY: Yeah, back there. Oh, yeah, yeah. That's right. There were some German family there. But then we went to school and, uh, they poked fun at us because our lunch was wrapped in the Abendpost.

DALLETT: Which was that? German newspaper?

KELLY: German newspaper. And, of course, we'd listen to everything, and they made fun of us all the time, our dress, our talk and everything. But we picked it up. And then we got the funny papers and we'd start reading the funny papers.

KORTMAN: The Katzenjammer Kids. (She laughs.)

KELLY: Yeah. We picked it up that way.

DALLETT: What else do you remember about, uh, was life strange to you in Glenview, or were there new things that you were being introduced to as, as a young kid here, or did you just seem to take to it?

KELLY: Well, I don't, I can't, I can say it was better than it was in Germany.

DALLETT: How so?

KELLY: Well, we ate better. That's one thing. (She laughs.) Children will remember that. And we had beds and practically, we didn't have to sleep four in a bed. There'd be two on a bed instead, and things like that. And, uh--

DALLETT: Were there new foods that you got introduced to that you liked?

KELLY: Yes. Yes. Mother, the first picnic they had for us, mother ate too much ice cream and got sick. She never had, we never had ice cream before.

DALLETT: Anything else that you hadn't had in Germany that, uh, you liked or didn't like? You mentioned the pumpernickel and prunes that you didn't like.

KELLY: Well, that was at Ellis Island.

DALLETT: Anything here in Illinois that, uh, was new?

KELLY: No.

DALLETT: Not really.

KORTMAN: Everything was new as far as the food was concerned, you know. It was fixed different. Mother had to learn how to cook differently. We had a lot of boiled dinners and, and stuff like that. Not too much meat. We couldn't afford it. But here we could, so it was always the food end of it that was--

DALLETT: Uh-huh. Did she continue with some of the German kinds of baking she had to do?

KELLY: Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

KORTMAN: She'd continue with a lot of it.

KELLY: She was a very, very good cook.

DALLETT: What kind of things would she make?

KORTMAN: Sauerbraten and strudel. All those. Baked, like, oh, mother made a lot. She was a wonderful cook.

DALLETT: Did she pass that on to you?

KELLY: Yes, we'd, yes, my sister that's in a nursing home now, Mary, uh, she was a very good cook. (A telephone rings in the background.) Excuse me. (Break in tape.)

DALLETT: Okay. Uh, you were, you were talking about, uh, the fact that you continued to the German dancing once you were in this country?

KORTMAN: Oh, yeah. Every time we hear it, I was just telling her, I says, "I love german music a lot." And I played the piano. I gave, in fact, I played the piano a lot and I got a citation for that, too. But anyhow, when I hear it, I'm right there, singing the German songs that mother and dad sang. Oh, I don't forget them. And to this day senior citizens, when I go there, I, that's in me.

KELLY: Mother was a good German polka dancer.

KORTMAN: Could she dance. Could she dance.

DALLETT: So you maintained those German, those German traditions, and you also picked up, obviously, the american language. Any other, uh, American customs that, that you adopted that you really enjoyed, or--

KORTMAN: Go along with everybody else, nowadays.

DALLETT: So as, as you were going to school, uh, how long did it take for you to start to pick up the language and, and become like the other children?

KORTMAN: Not too long in a one room schoolroom, you know, with a potbellied stove. We had to help build a fire in the morning. At the Rueben School.

KELLY: Yes, it's a little old, little school and it had eight grades. One teacher. Eight grades, one teacher.

KORTMAN: And we learned a lot there.

KELLY: And the first thing I knew how to say correctly was, "You want an apple." (They laugh.)

DALLETT: How about citizenship? When did you get your citizenship?

KORTMAN: Oh, that's another thing I want to tell you. Dad got his as soon as possible. At that time they had what the call the first papers and the second papers. I don't know if you remember that. That, we got ours, and, of course, automatically, we all became citizens.

KELLY: Through an act of congress. Through my dad.

KORTMAN: But they changed that. Later on in years, they changed that. And each one had to get their own, uh, citizenship papers. And I took dad's. Off of dad's

they made derivative copies of it. But we all went down to the judge and he swore all of us in.

KELLY: All of us in.

DALLETT: And what year was that? Do you remember?

KELLY: I, I took care of all that, got all the data for, all that stuff, you know, where we lived and when we came and, and dad's papers were in such terrible condition, because every time somebody had to go out of the country or, my brothers tried to join the Army, they'd need the papers. And they were a wreck. And I went down to the naturalization papers place to get a new one. They don't give you new ones, you see. You can't get a new, you can't get a copy, or a new one. So I, we all got our own now.

DALLETT: Uh-huh. And, uh, did you, did you ever go back to your, the village where you were from?

KELLY: No. None of us went back to Germany.

KORTMAN: We never went back. No.

DALLETT: Are you ever curious to know what your life would have been different if, if you had stayed there?

KELLY: Yeah. I don't know.

KORTMAN: Show the picture of the, I remember we used to go on the ocean there. We always played in the sand, we were on the waterfront all the time. In fact, my dad used to say we ate fish twenty-one times a week. But, uh--

DALLETT: Did you miss that when you were here in this country?

KELLY: No. We both loved fish and I eat it all the time.

KORTMAN: Oh, we love it.

KELLY: We're Scandahoovians. And that picture showed the place of the resort. I got it in there.

DALLETT: That's okay. We can, in a moment you can get it.

KELLY: This one?

KORTMAN: No, mother--

DALLETT: Do you know whether life in America-- That's okay, let's finish with this first, okay? Do you know whether, uh, the expectations of your father had about how life was going to be better for him here, do you know whether he was right in thinking life was going to be better for him in America? Was he, was he pleased with the way things went?

KELLY: Yes.

DALLETT: He never had any thoughts of going back to Germany? Or your mother.

KELLY: Never. Neither. Or my mother. They never wanted to go

back.

KORTMAN: My mother had an uncle that was quartermaster, brought the boat in the harbor, you know him. But, uh, they, uh, there was nobody there to go back to, really. No.

DALLETT: The rest of the, really just your family was here. Hold on just one second. Uh, do you have any of the original papers that were issued, like your passport papers or visa papers?

KELLY: No. I don't know that. Uh-huh. I don't know whether my oldest brother had them or, somebody in the family had them, but I don't, I don't, we don't have them.

DALLETT: Okay. I think that's all I need to ask you unless there's anything else either of you would like to add about--

KELLY: No. I would like to ask if you're, uh, making a copy or something is there a chance of us getting it?

DALLETT: Oh, yes, yes. Sure. We can send one out to you.

KELLY: You don't want any of these, uh--

DALLETT: Yeah. I would like to ask you for a photograph, but I just want to thank you very much for telling me the story. Okay? Uh, that is the end of side two and the end of Interview Number 111 with Ann Kelly and Louise Kortman. And it now 1:20.